

Envisioning Lhasa: 17-20<sup>th</sup> Century Paintings of Tibet's Sacred City

**DISSERTATION**

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By

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## **Abstract**

Scattered among the world's museum and library archives are a curious type of Tibetan art about which little is known: the indigenous paintings of Lhasa. These variegated works display the city's existing monuments, including the Potala palace, Jokhang temple, the great monastic centers and other recognizable sites from Lhasa valley and beyond, which drew so many monks, pilgrims and visitors over the centuries (themselves featured in the paintings engaged in a variety of activities and significant formal events). As visual images the paintings function in many realms and defy traditional modes of classification. These works are simultaneously representations of the physical world but also abstracted, selective and heavily edited re-imaginings. As distinct and individual artistic expressions, they reveal their makers' and their patrons' perceptions and desires about Lhasa, the cultural and spiritual heart of Tibet. These images are puzzling, for not much is known about the specific circumstances that produced them or the purposes they may have fulfilled. Until now, this unique sub-genre has not been studied in depth or collectively on the large-scale. This dissertation is an effort to fill that gap by drawing together dozens of Lhasa paintings for the first time, providing a body of material to be analyzed and explored.

This study is divided into two parts. The first two chapters provide an analysis of what is seen in the Lhasa paintings, their visual program and appearance. I show that, to some extent, this group had conventions of iconography and composition which simultaneously made their subject recognizable while also purposefully distorting and re-envisioning the subject. The last two chapters seek the broader contexts of art history, history and culture in which these works were situated. I show that the Lhasa paintings emerged as a distinct artistic genre in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but have as their roots various distinct artistic traditions, including traditional Tibetan portraiture. I also evaluate roles sometimes ascribed to these works, specifically that they function as pilgrimage paraphernalia or as maps. I show that the Lhasa paintings operate outside conventional classifications and that they offer scope for many different readings.

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,  
Susan Peterson Arthur and William Brian Arthur.

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I am deeply indebted to a great number of scholars, curators, archivists, colleagues, friends and family members for their extraordinary support. The assistance I received in the form of materials, advice, knowledge, consideration and encouragement was truly humbling and is what made this work possible. Any errors or mistakes that remain in this work are fully my own.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

A light rain hung over the valley at dawn on August 3, 1904, but by noon the sun had set the Potala's (*po ta la*)<sup>1</sup> golden roofs to glinting and gleaming high above Kyichu (*skyid chu*) valley and Lhasa town (*lha sa*).<sup>2</sup> Dazzled by the sight, British army colonel, Francis Younghusband, whose troops had just arrived in the Tibetan capital after more than a year's campaign, later recalled, "The goal of so many travellers' ambitions was actually in sight! ...The sacred city, hidden so far and deep behind the Himalayan ramparts, and so jealously guarded from strangers, was full before our eyes."<sup>3</sup>

To see Lhasa was the goal of a lifetime for so many- to see, to behold and to know it. This desire, cherished by Tibetans and many non-Tibetans, not only drew large numbers of visitors to this small city, it also inspired a number of captivating, delightful

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<sup>1</sup> For ease of reading, in this study I present Tibetan words and proper nouns in a phonetic spelling. When a Tibetan word or name first appears in the text, and elsewhere as appropriate, I include the fully transliterated word (within parentheses) following the Extended Wylie Transliteration Scheme proposed by the Tibetan Himalayan Library, ([www.thlib.org/reference/transliteration/#!essay=/thl/ewts](http://www.thlib.org/reference/transliteration/#!essay=/thl/ewts)).

<sup>2</sup> The first sight of the Potala had been on the previous night, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, but Younghusband's party was some seven miles distant and there was a "drizzling rain." The next day the company marched nearly straight up to Marpori and the Western Gate and, standing on a precipice, glimpsed the city itself. Perceval Landon, *Lhasa, An account of the country and people of Central Tibet and of the Progress of the Mission sent there by the English Government in the Year 1903-4*, Vol. II, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1905), 171-182. Francis Younghusband, "The Geographical Results of the Tibet Mission," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XXV, No. 5, May 1905, 481-493; 490.

<sup>3</sup> John MacGregor, *Tibet, a Chronicle of Exploration*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 247.

and unique artistic images that form a special subset of indigenous Tibetan art: traditional-style paintings of Lhasa.

Today, dozens of these Lhasa paintings may be found scattered among library and museum archives across the globe. Each is an individual and expressive artistic vision of what was, and still is, an evocative and potent symbol, the city of Lhasa, the spiritual center of the Tibetan world. As a group these works present a rich body of material that challenges classic assumptions about standards of Tibetan art and defies easy placement within any single artistic or cultural category. And yet, curiously, though frequently reproduced in books and often included in exhibitions, they have received only minimal attention from scholars. The Lhasa paintings have not yet been studied individually in depth or comprehensively as a group.<sup>4</sup> And thus our knowledge of what these paintings are and how they operate remains in the earliest of stages. This lacuna presents both a challenge and an opportunity. My study is the first inclusive and large-scale investigation into the forms and functions of this group of paintings. It brings the works together, analyzes them collectively and seeks to situate them within their various art historical and cultural contexts. Throughout this study I ask one question, though repeatedly and from diverse perspectives: what are the Lhasa paintings?

On the surface the Lhasa painting appears uncomplicated and readily accessible, belying the complexities and conundrums present on the deeper level. As an example, we

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<sup>4</sup> Certain scholars have made general remarks about this sub-genre of Tibetan art and Joseph Schwartzberg's essay on Tibetan maps and cosmological diagrams can be considered a preliminary study of the Lhasa paintings. It brings together seven Lhasa paintings, but as the focus of the essay is more general, Schwartzberg does not include exhaustive collective analysis of the sub-genre. Joseph E. Schwartzberg, "Maps of Greater Tibet," *History of Cartography, Vol. 2, Book 2*, ed. John B. Harley and David Woodward, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 607-685. See more discussion of the present state of scholarship below.



might turn to the painting of Lhasa held at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto (Figure 56; see figures in Appendix D). This large work on cloth is a riot of bold color, broad forms and intricate detail. At the center we find the massive red and white hilltop Potala palace, residence of the Dalai Lama (*gyal ba rin po che*), Tibet's spiritual and one-time temporal leader. Pastel clouds amass behind it and small figures stream up its many staircases. On the flat land below, in the right-hand corner, is a low and sprawling golden-roofed complex. This is the Jokhang (*jo khang*), Tibet's most sacred temple, surrounded by the buildings of Lhasa town. In the other corner, moving out from the town and through Lhasa's city gate, the Bargo Kani (*bar sgo ka ni*, the Western Gate), rides a haloed figure on horseback with an entourage of mounted men. They seem to disappear into the distance of the painting, out beyond the Potala, where the rolling hills provide a verdant setting for small streams, grazing herds, and the three monastic complexes of the Lhasa area, which at one time drew thousands of monks from all over Tibet and beyond. It is a clear and direct picture, easily understood by anyone with a basic knowledge of Lhasa.

Yet, one does not gaze long before the painting becomes puzzling. On the one hand, this is in some sense a document, a picture of "reality," of a place and of things that actually existed in the physical world. This is uncommon for traditional Tibetan art, which is famously comprised of deeply symbolic and abstracted images meant to convey intricate religious and philosophical concepts. On the other hand, it is no picture of reality that can be obtained by any eyewitness or camera lens. It is an edited and constructed image, in which monuments are moved about and reconfigured so as to be seen from best

advantage, extraneous and undesirable elements are left out, and the overall vantage point is manipulated to present a view of the valley that is incongruent with its geographical realities. This work is thus an intentional re-imagining of the city, an artfully arranged and purposefully assembled artistic vision of Lhasa. But to what end? What was the intent of such an image? Who was making this and why? What purpose did it serve and for whom? Again, what *are* these?

As one looks beyond the surface of the painting to these deeper questions of context and meaning, the true richness of this sub-genre begins to emerge. Although there is almost no direct evidence regarding the specific circumstances under which the paintings were created and sold, we can nevertheless rely on anecdotal evidence and logical deduction to point out the modes and realms in which these paintings operated. The Lhasa paintings have many potential functions beyond being works of art; they may have been used as souvenirs of pilgrimage, props for spiritual journeys, maps, sources of geographical and architectural information, or even tools supporting certain socio-political agendas. As historical artifacts, they have something to reveal about the city of Lhasa, how it was seen and understood by different audiences and at different moments in time. Emerging not long after the ascendance of Lhasa as the cultural, spiritual and administrative capital of Tibet in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, these works may have served to promote the city itself and the goals of its leaders. Patterns of collection and disbursement echo the complicated diplomatic relationships between Lhasa and neighboring as well as far-flung regions during this turbulent time in its history. In fact, these paintings sit at the

center of Tibet's cultural matrix and a study of them has implications in many fields, including history, anthropology, the study of cartography, religion and art.

## 1.1 Background

### Lhasa, town and symbol

Lhasa, like many long-established urban centers, is a place with complex layers of history, meaning and significance. Traditionally it is the point of origin for Buddhism in Tibet and for the original Tibetan unified state. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Songtsen Gampo (*srong btsan sgam po*), Tibet's most celebrated early king, designated the valley to be the capital of his growing Tibetan empire and established the first Buddhist temple there, the Jokhang. The Jowo statue (*jo bo*), Tibet's most sacred Buddhist image, was installed at the center of the Jokhang and the town that grew around it came to be known as *lha sa*, the "place of the god(s)."<sup>5</sup> This statue, and Lhasa itself, became a major node and eventually *the* major node in Tibet's complex pilgrimage network, drawing not only pilgrims, but traders, craftsmen and important religious leaders. The signal moment for Lhasa came when, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (*blo bzang rgya mtsho*, 1617-1682) chose it as the location for his new residence and constructed the massive Potala palace on a hill just outside the city. The presence of the Dalai Lama, the political and religious leader of all Tibet, vaulted Lhasa into a position of dominance. The city became

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<sup>5</sup> Lhasa's original name seems to have been "Rasa" (*ra sa*), possible translations of which include "Goat Place" or "Walled Place." It was named "place of the god(s)" (Lhasa, *lha sa*) after the precious Buddhist statues, the Jowo and Mikyo Jowo, were placed in the Jokhang and Ramoche respectively; Heather Stoddard, "From Rasa to Lhasa," in *The Jokhang, Tibet's most sacred Buddhist Temple*, Gyurme Dorje et al., 159-200 (London: Edition Hansjorg Mayer, 2010), 160; It is sometimes also referred to as Lhaden (*lha ldan*), meaning the "seat of the gods."

not only the center of Tibetan religious practice and pilgrimage, but also the administrative and cultural capital, a role that it retains to this day. And, probably not coincidentally, this is the moment that the Lhasa paintings began to emerge.

Lhasa is not just a place but a symbol: complex, multivalent and potent. It is a sacred location, the object of pious devotion, a place of deep historical import, center of government, and locus and arbiter of collective Tibetan identity. Whether explicitly revealed or not, all of this lies at the back of the Lhasa paintings, no doubt informing their creation and consumption. And to this may be added another layer of symbolism, particularly for the Western viewer: the long-held belief that Lhasa is remote, inaccessible, beguiling and mysterious.<sup>6</sup> This notion, active from the 16<sup>th</sup> century but propagated particularly by 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Western imperialist and missionary interests, informs how we have seen and perceived Lhasa for most of the past century, and even still today. Moreover, in current times “Tibet” and “Lhasa” are not neutral designators, but are often polarizing and politically charged concepts. To one degree or another, these are the many complexities and perceptions that are brought to bear when one looks at a Lhasa painting.

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<sup>6</sup> I have done my best to avoid this tendency in my present study, though the Lhasa paintings do particularly lend themselves to such a reading. For more on the pervasive “Shangri-La” phenomenon in which Lhasa, and Tibet, is imbued with all sorts of fantastical and otherworldly qualities by Western collective imagination, see Martin Brauen ed. *Dreamworld Tibet, Western Illusion*, (Trumbull, Conn.: Weatherhill, 2004); Donald Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La, Tibetan Buddhism and the West*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); and Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther, *Imagining Tibet, perceptions, projections & fantasies*, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001).

## The Lhasa Paintings

To date I have found twenty-five Lhasa paintings, though I am certain that more exist and will eventually come to light. The paintings are currently found in major museum, library and private collections in Europe, North America and Asia. A few are known to me only from their publication in catalogs, their current whereabouts unavailable or unknown.

The paintings share a number of physical characteristics. Most are made of traditional materials: ink, colored pigment, and sometimes gold, on cloth. They are found in both vertical and horizontal format and typically missing the brocade frame of a traditional *thangka* (*thang kha*; a traditional Tibetan painting). Many are larger than the average *thangka*, with some of the more impressive examples exceeding 200 cm (78.7 inches) in height or length. Similar to traditional *thangkas*, most paintings show signs of having been rolled, presumably for transportation or storage.<sup>7</sup>

Specific dates of creation for the works are not known, but it is possible to arrive at an estimated date-range for each based on architectural details shown in the painting and other known facts about the painting's collection history.<sup>8</sup> As a group, it appears the Lhasa paintings were created between the late 17<sup>th</sup> and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the majority painted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the exception of one painting (from Zanabazar Museum in Mongolia), the name of the painters and specific provenance of the works are unknown. Stylistic comparison and analysis point to a variety of sources,

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<sup>7</sup> We see this in the vertical surface cracking in the painting, present in a large number of the paintings.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix C for an explanation of this method and Appendices A and B for individual painting dates.

including Tibetan, Mongolian, and possibly Chinese and Nepalese artistic traditions. Finer examples may have been produced in the Dalai Lama's own workshops while the less sophisticated ones may be the work of "folk" artists. While many paintings are individualized and unique creative expressions, within this group there are also examples of copying, either paintings copied from other paintings or from another, unknown, original source.

When considering these paintings collectively, the richest field of comparison lies in the artistic program presented to the viewer. What the painting depicts and how, that is, its iconography, composition, spatial arrangement and detail, varies painting by painting, but when these elements are examined across the group, certain commonalities emerge. All Lhasa paintings, of course, show the sacred monuments of the Lhasa valley, though in different arrangements and combinations. Every Lhasa painting has as its main subject either one or both of Lhasa's two most significant sacred sites, the Potala palace and the Jokhang temple. The Potala, located on Marpori (*dmār po ri*, the "red hill") was the residence of the Dalai Lama, an extremely dominant visual presence just outside the city. The Jokhang temple, Tibet's holiest Buddhist temple and heart of the Lhasa pilgrimage, is a sprawling complex at the center of Lhasa town. Most paintings depict additional monuments of the Lhasa valley, such as the Western Gate, Chakpori (*chags po ri*), Lukhang temple (*klu khang*), Drepung (*'bras spungs*) and Sera (*se ra*) monasteries, and other local sites. Curiously, some paintings also include monuments located far outside the Lhasa valley, such as Tashhilunpo (*bkra shis lhun po*) in the Tsang (*gtsang*) district and Samye (*bsam yas*) from the Yarlung valley. Most works also incorporate people and

animals within the composition and a few depict the events of important holidays and festivals of Lhasa, such as the famous Monlam Chenmo (*smon lam chen mo*; the “Great Prayer Festival”). Inscriptions can be found on many of the paintings recording the names of the monuments and sometimes the events that are shown.

Within these works one finds a recurring tension between the “real” and the “abstract.” Great importance seems to have been placed on the viewer’s ability to recognize the monuments, via the use of specific visual identifiers and inscribed labels, but the paintings also share a strong tendency toward abstraction and distortion. Major monuments are typically given visual prominence to the detriment of actual physical placement, distance or scale. Sometimes space between monuments is drastically compressed or individual monuments are re-situated or re-oriented for better display. The less important monuments may be reduced only to their identifiable components, rendered generically, or omitted altogether. The Lhasa paintings display the buildings of Lhasa that actually existed, but they are not necessarily accurate or objective images of “reality.” Each painting is a deliberately constructed picture, a complex vision promoting a specific understanding of Lhasa.

### **The Larger Genre**

The Lhasa paintings exist within a wider genre of Tibetan art that can be generally referred to as “monument paintings.” These are traditional-style paintings that depict the important sacred monuments and places of pilgrimage in Tibet. These include pictures of the holy mountain Kailash (Sanskrit: Kailāśa, Tibetan: *gangs rin po che, ti tse*)<sup>9</sup> and

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<sup>9</sup> See Himalayan Art Resources, HAR # 41043. [www.himalayanart.org](http://www.himalayanart.org).

monasteries on their own or within towns including Tashilhunpo,<sup>10</sup> Samye,<sup>11</sup> Labrang (*bla brang bkra shis 'khyil*),<sup>12</sup> and Drepung.<sup>13</sup> There are also paintings that may belong in this category that depict monasteries or sacred sites outside Tibet, such as Wustaishan in China<sup>14</sup> or Bouda stupa in Nepal.<sup>15</sup> Overall, this is a very large group and certainly worthy of investigation, but in terms of size and complexity, is beyond the scope of the present study. I chose to focus my research on paintings of Lhasa as these form the largest, oldest and most diverse subset of monument paintings and because Lhasa itself is a particularly rich and complex subject.

### **Terminology**

Throughout this study I refer to the present body of works as “Lhasa paintings,” though in catalogs and publications they may be found under a variety of names. These paintings have been called maps,<sup>16</sup> pure-lands,<sup>17</sup> pilgrimage depictions,<sup>18</sup> architectural-views,<sup>19</sup> topographic views,<sup>20</sup> “Lhasa cityscapes,”<sup>21</sup> portraits,<sup>22</sup> and more. In my opinion,

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<sup>10</sup> See example from American Natural History Museum, Himalayan Art Resources, [www.himalayanart.org](http://www.himalayanart.org) (HAR # 95143).

<sup>11</sup> See example at the Newark Museum, Himalayan Art Resources (HAR # 76016).

<sup>12</sup> Example at Rubin Museum of Art, HAR# 74280 and 1097.

<sup>13</sup> Example at Brussels Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Himalayan Art Resources (HAR # 51646).

<sup>14</sup> See example from Rubin Museum of Art, Himalayan Art Resources, (HAR # 65371).

<sup>15</sup> See example from the Royal Ontario Museum, Himalayan Art Resources (HAR # 77571).

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Schwartzberg, “Greater Maps of Tibet,” 607-681.

<sup>17</sup> Marilyn M. Rhie and Robert A.F. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion, the sacred art of Tibet*, (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1991), 374- 375

<sup>18</sup> Gene Smith in discussion with the author, May 14, 2009; also Toni Huber, *The cult of Pure Crystal Mountain: popular pilgrimage and visionary landscape in Southeast Tibet*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999)

<sup>19</sup> Gilles Beguin, “The Great Monuments of Lhasa as Presented in the Architectural Paintings of the Musée Guimet,” in *Lhasa in the seventeenth century*, ed. Françoise Pommaret, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 53



none of these labels are satisfactory as they are potentially misleading, overly specific or overly broad. I explore a few of these problematic descriptors in greater depth in the following chapters. The term *thangka*, which refers to traditional Tibetan paintings, may be a better fit, but not all of the works in this group are of the traditional material and format that the term suggests. Thus, the general word “painting” may be the most inclusive and appropriate name for the group. It should be further noted that “Lhasa,” or “the place of the gods,” technically refers to the Jokhang temple, though typically it is also applied to the town around the Jokhang. In popular understanding, particularly amongst visitors including pilgrims, monks and traders, in memoirs and scholarly studies, “Lhasa” is frequently used to refer to the whole valley, including the Potala, Chakpori and even the monasteries in the foothills.<sup>23</sup> And so, in my opinion, the simplest, most inclusive and accurate term for these works is “Lhasa paintings.”

I found as I worked with the twenty-five paintings, that I needed a quick and easy way to refer to an individual work. Throughout this study I use “nicknames” to refer to individual paintings, loosely based on their current location or the author of the book in which they are found, as follows (and listed in greater detail in Appendices A and B):

- |   |          |   |
|---|----------|---|
| 1 | “Prague” | National Gallery of the Czech Republic, Prague (#Vm 5629) |
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<sup>20</sup> Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, et al., *Dieux et démons de l'Himâlaya: art du bouddhisme lamaïque : [exposition], Grand-Palais, 25 mars-27 juin 1977*. (Paris: Secrétariat d'État à la culture, Éditions des musées nationaux, 1977), 237

<sup>21</sup> Jeff Watt in discussion with the author May 15, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> See discussion in Chapter 4.

<sup>23</sup> This is a typical phenomenon all over the world. For example, “Los Angeles” may refer to the city itself or be used to describe the entire topographic basin including a number of cities and suburbs. The same holds true for many large cities (eg. London, Paris, etc.).

2. “V&A” Victoria and Albert Museum, London (#IS.1-1972)
3. “RMA” Rubin Museum of Art, New York (#C2009.4)
4. “ROM” Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (#921.1.82)
5. “Brussels” Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels (#Ver. 349)
6. “Paris” Private collection, Paris<sup>24</sup>
7. “Stockholm” Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm (#1935.50.2882)
8. “Bod-kyi-thang-ka” From the book *Bodkyithangka*<sup>25</sup>
9. “Guimet 1” Musée Guimet, Paris (#MG21248)
10. “Guimet 2” Musée Guimet, Paris (#MG1043)
11. “Oxford” Bodleian Library at Oxford University (Richardson Collection)
12. “Basel” Museum der Kulturen, Basel, Switzerland (#NR.IId 13863)
13. “Pal” from Pal, *Himalayas* (pg. 276-277)<sup>26</sup>
14. “British Library” British Library, London (Wise Coll., Add.Or3013a-b)
15. “Antwerp” Museum aan de Stroom, Antwerp (#A.E. 73.25)
16. “Anonymous” from unknown source (see Appendix B)
17. “Waddell” from Waddell, *Tibetan Buddhism* (p. 66)<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Found in Anne Chayet, *Les Temples de Jehol et leurs Modèles Tibétains*, (Paris: Éditions Recherche sure les Civilisations, 1985); figure 42.

<sup>25</sup> Lu Wang, et al. *Bod kyi thang ka, Xizang tang ka*, (Beijing: Wen wu chu ban she, 1985).

<sup>26</sup> Pal, *Himalayas*, 276-277, 296-297

<sup>27</sup> Laurence Austine Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism: with its mystic cults, symbolism and mythology, and in its relation to Indian Buddhism*, (London: W.H. Allen & Co, 1895), 66.

18. “Nepal 1” Private Collection, Oslo (fig. 123 from Larsen article<sup>28</sup>)
19. “Nepal 2” Omiya Library at Ryukoku University, Kyoto<sup>29</sup>
20. “Nepal 3” Private Collection, London (from *Bodies in Balance*)<sup>30</sup>
21. “Nepal 4” from Holdich, “Lhasa”<sup>31</sup>
22. “Mongolia” Zanazabazar Museum of Fine Art, Ulaan Batur,  
Mongolia
23. “ArtStor” from ArtStor website (also *Precious Deposits* and  
Huntington Archive)<sup>32</sup>
24. “Vienna” website for Galerie Zacke, Vienna<sup>33</sup>
25. “Olschak” from Olschak, *Mystic Art of Tibet* (p. 78)<sup>34</sup>

## 1.2 Previous Studies

There is a conspicuous lack of published information on the Lhasa monument paintings. Although the images are housed in major collections and are exhibited with some frequency, they have received almost no extensive scholarly commentary or

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<sup>28</sup> Note that Nepal 1-4 are not named after their current location or the author of a publication, rather, as these appear to be copies by a single artist, they have been named for the purported location of that artist, Nepal. See discussion Appendix B and also “Nepal 1” in Knud Larsen, “A Perspective Drawing of Lhasa,” *Art in Tibet: Issues in Traditional Tibetan Art from the Seventh to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Erberto F. Lo Bue (Boston: Brill, 2011), 232. 225-233, figure 123

<sup>29</sup> Larsen, “A Perspective Drawing,” 225-233, figure 127

<sup>30</sup> Theresia Hofer and Barbara Gerke, *Bodies in Balance, the art of Tibetan medicine*, (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2014), 263.

<sup>31</sup> T.H. Holdich, “Lhasa.” *The Geographical Journal* 18, No. 6, December (1901): 602-607.

<sup>32</sup> [www.artstor.org](http://www.artstor.org); [www.huntingtonarchive.osu.edu](http://www.huntingtonarchive.osu.edu); *Precious Deposits, Vol. 4, Qing Dynasty*, (Beijing: Morning Glory Press, 2000).

<sup>33</sup> Galerie Zacke website, <http://www.zacke.at/de/sammlung/14719/kunst-aus-asien-auktion-november-2012/eintrag/11699/bildkunst-himalaya-kulturkreis-der-potala-lhasa-bildkunst>

<sup>34</sup> Blanche Christine Olschak and Thupten Wangyal, *Mystic Art of Tibet*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 78.

discussion. The reasons for this are unclear. While most scholars will have encountered these paintings, they may have only seen a handful of distinct examples. It may be that practical considerations prevented the study of this small and highly scattered group. Perhaps their deviation from the highly prescriptive “standard” Tibetan religious imagery and iconography has made them less intriguing to scholars. Indeed, it may be that the images simply felt too “obvious” to researchers in a field known for its esoteric and deeply encoded religious art to spend time explaining these more straightforward pictures. It is also possible as the field of Tibetan art history is still so young, that researchers have simply not tackled this topic until recently.<sup>35</sup> Encouragingly, there are a few scholars who have begun to take an interest in these images in the last four to five years, and I imagine that a number of published studies will soon become available.<sup>36</sup> At present, the paintings may be found in exhibition and collection catalogs, in a few essays, and mentioned (with exceeding brevity) in a few significant books. Discussion remains rather cursory and high-level and there has not yet been much attempt to situate these within a broader scope of theory or methodological framework.

Currently, Lhasa paintings, or details of the paintings, are available for viewing in a number of catalogs and compilations, on websites and exhibitions. Some of the more notable catalog entries include those by Christine Olschak (1973 and 1987), Essen and

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<sup>35</sup> The field is not even a century old. George Roerich’s book *Tibetan Paintings* (1925) is one of the earliest works on Tibetan art history. The discipline’s true foundational source was Giuseppe Tucci’s *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (1949). Tibetan art history, and Tibetan studies in general, really began to blossom in recent decades once physical access to Tibet was restored and with the increased availability of Tibetan language education in Europe and North America. George Roerich, *Tibetan Paintings*, (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1925); Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan painted scrolls*, (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1949);

<sup>36</sup> Current scholars in this area include Knud Larsen, Tsering Wangyal, Wenshing Chou, Jeff Watt, Diana Lange, Natasha Kimmet, and others.

Thingo (1989), Giles Beguin (1995), Marylin Rhie (1996), and Miriam Lambrecht (2005), among others.<sup>37</sup> Each catalog contains a reproduction of one, or sometimes two, Lhasa paintings and a small amount of direct commentary, almost invariably focused on the buildings of Lhasa and their significance. Discussion of the painting itself, its style, layout and possible provenance, is fairly minimal as is discussion of the work's cultural and artistic context. Where and how these works are presented within these catalogs leads the reader to make certain inferences. First, as the commentary dwells on Lhasa itself, the paintings take on the role of illustration, visually demonstrating the buildings that are being mentioned. They assume a documentary and maybe even a map-like quality. Second, the paintings are frequently found grouped with cosmological diagrams, such as *bhavacakra* (Wheel of Life), mandalas, images of the mystical kingdom of Shambala, and pictures of paradise realms. This does two things: it categorizes the Lhasa paintings as a Buddhist diagram, or a systematic representation that organizes and displays doctrinal information, and it pushes the Lhasa painting into the realm of the otherworldly, the theoretical and the spiritual. Sometimes this is explicitly stated, as Marylin Rhie does in the *Wisdom and Compassion* catalog (1996), when she begins by saying the ROM painting should be considered a "Pure Land," (i.e. a paradisaical image).<sup>38</sup>

The notion that the Lhasa painting is a sub-category of cosmological diagrams or maps was put forth in Toni Huber's seminal work *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain* (1999). Huber, an anthropologist specializing in Tibetan pilgrimage, writes of the

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<sup>37</sup> Featuring a particularly interesting Tashilhunpo monastery painting, but not a Lhasa painting is Kulturstiftung Ruhr, *Tibet, Klöster öffnen ihre Schatzkammern*, (Munich: Hirmer, 2006), 439.

<sup>38</sup> I have little argument with this designation, however I think not all Lhasa paintings fall so readily into this category. Rhie, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 374.

pilgrimage practices, representations (mainly in oral and written texts), and rituals associated with the Tibetan pilgrimage sight at Tsari, known as Pure Crystal Mountain (*dag pa shel ri*). This book is a touchstone and significant landmark in Tibetan studies. In his chapter on oral and textual representations of the pilgrimage, “History and Prayer as Map,” Huber mentions very briefly the artistic and visual cartographic traditions of Tibet, which he calls “*shingiköpa* [*zhing gi bkod pa*], or ‘arrangement of a region/ field,’” most typically found in the form of “cosmograms” (eg. mandala) and images of “other possible world-systems” and “paradisical alternate realities” (eg. Shambala or Padmasambhava’s Copper-Colored Mountain).<sup>39</sup> Within this category he places the “Buddhfields that Tibetans recognized on earth, such as the Potala palace and its environs.”<sup>40</sup> He mentions that such images were considered sacred objects, or physical supports for the essence and power of the Buddha, known in Tibetan as “ten” (*rten*). Huber separates such images from “maps” that more “resemble the style of Western cartography” and which do not have a ritual status.<sup>41</sup> David Jackson, one of the most prolific and influential art historians in the field of Tibetan art, in a very brief mention in his book *Tibetan Thangka Painting* (1984), is in alignment with Huber’s identification of these “paintings of stūpas, as well as important temples and monasteries,” as “ten,” as sacred images.

Joseph Schwartzberg’s essay in *The History of Cartography* (1994)<sup>42</sup> on Tibetan cartographic traditions takes the opposite stance. Schwartzberg, a geographer and cartographic specialist in the sphere of South Asia, separates Tibetan traditional

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<sup>39</sup> Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

<sup>40</sup> Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

<sup>41</sup> Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

<sup>42</sup> Schwartzberg, “Maps of Greater Tibet.”

cartography into “cosmographic maps” (eg. mandalas, Mount Meru, lineage fields, paradisaical realms, etc.) and “geographical maps.” This second category is where he places the images of Lhasa, along with a scant few “world maps” and Tibetan maps of routes and roads. His study is valuable for its brief discussion of seven different Lhasa paintings (the largest collection of Lhasa paintings within a single study until now), and for its listings of the content and whereabouts of Tibetan cartographic collections.

Certain publications use the Lhasa paintings in a purely informational or documentary capacity. In these instances the painting, or details from the painting, are used to show how a specific building appeared in the past. This is particularly the case with Knud Larsen (2003, 2014),<sup>43</sup> André Alexander (2005) and Michael Henss (2015),<sup>44</sup> in their efforts to document and reconstruct Lhasa’s historical monuments. The goal of these publications is to explain and illustrate the architectural and geographic realities of the city in prior times. Lhasa paintings are used as material evidence displaying these past realities alongside old photographs, maps and satellite images. Such publications emphasize the paintings’ capacity to function as purveyors of concrete architectural and physical information.

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<sup>43</sup> Knud Larsen and Amund Sinding-Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas, traditional Tibetan architecture and townscape*, (Boston: Shambala, 2001); Theresia Hofer and Knud Larsen, “Pillars of Tibetan Medicine, The Chagpori and Mentsikhang Institutes in Lhasa,” in *Bodies in Balance, the art of Tibetan medicine*, 257-268 (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2014).

<sup>44</sup> André Alexander, *The Temples of Lhasa, Tibetan Buddhist architecture from the 7th to the 21st centuries. Tibet Heritage Fund's conservation inventory, v. 1*. (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2005); Michael Henss, *Cultural Monuments of Tibet, the Central Regions*, (Munich: Prestel, 2014).

For practical considerations when analyzing a Lhasa painting, there are a few essays to which the scholar may turn. Giles Beguin's article (2003)<sup>45</sup> discusses how to approach the visual analysis of a Lhasa painting. His essay is an examination of the two Lhasa paintings at the Musée Guimet, in which he identifies the major monuments shown and demonstrates determining a date of creation using the visual elements present within the painting and knowledge of the painting's collection history (see Appendix C for more on this), a method also used in Larsen's article (2014).<sup>46</sup> Rhie's catalog entry (1996), mentions, albeit very briefly, possible provenances for the ROM painting based on stylistic analysis. Jeff Watt, in his article on the painting from the Zanabazar Museum in Mongolia (2012), discusses the use of photographs as models for this painting.<sup>47</sup>

The online database and virtual museum of Tibetan and Himalayan art, the Himalayan Art Resources (HAR),<sup>48</sup> is perhaps the most useful tool for a study of this kind. In 2009, Watt, who serves as curator-in-chief of HAR, built a sub-database within the site showing many examples of monument paintings, organized by site, (i.e. Lhasa, Shigatse, Labrang, etc.), including five Lhasa paintings, or "cityscapes" as Watt calls them. The database allows the researcher not only to view individual works in detail, but also readily lends itself to comparing works within the sub-genre or even across the larger genre and other related image types (such as photography, portraiture, landscape painting,

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<sup>45</sup> Giles Beguin, "The Great Monuments of Lhasa as Presented in the Architectural Paintings of the Musée Guimet," in *Lhasa in the seventeenth century: the capital of the Dalai Lamas*, ed. Françoise Pommaret, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 53-64.

<sup>46</sup> Larsen, "A Perspective Drawing of Lhasa."

<sup>47</sup> Jeff Watt, "Himalayan Buddhist Art 101: Cityscapes," *Tricycle* (October 4, 2012) accessed Oct. 22, 2012, [www.tricycle.com/blog/himalayan-buddhist-art-1010-cityscapes](http://www.tricycle.com/blog/himalayan-buddhist-art-1010-cityscapes).

<sup>48</sup> [www.himalayanart.org](http://www.himalayanart.org);



etc.). While the site does not include much written commentary, it is the best place to turn for collective visual comparison across a range of sites.

Finally, broadening the scope, one finds tangentially related studies that are rich and valuable supplements to the literature above. In particular, I found Wenshing Chou's dissertation (2011) and articles (2007, 2011)<sup>49</sup> on the representations of the Buddhist pilgrimage site in Northern China, Wutaishan, to be enormously helpful. In her work, Chou, an art historian, shows that the way in which a sacred site is perceived and represented is a product of an ongoing iterative process of layering. She demonstrates how the individual's experience and visions participate in and add to the collective understanding of a site. Her work returns again and again to the large printed and hand-colored maps of Wutaishan available to Chinese, Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhists who visited the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many scholars would place these images within the realm of Tibetan monument painting and Chou's work should be considered foundational scholarship in this arena.

The publications I have mentioned formed a starting point for looking critically at the Lhasa paintings, but it is still a very sparse field, one which I hope to enrich and deepen with the material I present in this work.

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<sup>49</sup> Wenshing Chou, *The Visionary Landscep of Wutai Shan in Tibetan Buddhism from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century*, Dissertation University of California, Berkeley, 2011; Wenshing Chou, "Ineffable Paths: Mapping Wutaishan in Qing-Dynasty China," *Art Bulletin* (March 2007); Wenshing Chou, "Maps of Wutaishan: Individuating the Sacred Landscape through Color," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, No. 6 (December 2011).

### **1.3 Objectives, Methods and Materials**

From the start, the objective for my study was threefold: to collect, analyze and contextualize the Lhasa paintings. My plan was to find and bring together as many paintings as possible, to analyze them individually and collectively, and then to situate the works within the broader context of their production and consumption. Conducting a preliminary study into how these works look and function, both individually and as a group, is the main purpose of my project.

#### **Primary Materials- Collection & Analysis**

The Lhasa paintings are the primary sources and main corpus of study for this dissertation. In order to study these works, I first had to find them. When I began my project I was aware of six Lhasa paintings.<sup>50</sup> Combing through museum websites, catalogs and publications, following the advice of colleagues, and sometimes by sheer stroke of luck, I was able to track down nearly twenty additional paintings and thus form a true group.<sup>51</sup>

The next step was to conduct individual analysis on each painting. To this end, I collected data on individual iconography, inscriptions, style, material, condition, collection history, publication history and any other information available within or about each specific work. This sort of task is best achieved in person, so I made an attempt to visit as many of the paintings as possible to conduct photo documentation (when permitted), measurement verification and direct visual inspection. Firsthand examination

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<sup>50</sup> Thanks to the assistance and advice of Jeff Watt.

<sup>51</sup> I owe particular thanks in this to the assistance and advice of Dr. Diana Lange, Jeff Watt, Natasha Kimmet and Lenka Gyatso.

allowed me to verify information not available in photographs such as marks on the back and sides of the item<sup>52</sup> and material condition. Additionally, I frequently found minuscule details or inscriptions on the paintings' surfaces that had not been previously noticed. My visits often afforded me access to museum records, collectors' notes, and exhibition materials, which added greatly to my knowledge of how these works were understood by their collectors. Furthermore, I found it immensely helpful and satisfying to discuss the paintings with the collection curators, who were often both familiar with the work and deeply curious about it. These fruitful discussions added nuance and depth to my thinking and sometimes even introduced new avenues of inquiry.

A major part of my analysis was directed toward the visual content of the paintings, their subject matter and iconography.<sup>53</sup> My objective was to determine which of Lhasa's many buildings were being shown, in what manner and with what frequency across the group. The hope was that a clear pattern would emerge delineating a traditional visual iconography of Lhasa itself, perhaps ultimately pointing to the function or value

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<sup>52</sup> This can show how the piece was used or viewed, for example, if the sides show evidence of a traditional cloth frame or if there are consecration symbols on the verso, we know the painting was understood as a *thangka* and probably as a sacred object. See Chapter 5 for more on this. I thank Susan Huntington for training me in her careful and thorough approach to assessing the materiality of an art object.

guidance and training me in how to approach and assess the materiality of an art object.

<sup>53</sup> Traditionally a term associated with the work of art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968) and his (and others') analysis of Christian art, iconography is the study of the visual content and meaning of a work of art, which on a basic level is similar to its "subject matter" but on the more complex level seeks meanings that may be encoded within the individual visual elements and the manner in which they are put together, meanings which are not necessarily readily apparent to viewers unfamiliar with the time, culture or specific context in which the work was produced. The study of iconography has always existed at the heart of Tibetan art history as a tool used to assess, identify, describe and categorize Tibet's extraordinary multiplicity of religious representations and images. Parsing iconography in visual images has allowed art historians to trace artwork to specific Buddhist teachings and lineage practices, and can sometimes show how these practices and teachings evolved over time.

ascribed to these works. Learning to identify the specific buildings, places, people and activities shown in the paintings turned out to be a dynamic process of continued learning and refinement. At first I relied upon my own knowledge of Lhasa gained from visits to the city and prior research that I conducted concerning some of its older sites.<sup>54</sup> However, through my continued exposure to both the paintings themselves and to old photographs, maps, eyewitness and architectural accounts of the city I gradually gained greater facility and confidence in identifying the visual elements that made up these paintings, allowing me to recognize trends and outliers (and even, often, the works' dates of creation).

Visual analysis and comparison further revealed trends in how artists were composing and executing these works. Placing each of the twenty-five paintings side-by-side showed that there were typical and atypical compositional arrangements, orientations and distortions. Close examination and comparison also showed patterns of creation, such as the use of preliminary sketches or the likelihood of a work having multiple artists, and patterns of use and function. In fact, material assessment across the group called into question certain long-held assumptions about these works.<sup>55</sup>

### **Secondary Materials and Contextualization**

In addition to direct observation and comparison, I found many additional materials and studies useful in exploring the context surrounding the creation and collection of the Lhasa painting. These materials took many forms and came out of many

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<sup>54</sup> Bríd Caitrin Arthur, "Myth and Reality, Lhasa's Jokhang Temple and the Legend of Wencheng," M.A. Thesis, The Ohio State University, 2006; Bríd Arthur, "Draglha Lugug of Chakpori: a preliminary "fact-finding" odyssey," unpublished paper presented at Tibet Site Seminar Conference at Princeton University, 2008.

<sup>55</sup> For instance, that many of these works are too big or too fine to be "pilgrimage souvenirs." See Chapter Five for more discussion on this point.

disciplines. Here I will mention only a very select list of sources that I consider particularly crucial to the study of the Lhasa paintings.

For understanding Lhasa as a physical place, in terms of the look and appearance of its buildings, its geographical layout, and the significance of its individual monuments there are a number of resources, including primary and secondary. Old photographs of the city, taken between 1900 and 1959, show how the city and its buildings appeared, prior to the major changes brought about by the Cultural Revolution and other events of the modern era. These are available in many collections, including the “Tibet Album,” an online resource hosted by the Pitt Rivers Museum,<sup>56</sup> the online collection at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee,<sup>57</sup> the published photographic albums of Heinrich Harrer and Hugh Richardson,<sup>58</sup> and a critical study by Claire Harris and Tsering Shakya (2003).<sup>59</sup> Eyewitness accounts and memoirs by residents of Lhasa, Western explorers and would-be colonizers, and travelers of all sorts, published directly or retold in compilations, contain reports on the town, its daily life and its holidays and also gave insight into how the city was understood and experienced.<sup>60</sup> Of these, Hugh Richardson’s

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<sup>56</sup> Pitt Rivers Museum, “The Tibet Album, British photography in Central Tibet, 1920-1950,” <http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk>.

<sup>57</sup> University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, “Tibet, from the collections of the American Geographical Society Library,” <http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/tibet>.

<sup>58</sup> Heinrich Harrer, *Lost Lhasa, Heinrich Harrer’s Tibet*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1992); Hugh Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, (London: Serindia Publications, 1993).

<sup>59</sup> Claire Harris and Tsering Shakya, *Seeing Lhasa*, (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2003).

<sup>60</sup> A brief selection: Namgyal Lhamo Taklha, *Born in Lhasa*, (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 2001); Lobsang Gyatso, *Memoirs of a Tibetan Lama*, ed. and trans. Gareth Sparham (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1998); Martin Brauen, ed. *Peter Aufschnaiter’s Eight Years in Tibet*, (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2002); Ippolito Desideri, *Mission to Tibet the extraordinary eighteenth-century account of Father Ippolito Desideri, S.J.* ed. and trans. Michael J. Sweet and Leonard Zwilling. (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2010); MacGregor, *Tibet, a*

account (1993) of Lhasa's significant holidays, replete with photographs, was of particular value.<sup>61</sup> By far the most significant publications for understanding Lhasa's physical realities (and historical significance) are André Alexander's pioneering and exhaustive studies of the city's historic buildings,<sup>62</sup> the work of Knud Larsen and Michael Henss and the unparalleled, *Tibet handbook*, by Victor Chan.<sup>63</sup> These publications contain old maps, current maps, satellite images, photographs new and old, architectural renderings and schema, historical and literary descriptions, and even details from the Lhasa paintings, all of which were of enormous value to this study. I also made use of monographs of individual buildings of Lhasa, such as the recent book on the Jokhang temple (2010), and essays available on the Tibetan-Himalayan (digital) Library about Drepung, Sera and other monuments of Lhasa.<sup>64</sup>

Regarding the history of Lhasa and the variety of factors that contributed to its development, social, cultural and economic, I turned to many translations of traditional texts and modern scholarly studies, among them, *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century*, edited by Françoise Pommaret, which continues to be one of the best introductions to

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*chronicle*; Peter Hopkirk, *Trespassers on the Roof of the World: the Race for Lhasa*, (London: John Murray Ltd., 1982).

<sup>61</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies*.

<sup>62</sup> André Alexander, *The Old City of Lhasa, report from a conservation project*, (Berlin: Tibet Heritage Fund, 1998); André Alexander, *The Temples of Lhasa*; André Alexander, *The Traditional Lhasa House, typology of an endangered species*, (Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH, 2013).

<sup>63</sup> Victor Chan, *The Tibet Handbook*, (Chico, Calif.: Moon Publications, Inc. 1994); Larsen, *The Lhasa Atlas*; Henss, *Cultural Monuments*.

<sup>64</sup> Gyurme Dorje, et al., *Jokhang, Tibet's most Sacred Buddhist Temple*, (London: Edition Hansjorg Mayer, 2010); Georges Dreyfus, "Drepung Monastery Project," Tibetan-Himalayan Library, Accessed January 31, 2015, [www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/drepung](http://www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/drepung); "The Sera Monastery Project," Tibetan-Himalayan Library, Accessed January 31, 2015, [www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/sera](http://www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/sera).

Lhasa at its zenith,<sup>65</sup> traditional histories (or hagiographies) translated by Per K. Sørensen (1994) and Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger (2000), and, significantly, the translated works of the Fifth Dalai Lama, including his autobiography and his history of Tibet.<sup>66</sup> Lhasa's history sits at the center of Tibet's history, and there are innumerable resources, with a wide variety of approaches, methodologies and subjectivities, available in this regard. They are too numerous to mention here, though I wish to highlight the work of Matthew Kapstein (2006), Gray Tuttle (2005) and Joseph Fletcher (1978), these last two providing particularly thoughtful and informative discussions of Chinese-Tibetan relationships during the Qing dynasty (1644-1912).<sup>67</sup>

The study of Tibetan and Himalayan concepts of pilgrimage and sacred space is a rich and dynamic field. Within this arena I found myself repeatedly consulting the publications of Toni Huber, Robert Ekvall, Katia Buffetrille, Martin Mills, as well as traditional pilgrimage guides, such as the well-known, *mKhyen brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*, and Martin Mill's study of the ritualization and political

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<sup>65</sup> Françoise Pommaret, *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century, The capital of the Dalai Lamas*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

<sup>66</sup> Per K. Sørensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: An Annotated Translation of the XIVth Century Tibetan Chronicle: rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long*. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994); Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger, *dBa'bzhed: The Royal Narrative concerning the bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000); Nag-dBan Blo-bZan rGya-mTSHo, *The Illusive Play: the Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*, Samten G. Karmay trans., (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2014); Nag-dBan Blo-bZan rGya-mTSHo, trans. Zahiruddin Ahmad, *A History of Tibet by Nag-dBan Blo-bZan rGya-mTSHo, Fifth Dalai Lama of Tibet*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University, 1995); .

<sup>67</sup> Matthew Kapstein, *The Tibetans*, (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2006); Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhist in the Making of Modern China*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Joseph Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1800," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 10, Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1978).

contestation of landscape and territory, as well as many others.<sup>68</sup> For cartographic considerations, I utilized studies that ranged much further afield, such as Edward Casey's *Representing Place* (2002), and of course essays by J.B. Harley, Cordell Yee, and Joseph Schwartzberg in the foundational *History of Cartography* series.<sup>69</sup> I also combed through early accounts produced by geographers, specialists and scholars in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and very early 20<sup>th</sup> century that featured maps or illustrations of Tibetan monuments, looking for potential interactions between the Lhasa painting and Western cartographic traditions.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, of course, I relied on a large number of art historical publications. Of particular value were the many works of David Jackson who has meticulously outlined sources and styles of Tibetan art history using traditional histories and textual accounts and has also documented the techniques and materials used by traditional artists. Additionally, his books contain a large number of images, incredibly helpful for anyone searching for tiny architectural details across centuries of Tibetan art. In this regard, I also found rich resources in the Himalayan Art Resources online catalog (HAR), John Huntington's *Circle of Bliss* (2003) catalog, and the two catalogs by Marilyn Rhie and

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<sup>68</sup> In particular, Toni Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*; and, Toni Huber, "Putting the *gnas* back into *gnas-skor*: Rethinking Tibetan Buddhist Pilgrimage Practice," in *The Tibet Journal*, Volume 19 (Summer 1994). Robert Ekvall and James Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1987). Also, Katia Buffetrille, "Lhasa, City of Pilgrimage," in *Lhasa in the 17<sup>th</sup> century*, ed. Pommaret, 157-167; Martin Mills, *Identity, ritual and state in Tibetan Buddhism: the foundations of authority in Gelukpa monasticism* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003); Alfonsa Ferrari, *Mk'yen brste's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*, (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958); Keith Dowman, *The Power-places of Central Tibet: The Pilgrim's Guide*, (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988)

<sup>69</sup> J.B. Harley, "Chapter One," in *History of Cartography, Vol 1*, ed. J.B Harley and David Woodward, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and Cordell Yee's various essays in *History of Cartography, Vol 2, Book 2*, ed. John B. Harley and David Woodward, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Schwartzberg, "Maps of Greater Tibet."

<sup>70</sup> See Chapter Five for the results of this investigation.



Robert Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion* (1991) and *Worlds of Transformation* (1999), along with many others, some of which were mentioned in discussion above.<sup>71</sup> I must also acknowledge the works of Patrica Berger, Laura Hostetler, Anne Chayet and, again, Wenshing Chou, as particularly valuable resources in considering the interaction between Chinese and Tibetan art and cartography (and architecture) in the Qing dynasty.<sup>72</sup>

My process of research was a long road with many surprising junctures, twists and turns. Where I ended up was not necessarily where I expected to go, and, as often happens, the scholarly works that I found most critical in the beginning stages were not necessarily the ones I was turning to by the end of the project. Suffice it to say I am indebted to the great pantheon of Tibetan scholars, and historians of art, cartography, history and culture, whose body of work forms the substantial foundations for my own small study, whether mentioned here by name or not.

#### **1.4 Chapter Review**

John Rennie Short, scholar of cartography and urban geography, tells us that maps “tell two stories: the story in the map and the story of the map,” which is to say, “the depiction it contains” and “the history of its production and consumption.”<sup>73</sup> I found this

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<sup>71</sup> John C. Huntington, et al. *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art*, (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2003); Rhie, *Wisdom and Compassion*; Marilyn Rhie, et al. *Worlds of Transformation: Tibetan art of wisdom and compassion* (New York: Tibet House, 1999).

<sup>72</sup> Especially, Patricia Berger, *Empire of Emptiness, Buddhist art and political authority in Qing China*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003); Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise, ethnography and cartography in early modern China*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), Chayet, *Les Temples*; Chou, “Ineffable Paths.”

<sup>73</sup> John Rennie Short, *The World through Maps, a History of Cartography*, (Toronto: Firefly Books Ltd., 2003), 24.

idea useful as I thought about structuring the elements of this dissertation, and thus, exchanging “Lhasa painting” for “map,” my dissertation tells two stories.

The first two chapters tell the story *in* the Lhasa paintings, they seek the narrative that is available on the paintings’ surface, their visual content. Chapter 2 focuses on the structure(s) of the paintings, both literally and figuratively. It describes the various monuments that can be found in the paintings, how they may be recognized, their cultural, religious and historical significance and the frequency of their appearance within the group overall. Then it explains how these buildings are put together, their composition, spatial arrangement and overall levels of “accuracy,” that create the full visual appearance of each painting. This chapter concludes by asking whether the paintings display a conspicuous message or story. Chapter 3 explores the portrayal of human activity that brings the Lhasa paintings to life. It identifies both the formal events and holidays that are shown as well as the inclusion of individual human and animal figures.

The following two chapters tell the story *of* the Lhasa painting, the tale of their origin and their applications, their “production and consumption.” Chapter 4 seeks to situate the paintings within the continuum of Tibetan art history and to explain how the Lhasa paintings came to be. It establishes the precedents for showing actual monuments in Buddhist and Tibetan art and explores the potential relationship between monument paintings and portraiture. This chapter also investigates practical sources for the paintings: the makers, methods and means used to produce these representations of the Lhasa valley. Chapter 5 delves into the meaning(s), function(s) and value(s) that the

Lhasa paintings may have held for various audiences. The first half of the chapter evaluates the widely held notion that these paintings were intended for pilgrims. It seeks evidence in support of this explanation, but also questions its validity as the only explanation for the existence of these paintings. The second half demonstrates how the Lhasa paintings functioned as sources of practical information, perhaps even as “maps,” once outside of Tibet. It presents a series of situations in which the Lhasa paintings may have been used as practical and instructive diagrams for understanding, re-creating and, perhaps, promoting specific agendas concerning, Lhasa (and Tibet). It concludes by asking if we should consider the Lhasa paintings to be “maps.”

Finally, I include three appendices that I hope will provide practical aid to those who wish to know more about an individual painting or who are conducting analysis on a newly found Lhasa painting. Appendix A is intended to offer simple reference information for each painting in this study, presented within a matrix that allows for easy comparison across the group. Appendix B provides specific and extended information on each of the twenty-five paintings, including subject matter, date of creation, collection history, and additional considerations and resources. Appendix C outlines methods for assigning a date of creation to individual paintings.

It is my hope that this study will provide a beginning point, a first step, in understanding the dynamics of this small, but rich body of material.

## **Chapter 2: Constructing the Lhasa Paintings – Subject Matter and Appearance**

The paintings of Lhasa are not glanced at. They are peered into, poured over and traversed by the eye. A good deal of their visual interest lies in the differentiation and identification of the individual buildings depicted. Museum-goers, curators, colleagues, everyone alike, points and asks, “what is that building... and that one... and the one over there?” This chapter is an attempt to answer that question, not for frivolous reasons, but to discern the visual and iconographical elements that are typically found in these paintings. This is the story *in* the painting: an examination and analysis of subject matter, appearance and the significance of these artistic choices. What is being displayed on the surface of these works? What are the individual elements and how do they work together? Are there iconographic trends? Is there a visual program?

Though this sub-genre of Tibetan painting displays an unusually high degree of variability, there are some rough rules of thumb concerning the selection of monuments and the placement of monuments within the painting. The following discussion describes the individual monuments that are found most frequently within the paintings, their general appearance and location, and their historical, political, and religious significance. It also considers how the monuments interact with one another and within the

composition as a whole. The chapter begins with a brief history of the town and valley to provide a rough framework into which the monuments and the paintings may be fit.

## **2.1 Background: A Very Brief History of Lhasa**

The history of Lhasa can be thought of in five phases: the Yarlung era (7-9<sup>th</sup> centuries), an interim period (9-17<sup>th</sup> century), the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama and his regent (17<sup>th</sup> century), the centuries as a pre-modern capital (late 17-20<sup>th</sup> centuries) and the post-Dalai-Lama period (1959 to the present). The fourth period, late 17<sup>th</sup> to mid- 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, is the time period in which all of the Lhasa paintings were created.

The Yarlung era (7<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> centuries) is the beginning of Tibetan recorded history.<sup>74</sup> It is named for the tribe from the Yarlung- Chongye (*yar klung phyongs rgyas*) valley in southern Tibet that came suddenly to dominate the regions of Central Tibet in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century. The Yarlung dynasty is perhaps best known for its king, the great “unifier,” Songtsen Gampo (617-649),<sup>75</sup> who extended Yarlung holdings across much of Inner Asia to create what would be pre-modern Tibet (the boundaries of which remained more or less intact until the 18<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>76</sup> Lhasa’s history began when the valley was chosen by Songsten Gampo to be the site of his capital in 633.<sup>77</sup> Selected perhaps for its strategic

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<sup>74</sup> Tibetan histories that recount this period are all post-11<sup>th</sup> century; for concurrent histories of the Yarlung era one must turn to Chinese texts and sources from other neighboring regions.

<sup>75</sup> The dates of events in Songtsen Gampo’s life, including his birth, death and the founding of the Jokhang are difficult to pinpoint with certainty. Dates mentioned here are based on Stoddard “From Rasa to Lhasa”

<sup>76</sup> Anne-Marie Blondeau and Yonten Gyatso, “Lhasa, Legend and History,” in *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century, The Capital of the Dalai Lamas*, ed. Françoise Pommaret; 15-39 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 16.

<sup>77</sup> This date comes from from Stoddard, “From Rasa to Lhasa,” 160; Larsen, *The Lhasa Atlas*, 12; the degree of architectural development in the area at this time is not well-known.

location and mild climate, it is said that the king built a fortress palace here on the Red Hill, Marpori, where the Potala would one day stand.<sup>78</sup> The Jokhang temple, which would become the heart of Lhasa and of Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage, was established in the center of Lhasa valley in 639.<sup>79</sup> Subsequent Yarlung kings, particularly Trisong Detsen (*kri srong lde btsan*; r. 755-797) and Ralpacan (*ral pa can*; 815-836), were responsible for the further growth of Buddhism and the building of the first monasteries in Central Tibet. In the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhism fell into massive decline in the region and the Yarlung dynasty came to an end.

The size of Lhasa in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and its fate immediately following the fall of the Yarlung dynasty is not well known. It is generally supposed that, while significantly reduced in terms of political importance, the Lhasa valley continued to function as a destination for pilgrims and traders, as it was located along the major routes between India, Nepal, the Western Himalayas and the Muslim territories of the North.<sup>80</sup> In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the great Buddhist teachers of the Second Diffusion began arriving, including the Indian scholar Atisa (Atiśa Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna), who revitalized<sup>81</sup> (or re-introduced or

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<sup>78</sup> Larsen, *The Lhasa Atlas*, 12; According to Blondeau and Gyatso, the royal residence may have been the Maru or Marru residence in Lhasa or a fort or palace built on Marpori hill which at the time would not have been considered part of Lhasa. Blondeau and Gyatso, "Lhasa", 16-17.

<sup>79</sup> Some sources date the Jokhang to 641, nevertheless, 639 seems to be a more correct estimate; see Roberto Vitali, *Early Temples of Central Tibet* (London: Serindia Publications, 1990), 72; and Arthur, "Myth and Reality," 37-38.

<sup>80</sup> Alexander and de Azevedo, *Old City of Lhasa*, 11.

<sup>81</sup> Alexander, *The Old City of Lhasa*, 11; many scholars maintain that Lhasa remained a significant and vital area in terms of trade and pilgrimage throughout these years, (eg. Alexander, *Old City of Lhasa*, 10), but it is possible that the significance of Lhasa may have dwindled precipitously in the 9-11<sup>th</sup> centuries, and then may have ramped up quite slowly. Though some traditional stories tell of Lhasa's temples being abandoned and turned into homes for transients at this time (Blondeau and Gyatso, "Lhasa," 28), it can be supposed that, because its early temples remained rather well preserved, the area was not wholly deserted.

simply introduced) Lhasa's significance as a major site of early Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>82</sup>

From this point forward, the town slowly began to grow, pilgrimage circuits developed, and by the 14<sup>th</sup> century Lhasa's importance, both cultural and political, was on the rise. This was due in large part to the actions of Tsongkhapa and the ascendancy of the Gelugpa monastic order.

The Gelugpa (*dge lugs pa*) is the largest of the four branches of Tibetan Buddhism, the others being the Nyingmapa, the Sakyapa and the Kagyupa. The Gelugpa tradition is seen as a reformation of the earlier Kadampa school (based on the teachings of Atisa) and emphasizes monastic discipline, scholarly learning, and logical debate. To this school belong the famous reincarnated lineages ("tulku," *sprul sku*) of the Dalai Lamas and the Panchen Lamas. The Gelugpa order is derived from the teachings of Je Tsongkhapa (*rje tsong kha pa*, 1357-1419),<sup>83</sup> the great Buddhist scholar and reformer. Originally from Amdo, in Eastern Tibet, Tsongkhapa spent most of his life in Central Tibet, ultimately establishing his own monastery, Ganden (*dga' ldan*), very near Lhasa. Tsongkhapa also instituted the Great Prayer Festival of Lhasa and helped to renovate the Jokhang complex. His students founded the great Lhasa valley monasteries, Drepung and Sera.

The rise of Lhasa as the religious and political center of Tibet is due mainly to the activities of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama (*blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho*, 1617-1682). The

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<sup>82</sup> The traditional story is that the knowledge of the Jokhang (and thus Lhasa's) divine Buddhist past had been lost, but thanks to Atisa's discovery of a text written by Songsten Gampo and hidden in the Jokhang, this history was recovered. It is possible that the significance of the Jokhang is a wholly 11<sup>th</sup> century invention (see this chapter's section on the Jokhang for more discussion).

<sup>83</sup> Tsongkhapa is also referred to as Je Rinpoche (*rje-rin-po-che*) and as Losang Drakpa (*blo-bzang-grags-pa*).

institution of the Dalai Lama, a reincarnated divine being, Buddhist monk, leader of the Gelugpa order and eventual head of state, is a title bestowed upon the line by the Tümed Mongols in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This title was posthumously applied to the first two Dalai Lamas, both throne-holders of the Ganden monastery. It was the third Dalai Lama, Sonam Gyatso (*bsod-nams-rgya-mtsho*; 1543-1588) who established relations with the Mongols under Altan Khan, ultimately converting Mongol Buddhists almost entirely to the Gelugpa order.<sup>84</sup> From this time on, the Gelugpa school enjoyed the political support of the Mongols and Mongolian monks and pilgrims were a frequent presence in Lhasa. This alliance proved to be very useful to the Gelugpa. When the Mongols under Gushri Khan defeated the once-dominant Karma Kagyupa sect in Tibet's Tsang district, the kingdoms of Tibet were granted to the Dalai Lama. The Fifth Dalai Lama moved his capital to the Lhasa valley, built the Potala residence on Marpori hill, and undertook massive building and renovation projects within Lhasa. From this point forward, not only was the city the seat of Tibetan government, it was also the main residence for dignitaries and noblemen, a major site for trade and the most important site of Buddhist pilgrimage. No doubt prompted by the newfound importance of the city and the fluorescence of art there, it is likely that paintings of Lhasa's monuments began to be produced in the decades and centuries that followed.

The fourth period of Lhasa's history (late 17<sup>th</sup>- mid 20<sup>th</sup> century) was a time of on-going political machinations, Western interest in the region, and steady growth of the city. Political and military threats materialized from both internal and external sources,

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<sup>84</sup> Martin Brauen, et al. *The Dalai Lamas, a visual history*, (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2005), 54.



ultimately prompting the Qing court to establish a more or less on-going presence in the city. This era also saw a number of Western “explorers” enter, or try to enter, the city.<sup>85</sup> By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, interest in Lhasa had spread internationally along with global imperialist and capitalist expansion. The competition among foreign powers, primarily Russia and Britain, to claim Tibet was a major component in the “Great Game,” sometimes referred to as “the Race to Lhasa.” In 1904 a British military expedition led by Col. Francis Younghusband entered Lhasa, effectively “opening” the city. This occurred during the tenure of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (Thubten Gyatso, *thub bstan rgya mtsho*; 1876-1933), a great reformer and politician, who ushered Tibet into the early stages of “modernization” and global politics. The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso, *bstan ‘dzin rgya mtsho*; born 1935 and still alive today) left Tibet in 1959, effectively ending the era of the Dalai Lamas in Lhasa.

## **2.2 The Setting: the Lhasa Valley**

The town and monuments of Lhasa are located in a small valley in the Ü (*dbus-khol*), or Central, region of Tibet (the TAR or Tibetan Autonomous Region, Tibetan: *bod rang skyong ljongs*, Chinese: *xixang zizhiqu*) (Figure 57). The valley is created by the “River of Happiness,” the Kyichu, which is a tributary of the mighty Tsangpo River (*yar klung gtsang po*) that runs nearly the full Southern length of Tibet and becomes the famous Brahmaputra River in India. The Lhasa valley is broad and flat. It lies

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<sup>85</sup> Lhasa was famously “closed” to foreigners in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This notion did much to create and inflate the long-held notion of Lhasa (and Tibet as a whole) as a hidden and mysterious kingdom locked away in the Himalayas, what is often called the “Shangri-La” effect. In fact, even during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a fair amount of Europeans made it into Tibet and sometimes even into Lhasa itself.

approximately 3500 meters above sea level ringed by mountains soaring up to 2000 meters above the valley floor.<sup>86</sup> Three famous hills rise up from the center of the valley floor: the most imposing is Marpori or “Red Mountain” (*mar po ri*) upon which is situated the iconic Potala palace, to the southwest is the “Iron Mountain” or Chakpori (*chags po ri*), and the much smaller, Bhamari or “Rabbit Mountain” (Figure 58<sup>87</sup>).

Surrounded on virtually all sides by tall mountains, the protected valley is mild and fertile and known in traditional histories as the Plain of Milk (*‘o ma’i thang*).<sup>88</sup> The area was described as a “garden city” by British correspondent Perceval Landon in 1904, who remarked, “these wild stretches of woodland, these acres of close-cropped grazing land and marshy grass, ringed and delimited by high trees or lazy streamlets of brown transparent water... [have an] Arcadian luxuriance.”<sup>89</sup> This paradise setting that Landon describes is echoed in the paintings of Lhasa, which place architectural monuments in a verdant setting filled with hills, streams, trees and fields.

Typically, the paintings are oriented with the Kyichu River, which is south of the town and of the Potala, at the bottom of the painting and the mountains to the north at the top.<sup>90</sup> There may be two reasons for this south to north orientation. First, the course of the

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<sup>86</sup> Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 13; and David Germano, “An Introduction to Lhasa,” *The Tibetan and Himalayan Library*, 2010, accessed January 10, 2013, [places.thlib.org/features/637/descriptions/16](http://places.thlib.org/features/637/descriptions/16).

<sup>87</sup> Image 58: F. Spencer Chapman, 1936. Pitt Rivers online collection (#1998.131.222) [http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo\\_1998.131.222.html](http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo_1998.131.222.html) 12/2/14

<sup>88</sup> Sørensen, *The Mirror*, 254.

<sup>89</sup> Robert Barnett, “A City, its Visitors, and the Odour of Development,” in Françoise Pommaret, ed., *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century, The capital of the Dalai Lamas*, 199-226, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 224.

<sup>90</sup> Exceptions include the four similar works known as Nepal 1-4 and the painting from Oxford. These works are oriented from the West looking East. It is possible that the artist took this view

Kyichu runs down the center of the valley until it reaches Lhasa where it flows against the feet of the southern mountains.<sup>91</sup> Topography thus forces all building and human activity to the north of the river. Orientation may also be explained by traditional building practices, which orient homes and temples to the south.<sup>92</sup> The best or most representative view of a building is, therefore, its southern façade. Indeed, the most visually dominant façade of the entire Lhasa valley, the southern side of the imposing Potala, likely dictated the orientation of the paintings.

The Lhasa paintings are typically amalgams of many different monuments. For discussion purposes I have chosen to focus first on the two monuments that are always the main subject of the paintings, the Jokhang temple and Potala palace. Description then proceeds geographically outward: beginning with the town of Lhasa, then moving around the valley's monuments from the hills down to the valley floor, and ending with monuments that may be included in some paintings but which are actually located far outside the valley.

### **2.3 The Main Elements: The Jokhang and the Potala**

The Jokhang temple and the Potala palace, while very different in appearance and significance, are the two most famous monuments of Lhasa and are the most physically

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from the Chakpori hill. This orientation presents the Jokhang's main façade more fully and accurately.

<sup>91</sup> As noted by Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 13.

<sup>92</sup> Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 43.

dominant man-made features of the valley. It is the inclusion of one or both of these that make a Lhasa painting identifiable as a Lhasa painting.<sup>93</sup>

### **The Jokhang (*jo khang*) and the Tsuglakhang complex (*gtsug lha khang*)**

The significance of the Jokhang temple (Figure 59), also known as the Rasa Trulnang Tsughlakhang “miraculously manifested main temple of Rasa (Lhasa)” (*ra sa 'phrul sgnang gtsug lha khang*),<sup>94</sup> can hardly be overstated. It is Tibet’s first and foremost Buddhist temple. Located in the center of Lhasa, the Jokhang is the heart, both literal and metaphorical, of traditional Tibetan culture and religion. It is the *axis mundi* of the Tibetan cultural sphere. The temple’s significance derives from its role as a touchstone of Tibetan history, as the locus of Tibetan Buddhist divinity and as the foremost site of Tibetan pilgrimage.

The founding story of the Jokhang, a tale rooted in history and mysticism, casts this temple as a primary agent in the establishment of Tibetan Buddhism. As the story goes, King Songtsen Gampo, the divine Buddhist king, married two foreign Buddhist wives, Princess Bhrikuti of Nepal and Princess Wencheng of China. Both arrived in Lhasa bearing a sacred statue of the Buddha. The Nepalese queen wished to erect a Buddhist temple to house her precious image, but every attempt she made met with failure. The reason for this failure was explained in due course by a mystical vision

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<sup>93</sup> This study excludes paintings of single monuments with the exception of the painting from Prague, which I believe to be part of a set or larger painting that would depict more monuments of the valley. This study also includes paintings that focus only on the town of Lhasa (Nepal 1-4). These were included as they are images of the city and its surroundings in a native style and provide a good example of the degree of variance between the works.

<sup>94</sup> Alternate spelling: *ra sa sprul nang* (THDL); and also sometimes referred to as the “Lhasa Cathedral,” or Lhaden Tsuglakhang (*lha ldan gtsug lag khang*) Henss, *Cultural Monuments*. 45; Alexander, *Old City of Lhasa*, section 1.2.

received by Princess Wencheng, which revealed that the lands of Tibet were embodied by a fierce demoness (*srin mo*) hostile to Buddhism (Figure 60). For the new religion to take hold and to flourish, it would be necessary to stake the writhing body of the demoness by establishing Buddhist temples in precise locations within the kingdom. The heart of the demoness and thus the most vital place of subjugation was the center of the Lhasa valley in the middle of Milk Lake (*ö mtsho*). Through the pious devotion of the king and the divine intercession of his personal deity, Avalokiteshvara (Skt: Avalokiteśvara, Tib: Chenrezig, *spyan ras gzigs*), a miraculous stupa appeared in the lake which was then drained and the Nepalese queen's temple was successfully erected. This was the Jokhang temple, the literal "lynch-pin" of Tibetan Buddhism, which physically pierces the heart of the demoness, allowing Buddhism to exist and flourish in Tibet.<sup>95</sup>

The building of the Jokhang is a foundational event in traditional Tibetan history and a favorite subject for plays, songs and art. The tale positions the Jokhang as the point of genesis, both spatially and temporally, of Tibetan Buddhism. It also designates the Jokhang's founding as a primary act of Songtsen Gampo, who is seen as the great father of Tibetan culture and religion, a divine emanation of Avalokiteshvara, and the creator of the Tibetan state. As a metaphor the tale is very apt, demonstrating, perhaps, that Tibetan state religion draws on its Eastern and Southern neighbors but ultimately has its own "native" essence, produced through the agency of Tibetans and some force inherent (or

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<sup>95</sup> This story is repeated in many, many versions, all more or less similar. The version used here is based partially on Blondeau and Gyatso. For a critical look at the story see Heather Stoddard "The Geomantic Stones of the Jokhang." in *The Jokhang, Tibet's most sacred Buddhist Temple*, Gyurme Dorje et al., 159-200 (London: Edition Hansjorg Mayer, 2010), 160-177.

self-emanating) in the landscape itself.<sup>96</sup> Versions of the traditional story may be found in Tibetan literary works dating as far back as, but not before, the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>97</sup> The oldest account is the 11<sup>th</sup> century *bka' chems ka khol ma*, the treasure text purportedly left in the Jokhang by Songtsen Gampo and discovered there by Atisa.<sup>98</sup> It is included in many classic histories of Tibet including, significantly, the history of Tibet written by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1643.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, the story can be seen as useful for the promotion and legitimization of the dominance of Lhasa and the rule of the Dalai Lamas. It also partially explains the reason for the Lhasa pilgrimage.

It is not the Jokhang temple itself that is the object of pilgrimage, but rather, the statue of the Buddha, the Jowo, installed at its center (Figure 61). This image is believed to be one of the two precious Buddha statues brought to Lhasa by Songtsen Gampo's foreign wives. Though there is some debate over which was meant for which, ultimately one statue ended up in the Ramoche temple and one ended up in the Jokhang.<sup>100</sup> The

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<sup>96</sup> Despite its hagiographic nature, parts of the Jokhang's founding story are corroborated by the physical evidence at the Jokhang, which supports its being built in reign of Songtsen Gampo in a Nepalese style potentially by Nepalese craftsmen. See, Arthur, "Myth and Reality," Dorje, *Jokhang*; Roberto Vitali, *Early Temples of Central Tibet* (London: Serindia Publications, 1990), 72.

<sup>97</sup> Dorje, *The Jokhang*, 7.

<sup>98</sup> No physical version of this text exists from that time, however the text is referenced in 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century works. Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp, "Tibetan Historiography," *Tibetan literature: Studies in Genre*, Lhundup Sopa, et al. (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 1996), 39-56.

<sup>99</sup> This work is titled *Deb-ther-rgyal-mo'i-glu-dbyangs*; or *Bod-kyi-rgyal-rabs-deb-ther-rdzogs-ladn-gzhon-nu-ma*. Nag-dBan Blo-bZan rGya-mTSHo, trans. Zahiruddin Ahmad, *A History of Tibet by Nag-dBan Blo-bZan rGya-mTSHo, Fifth Dalai Lama of Tibet*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University, 1995).

<sup>100</sup> Traditionally the Jowo of the Jokhang is seen as the Chinese statue. Victor Chan recounts a tale in which the Jowo, originally housed at the Ramoche, was hidden at the Jokhang in the later 7<sup>th</sup> century because of a fear of attack by foreign troops and then left there. Chan, 116; however André Alexander notes that "the date of and reasons behind the switch [of the statues], if it occurred as such, are still insufficiently understood;" Alexander, *Temples of Lhasa*, 88.

Jowo, the “Lord”, housed in the Jokhang’s innermost chapel, is believed to be a statue of the historical Buddha at age twelve made during the Buddha’s lifetime. This statue, understood by pious Tibetans to be “a manifestation of the Buddha himself,” represents the literal presence of the Buddha in Tibet.<sup>101</sup> The figure is a medium-sized, seated Buddha, painted gold and adorned with (much more recent) ornate jewelry, clothing and crown. Pilgrims prostrate before the figure, make offerings to it, circumambulate the image and touch it to receive merit and blessings. Because it is seen, not as a statue, but as a point of contact with the Buddha himself, pilgrims understand these acts as a meeting or audience (*mjal*) with the Jowo.<sup>102</sup> The Jowo is the most important pilgrimage destination in Tibet and this journey is something that every pious Tibetan would hope to complete in their lifetime. Over the centuries the temple drew innumerable pilgrims and their acts of circumambulation, as well as their need for food and housing, helped dictate the growth and shape of the city and its surroundings.<sup>103</sup>

A visit to the Jokhang is a recurring motif in the biographies of many Tibetan Buddhist teachers and luminaries. These include Yarlung *cakravartins* King Trisong Detsen and Ralpacan, Atisa (the great Indian teacher and progenitor of the Kadampa lineage that pre-dated the Gelugpa), and, of course, Tsongkhapa (founder of the Gelugpa school), among many others, including monks and teachers of other sects of Tibetan Buddhism. Each visit of a divine historical personage added to the temple’s sacred associations and often resulted in physical additions to the actual edifice. Through

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<sup>101</sup> Cameron David Warner, “Crowning the Jowo Sakyamuni: Texts, Photographs and Memories.” *History of Religions*. Vol 51. No. 1. pp 1-30 (Aug 2011) 1-3.

<sup>102</sup> Warner, “Crowning the Jowo,” 3.

<sup>103</sup> For more on the Lhasa pilgrimage see Chapter Five.

centuries of renovation, redecoration or enlargement, the temple evolved into a sprawling complex.<sup>104</sup>

The Jokhang complex, best referred to as the Tsuglhakhang, appears in the paintings more or less as it does today. The original 7<sup>th</sup>-century temple is the innermost building, a square three-story edifice topped with golden hip-and-gable roofs on each of its four sides. This is the true Jokhang and it contains the Jowo image in a first-floor chapel on its eastern side. This floor also contained two other famous sculptural images, an eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara and a seated bodhisattva Maitreya. One can find individual stylized images of the Jokhang in which these three sculptures are visible from the outside of the temple (Figure 62), and in fact this seems to have been a regular iconography employed in paintings of the Jokhang as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century and even through the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>105</sup> In the Lhasa paintings under consideration in this study, one may also find examples in which the Jokhang roof is “removed” so that these three images are made visible. However, the majority of the paintings afford only a view of the temple’s many roofs and its southern and western façades.

The Tsuglhakhang, as seen from a birds-eye perspective in the paintings, is an organically developed mix of various buildings with different roof-levels and odd shapes. The inner Jokhang is surrounded by the partially covered “nangkor” passage (“inner pilgrimage circuit;” *nang bskor* or *nang ‘khor*), a series of buildings that once formed the offices of the Lhasa government, the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama’s residences, a

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<sup>104</sup> The major eras of architectural expansion occurred in the 11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, but smaller building projects were completed in the centuries between. Alexander, *Temples of Lhasa*, 44; Dorje, *The Jokhang*, 54- 58.

<sup>105</sup> See Chapter Four for further discussion.



printing house and other storerooms and preparation rooms (Figure 63). The main open-air courtyard on the western side, the secondary courtyard in the southwestern corner, and the Sungchöra courtyard (Southern Courtyard) on the southern side are nearly always visible in paintings, often filled with monks. Great care was typically taken in rendering the Tsuglhakhang in the paintings. Often its layout, architectural details and scale were quite accurate. The temple roofs were sometimes decorated with real gold. However, there are certain distortions that appear with frequency in the representation of the Jokhang.

The aspect of distortion that appears most often is the turning of the Jokhang to face the viewer. The main entrance of the complex is on its western face and it is toward this entrance that everything in the temple is oriented, including the Jowo itself. This façade, identifiable by the commemorative stele (*rdo ring*) and willow tree on the exterior, is the favored spot for pilgrims performing stationary prostrations and is the main entrance used in Lhasa's major festivals. In the paintings, this is the side that faces the viewer, oriented toward the bottom of the painting. As the paintings are nearly all oriented from south (bottom of painting) to north (top of the painting), this means the Jokhang, together with its surrounding town, has been turned so that the western façade faces south toward the viewer and the Southern Courtyard faces east. The reason for this re-orientation may simply be that artists felt it best to present the viewer with the main face of this important temple. Perhaps they were prioritizing visual recognition or the experience of visiting the temple over a geographically accurate positioning. Or, perhaps, the reason relates to Buddhist cosmology. Mandalas are “entered” and “traversed” from

their eastern gates, which are typically oriented toward the bottom of an artwork, understood as the side closest the viewer. The Jokhang, which does have an internal mandala-like form<sup>106</sup> and which is circumambulated in a similar manner, should thus be entered like a mandala from the bottom of the painting. It is interesting to note that in more recent paintings (Olschak) or those with Western sponsors (British Library) the Jokhang faces its proper geographic direction, west, toward the left side of the composition.

Other distortions are due perhaps to a lack of knowledge rather than a purposeful revision. The Jokhang complex is often out of scale with its surrounding town. The town may be indicated by only a handful of generic buildings or omitted entirely. And, in at least one instance, the perspective and architectural details of the Tsuglhakhang's buildings have been so distorted that the temple is barely recognizable (Waddell). Nevertheless, the Jokhang complex and surrounding town of Lhasa is one of the most quickly recognized elements in the Lhasa painting, second only to the iconic Potala palace.

### **The Potala Palace (*po ta la; rtse pho phrang*)**

High atop the broad promontory that rises from the Kyichu valley, Marpori, looms the massive presence of the Dalai Lama's earthly seat, the mighty Potala palace (Figure 64), an earthly version of Avalokiteshvara's Potalalaka paradise. This is one of the most striking buildings in the world and, aside from the Dalai Lama himself, the most widely recognized symbol of Tibetan culture in present times. Its towering façade, more

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<sup>106</sup> Henss, *The Cultural Monuments*, 55.

than 100 meters high and visible from virtually every part of the Lhasa valley, is an ever-present reminder of its intended occupant, the Dalai Lama, and his role as overseer figuratively, practically, and, from this position, physically of Tibetan religion and culture.

The Fifth Dalai Lama's decision to move his lineage seat from Ganden Phodrang Palace at Drepung monastery to Marpori was motivated mainly by politics and the desire to create a symbolic break with the past. In 1642, Mongol leader Gushri Khan took control of Tsang and offered the lands of Tibet to the Dalai Lama. That same year,<sup>107</sup> the Dalai Lama sought a new residence that was, perhaps, both more neutral in terms of monastic sectarianism and more emblematic of his new role as spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet. Marpori seems to have been an ideal choice as it enjoyed a central position in the region near Lhasa, was removed from the local Gelugpa monasteries, though still within sight of these, and was a defensible position with pre-established connections to the divine Buddhist kings of Old Tibet.<sup>108</sup>

Through many activities, but particularly via the building of the Potala, the Fifth Dalai Lama was appropriating the legacy of Yarlung king, Songsten Gampo, and all his attendant associations as “unifier” of Tibet, divine and earthly ruler, and, most importantly, manifestation of the Buddhist deity Avalokiteshvara. The king had long

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<sup>107</sup> Henss, *The Cultural Monuments*, 106.

<sup>108</sup> based on discussion of Anne Chayet, “The Potala, Symbol of Power.” in *Lhasa in the seventeenth century*, ed. Françoise Pommaret, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 39-52

been identified as an earthly embodiment of this Buddhist deity who had come to be regarded as the protector or “patron-saint” of Tibet.<sup>109</sup>

Avalokiteshvara is the great bodhisattva of compassion, one of the most popular figures in the Buddhist pantheon and central to Tibetan collective identity.

Avalokiteshvara first appears in the *Lotus Sutra* (ca. 1<sup>st</sup> century CE) where he is described as the divine protector of all those in peril who invoke his name.<sup>110</sup> Even at this early period Avalokiteshvara was ascribed a multitude of names and forms, further expanded upon in the centuries to come. He is the “Lotus-Bearer” (Padmapani), the Compassionate One, the “Lord of the World” (Lokesvara, Lokanatha), the “Lord of the Six Syllables” (Sadakshari), the thousand-armed one, the savior from the eight great perils, and many others including tantric and wrathful forms. As an emanation of the cosmic Buddha, Amitabha, Avalokiteshvara is also the one who gathers the departed faithful and brings them to Amitabha’s paradise of Sukhavati. Across these forms his qualities are multivalent yet recursive: this is the being who senses the suffering of humans and who descends to the earthly plain to come to their aid. In Tibet, his role is even more specific as the “creator and savior of the Tibetans.”<sup>111</sup> Legends say that the first Tibetans were descendants of the union between Avalokiteshvara, in the form of a monkey, and a demoness.<sup>112</sup> The Bodhisattva then incarnated as King Songsten Gampo, later as Dromtonpa (Atisa’s foremost student and Kadampa founder; *’brom ston pa*;

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<sup>109</sup> According to Anne Chayet this identification was well-established by the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Chayet, “The Potala,” 43; Brauen, *The Dalai Lamas*, 69.

<sup>110</sup> Huntington, *Circle of Bliss*, 180, 188

<sup>111</sup> Per Kværne and Rinzin Thargyal, *Bon, Buddhism, and democracy the building of a Tibetan national identity*, (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 1993), 47

<sup>112</sup> Robert Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1995), 5.

1004-1064), and then as the First, and then each successive, Dalai Lama.<sup>113</sup> This spiritual lineage forms a link between the Dalai Lama and Tibet's first Buddhist ruler legitimizing his ascendancy to a position very like that of a cakravartin, a divine king.

The Potala palace itself reinforces the connection between the Dalai Lama, Songsten Gampo and Avalokiteshvara. The site of its establishment, Marpori hill, was said to be the place of Songsten Gampo's own palace, the ruins of which were incorporated into the new palace. Substantive proof of a pre-existing structure has yet to be discovered. However, the same early texts that designate Songsten Gampo as Avalokiteshvara call this hill, "Potari" (*po ta ri*), in reference to Potalaka, the earthly mountainous abode of Avalokiteshvara, traditionally located in India.<sup>114</sup> Potalaka paradise, as described in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, is a south-facing mountain in a paradise of woods and streams.<sup>115</sup> The Fifth Dalai Lama claimed his new Potala to be "indistinguishable from the Potala mountain in the South,"<sup>116</sup> and, in fact, the description correlates very well. The Potala hill is south-facing and set in a wooded and watered "paradise." The actual edifice with its massive stone construction is another mountain unto itself. Through this identification, the Dalai Lamas were not symbols of Avalokiteshvara, but understood to be the bodhisattva himself in human form. And the Potala palace was not just a building, but his paradise.

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<sup>113</sup> Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*, 5-6; see also the excellent discussion in Brauen, *The Dalai Lamas*, 19-24.

<sup>114</sup> Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 97-98; According to Henss the designation of Marpori as Potari occurs "not before" the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>115</sup> Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 97.

<sup>116</sup> Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 97.

Like the Jokhang, the Potala is vivified, or sanctified, by the historical presences imagined there and more emphatically by the living presence residing there. The Jowo at the Jokhang remained the true object of the Lhasa pilgrimage, but the Dalai Lama and the Potala were also a part of the pilgrim's Lhasa experience. Pilgrims flooded the city at times of the year when the Dalai Lama was guaranteed to be on-view in processions and public ceremonies. Marpori hill was, or had already been, incorporated into the larger Lingkor (*gling skor* or *gling 'khor*) circuit and pilgrims would stop at the foot of Marpori to honor this sanctified place.

More than anything else, the Potala is a visual symbol, the sight of which is an evocative and indelible experience. Thomas Manning, an Englishman who “wandered” into Lhasa in 1812, described it thus, “[a] majestic mountain of building, [which] has a magnificent effect...My eye [was] almost perpetually fixed on the palace, and roving over its parts, the disposition of which being irregular, [it] eluded my attempts at analysis.”<sup>117</sup> Abbé Huc, a French priest and missionary, who arrived in Lhasa in 1846, wrote,

the palace of the Talé-Lama [sic] merits, in every respect, the celebrity which it enjoys throughout the world... a rugged mountain of slight elevations and of conical form, .... Upon this grand pedestal, the work of nature, the adorers of the Talé-Lama have raised the magnificent palace ...an aggregation of several temples, of various sizes and decoration... and culminates in a dome ‘entirely covered with plates of gold’.<sup>118</sup>

Virtually every travel account, including those written today, includes a description of the Potala. Descriptions, similar to those above, speak of volumes, colors, and height: the

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<sup>117</sup> MacGregor, *Tibet, a Chronicle*, 219.

<sup>118</sup> MacGregor, *Tibet, a Chronicle*, 239.

“aggregate” buildings, the bulky form of the construction, the white and red of the façade, shining gilded roofs, and the “looming,” “lofty” and even “floating” quality of the building.<sup>119</sup> This feeling comes through in the paintings as well, over half of which feature the Potala as the central subject.

The Potala, which represents the pinnacle of traditional Tibetan architecture, is part monastery, part palace, and part fortress (Figure 65). It was completed in two phases: the White Palace (*pho brang dkar po*, 1645-48) under the direction of the Fifth Dalai Lama, and the Red Palace (*pho brang dmar po*, 1690-94), built after the Dalai Lama’s death by his regent, Desi Sangye Gyatso (*sde srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho*; 1653-1706). These are named for the color of their external walls, the bright white and rusty red of which are immediately recognizable. The white palace is the larger building at the bottom that sprawls up the side and along the ridge of the hill. Comprised of seven stories, it contains audience halls and private rooms. The red palace is built on top of the white palace and is a more compact affair, comprised of four floors. This contained the mausoleums of the Dalai Lamas, the locations of which are marked on the rooftop by golden hip-and-gable roofs. The overall edifice is a mass of different volumes and rooflines, but nevertheless feels cohesive and monumental. It has the traditional battered walls that become increasingly narrow as they rise, the decorative brown “benma frieze”

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<sup>119</sup> For a particularly evocative and poetic description, see Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 104-105.

(spen bad) along the roofline and a great many, very regular, windows. Large staircases descend in a zigzag fashion to the area below known as Zhöl village.<sup>120</sup>

Zhöl village (*zhol*), at the foot of Marpori on the south-side, grew along with the Potala (Figure 65). It contained the government buildings for the Dalai Lama's new Ganden Photrang administration and workshops for the artisans employed to create the new palace and its contents. Later buildings also included a prison, stables, and printing houses. The village was enclosed within three walls, each containing an ornate entrance gate, the corners marked by square towers. Zhöl is always represented in the paintings though with varying degrees of specificity and accuracy. When accurately depicted the village buildings may be useful for dating the paintings.

The Potala, always a very recognizable element, appears in three quarters of the paintings (nineteen out of twenty-five). Of those, it is the central element in more than half the works (eleven of nineteen). No matter its location or emphasis, the Potala is always presented by its southern façade. This is the main façade and the most recognizable angle to view the building. It is also the side that faces into the Lhasa valley and the center of the pilgrimage circle. Great care is typically taken to render the details of the Potala. The various parts of the building, the rooflines and the staircases are often very accurate. The golden rooftops are always visible and also may be used to ascribe dates to the paintings. There are a few exceptions. Several works show a misinterpretation of the volumes of the building and the walls that extend up the hillside

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<sup>120</sup> The Potala is the finest example of the Tibetan hilltop monumental fortress (*dzong*); other examples of this type of edifice are the old *dzong* of Shigatse (see photo in Brauen, *Peter Aufschnaiter*, 131) and at Leh.



(ROM, Brussels, Paris). The work from Stockholm contains a very odd palace: the hillside is flattened and the building rises in two hexagonal tiers, one white and one red, with a large central shrine. It must be assumed that this artist never saw the actual building.<sup>121</sup>

These two elements, the Jokhang temple within Lhasa town and the Potala palace on its hill, are the critical nodes of the Lhasa valley and of the paintings. The monuments are counterpoints to one another: one lofty, the other sprawling; one ancient, one recent; one the domain of pilgrims and townsfolk, one the domain of the highest authority of the realm. And yet, as the most critical loci of Tibetan religious and cultural authority, they are more alike than different. Both draw agency from their role in the beginning of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibet itself, both are places of civic and religious power, and both house the living presence of Tibet's divine protectors. The meanings of these two buildings are deeply commingled and intertwined and both sit inextricably at the center of Tibetan culture. Unsurprisingly then, these two monuments serve as the main subject of the Lhasa paintings. In the collection of paintings there are several modes of general composition, however, every painting, perforce, takes the Jokhang, the Potala or both monuments simultaneously as its central focus.

Of the twenty-five paintings, seven focus on the Jokhang and eleven on the Potala (the remaining give equal weight to both simultaneously). Of the nineteen paintings that feature the two monuments together, the Potala is more frequently the central focus,

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<sup>121</sup> In fact, it is possible that this is a rendering not of the Potala in Lhasa, but of the Potala-facsimile built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Chengde, China. See Chapter Five for further discussion.

appearing at the center of nine works as compared to the Jokhang's two. Based on these numbers, it may be tempting to claim that the Potala is the more frequent and dominant focus of these paintings. This would suggest that the paintings are essentially about the Dalai Lama and his physical presence at the center of Lhasa and of Tibet. Such a reading would inevitably bring to bear all the layered associations that accompany that office and the site, historical, political, legendary, spiritual and mystical, that position the Dalai Lama as the inevitable ruler and protector of Tibet and Tibetans. Seen in this light, the paintings function as promotional materials that "sell" the notion of the cultural significance and centrality of the Dalai Lama and "his" Lhasa and by extension the Tibetan central government and the Gelugpa order. However, with only a handful of works from which to extrapolate, such a reading is probably tenuous at best. The discovery of just a few more paintings could tip the ratio in the other direction making the Jokhang and Lhasa town of equal significance and thus changing the visual message of the group at large.

## **2.4 The Monuments of Lhasa Town**

### **Lhasa townscape**

The Jokhang temple is nestled in the heart of Lhasa. The town grew organically around the main temple in a roughly circular shape, its layout both informed by and informing the two principal activities of the town center: pilgrimage and trade (Figure 66). The attraction for pilgrims was the sacred Jowo statue *in situ* at the Jokhang temple. The Buddhist pilgrimage practice of clockwise circumambulation of holy relics, in this

case in ever-widening concentric circles around the Jowo statue, led to the creation of Lhasa's three circumambulation routes: the Nangkhor or Inner Circuit around the original Jokhang temple, the Barkhor or Middle Circuit that circles the larger Jokhang complex, and the Lingkhor or Outer Circuit which encompasses the majority of the valley's sacred monuments- the Jokhang, Chakpori, and Marpori (Figure 67 and 68). According to Knud Larsen, these routes "changed their courses over the centuries and he suggests that traces of other, earlier, circumambulation routes can still be detected in the town layout."<sup>122</sup>

The Barkhor, the Middle Circuit around the Tsuglakhang complex, is perhaps the most recognizable feature of the town, as experienced on the ground and in the paintings. The Barkhor is the center of social, commercial and spiritual activity in Lhasa functioning as a circumambulation path, an open-area marketplace for traders and the place for grand processions on Lhasa's holy days. In the paintings, the Barkhor is easily identified as the open space around the Jokhang complex, typically filled with human figures.

The variance of the paintings in terms of accuracy and specificity is markedly noticeable in the representation of the townscape of Lhasa. In some paintings each building is rendered distinctly and accurately. In such examples individual homes, temples, shops, courtyards, streets and alleyways are all potentially identifiable. One may orient oneself within these paintings using the clear landmarks almost as if these were topographical maps (e.g., RMA, Basel, Antwerp, Mongolia, ArtStor, Olschak, Oxford, and Nepal 1-4). Other paintings include some buildings around the Barkhor but with far less accuracy, particularly in terms of geographical placement and the omission of most

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<sup>122</sup> Larsen, *The Lhasa Atlas*, 65.

streets, making the buildings more difficult or impossible to identify (e.g., Guimet 1 and 2, Anonymous, Bod-kyi-thang-ka and Waddell; Figure 69). Certain paintings contain only a minimum of generic “buildings” to indicate the existence of a town but with no defining features at all (e.g., ROM, Brussels, Stockholm and Vienna). Finally, several of the paintings, those that are among the oldest in the group, show no town at all, simply placing the chosen monuments alone in the landscape (e.g., BL, V&A, Prague).

If one wishes to judge the degree of accuracy of the townscape in a Lhasa painting with greater depth, there are a handful of religious buildings with distinct iconography that function as a sort of “litmus test” for accuracy. These include the Meru Dratsang and its neighbor the Gyurme Dratsang, the Rigsum chapels, Jembu Gang, and Tengyelung monasteries. Identifying these buildings can also assist in ascribing dates to the paintings.<sup>123</sup>

### **The Ramoche Temple (*ra mo che*)**

Curiously, though the Ramoche’s “historical importance is exceeded only by the Jokhang,”<sup>124</sup> this temple holds a much less significant role in Lhasa’s townscape and this is reflected in the Lhasa paintings (Figure 70). The Ramoche dates to approximately 641 and was built under the direction of Princess Wencheng to house the Jowo statue that she brought from China, later replaced by the Mikyo Dorje (supposedly brought to Lhasa by

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<sup>123</sup> Because the appearance of these buildings in paintings is less frequent, discussion of each may be found in Appendix B under the images in which they appear (V&A, RMA, Oxford, Basel, Nepal 1-4).

<sup>124</sup> Chan, *The Tibet Handbook*, 116.

Princess Bhrikuti).<sup>125</sup> The main space of the building is a rectangular prayer hall that faces east with a three-story tower built over square shrine room (*tsang khang*). The Ramoche is strongly identified with its supposed Chinese origin and is known popularly as “the Chinese Tiger” (*rgya stag*) or “the Chinese-built temple” (*gya tak*).<sup>126</sup> The temple may be identified with certainty in only half of the Lhasa paintings. In many instances the Ramoche is either missing or is not easily distinguishable from surrounding buildings. Perhaps this is because the building, seen best standing on Lhasa’s rooftops, is barely noticed as one traverses the streets.<sup>127</sup> In paintings where the Ramoche does appear it is best identified through two features: by its iconic tall (typically red) tower and its basic location in relation to the Jokhang and Barkhor. In general one can find the Ramoche located north or sometimes northwest of the Jokhang (which is to say above or above-left in the majority of the paintings).

## **2.5 The Further Monuments of the Lhasa Valley**

The majority of Lhasa paintings depict the entirety of the Lhasa valley, which includes not only the Potala, the Jokhang and the town but also the two large monasteries of the foothills and various outlying estates, gardens and myriad assorted small temples and hermitages.

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<sup>125</sup> According to legend, when the Chinese princess Wencheng arrived in Lhasa, the cart carrying her precious Jowo statue became stuck in the sand. Seen as a divine sign, Wencheng had her temple built on that spot. Chan, *The Tibet Handbook*, 116.

<sup>126</sup> This association is routinely called upon in modern times to emphasize Tibetan-Chinese interrelations. During the Cultural Revolution and into the 1980s, the Ramoche shrine room was devoted to a giant image of Chairman Mao. Alexander, *Temples of Lhasa*, 77.

<sup>127</sup> As remarked upon by Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 70.

## **Drepung (*'bras spungs*) and Sera (*se ra*) monasteries**

Other than the Potala and the Jokhang, the next most visually dominant monuments in the Lhasa paintings tend to be the monasteries of Drepung and Sera. Together with Ganden monastery, which is located outside Lhasa valley, these are the famous “Three Monastic Seats” (*gdan sa gsum*) of the Gelugpa order of Tibetan Buddhism. All three were large monastic centers of learning not unlike modern universities and acted as powerful economic and social entities in the region drawing thousands of monks from all over the Tibetan sphere and supplying an endless need for trade-stuff, books, art, food and supplies.<sup>128</sup> Drepung and Sera, each essentially a monastic village, were visible presences in the hills above Lhasa. Some rivalry existed between the monasteries, and the site of the Potala was in part chosen to mitigate this. In the paintings, the two monasteries typically flank the Potala.

Drepung monastery is located about 8.5 kilometers northwest of Lhasa still within sight of the town (Figure 71). Established in 1416 by a close student of Tsongkhapa, Jamyang Chöjé (*'jam dbyangs chos rje*; 1379-1449), it contained seven sub-monasteries or colleges and several regional houses for monks from specific ethnic areas. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century it housed more than 4,000 monks. Until that time, it was also the residence of the Dalai Lamas in the Ganden Potrang (*dga' ldan pho brang*; constructed in 1530).<sup>129</sup> Under the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama the monastery became an official pillar of the state and its monks were

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<sup>128</sup> Indeed, Lhasa, like most capitals, has always had a centripetal and centrifugal relationship with the rest of the region, its frontiers and neighboring states. Institutions such as pilgrimage, the Dalai Lama, the Lhasa government, and the great monastic institutions acted as magnets drawing people, goods, cultural practices, and religious knowledge into the region from all over where these things would mix and mingle and then be disseminated back out to the rest of the region and the world.

<sup>129</sup> Chan, *Tibet Handbook*, 146.

entrusted with the organization of Lhasa's annual Great Prayer festival.<sup>130</sup> Thus, the abbots and monks of Drepung held a particularly important position within Tibetan religious politics and the governance of Lhasa.

The monastery's name "Drepung" means "heap of rice," and that is what the monastery looks like from the Lhasa valley floor, a mass of white buildings piled up against the mountain. This is also an adequate description for the appearance of the monastery in the Lhasa paintings. Drepung is found in at least half of the Lhasa paintings. It can be identified first by its location, typically in the mountains to the left of the Potala. Drepung's Great Assembly Hall (*tshogs chen 'du khang*), found at the center of the monastic complex, is identifiable in the paintings by its large, square façade, golden peaked roof and broad courtyard.

Sera monastery is nestled in the foothills due north of Lhasa, about 4.5 kilometers from the center of town along the axis of the Ramoche road (Figure 72). It was founded in 1419 by another student of Tsongkhapa, Shakya Yeshe (1354-1435) and contains three colleges, Sera Jé (*se ra byes*), Sera Mé (*se ra smad*) and Ngakpa (*sngags pa*), and thirty-five regional houses for monks drawn from all over Tibet and beyond.<sup>131</sup> The monastery is particularly easy to spot in the Lhasa paintings. It is typically located above the town to the right side. Its distinctive iconography sets it apart from other monasteries. The complex is always shown as a walled, roughly circular, compound with a broad cleft

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<sup>130</sup> Dreyfus, "Drepung Monastery Project."

<sup>131</sup> José Ignacio Cabezón, "Introduction to Sera Monastery," THDL. 2008. Accessed on 11/2/2012. [www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/sera](http://www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/sera); and José Ignacio Cabezón, "Sera and the Metaphysics of Tibetan Sacred Space." THDL. 2006. Accessed on 11/2/2012. [www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/sera](http://www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/sera).

down its center. This is a tree-lined ravine that bisects the compound, a feature more clearly understood from aerial photographs than on the ground (Figure 73). Many paintings clearly present the major buildings of the monastery, including the Great Assembly Hall and the debating courtyards of the various colleges. Sera is known for its many hermitages (*ri khrod*) which may be found in some paintings dotting the hillside above. These functioned as tiny retreat houses for affiliated monks and nuns or even as small satellite monasteries. The best example is Guimet 1, in which many differentiated hermitages can be found. Sera monastery is found in well over half of the Lhasa paintings (fifteen) and slightly more frequently than Drepung (which appears in thirteen paintings).

### **Chakpori Hill and the Medicine College**

Returning to the valley floor, Chakpori, one of the three hills of the Lhasa valley, is included in half the Lhasa paintings and in three quarters of those that take the Potala as the main feature (Figure 74). With the Potala and Lhasa town, Chakpori forms one of the three defining nodes of the Lingkhör, or outer pilgrimage circuit. The hill is affiliated with the Buddhist deity of wisdom Vajrapani (Chagna Dorje, *phyag na rdo rje*). A recurrent artistic motif dating back to the earliest examples of Buddhist painting in India is that of the Buddha flanked by Vajrapani and Avalokiteshvara (Padmapani at the time). In the Lhasa valley the three nodes of the Lingkhör echo this classic triad: the Buddha as the Jowo in Lhasa, Vajrapani as Chakpori hill and Avalokiteshvara at Marpori hill.<sup>132</sup> By virtue of this strong symbolic reference and the fact that the peak of Chakpori is one of

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<sup>132</sup> I explored the potential interplay between these three geographical elements and the classic Buddhist triad in an unpublished paper, Bríd Arthur, “Draglha Lugug of Chakpori: a preliminary “fact-finding” odyssey,” unpublished paper presented at Tibet Site Seminar Conference at Princeton University, 2008.



the most visible features of the valley floor we might expect that this would be a major feature in the Lhasa paintings.<sup>133</sup> But this is not the case. In virtually every example, Chakpori hill is literally marginalized, compressed into a tiny space along the left side of the paintings or is incorporated into Marpori hill. So although Chakpori was a major feature of the Lhasa pilgrimage circuit, and thus would have been a major part of the pilgrim's experience in Lhasa, in the paintings the hill is not a significant feature.<sup>134</sup>

Chakpori may be recognized by its location to the left of the Western Gate and the Potala. It is a tall and narrow peak. At its top sits the Mentsikhang (*sman rtsis khang*), or Medicine College, established under Desi Sangye Gyatso in 1696. This building, destroyed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, had a square box-like base and a circular tower that is clearly recognizable in the paintings.

### **Bargo Kani, The Western Gate (*bar sgo ka rni*)**

Between Chakpori hill and Marpori hill is the main western entrance to the Lhasa valley, the Western Gate, Bargo Kani (Figure 75 and 76).<sup>135</sup> Its current form dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>136</sup> It is formed by three stupas located in the narrow place on the valley floor where Chakpori and Marpori nearly touch. The large central stupa has an opening in its

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<sup>133</sup> Knud Larsen notes that Chakpori, together with Marpori, also operate as orientating navigational points throughout the valley, easy to spot from anywhere. Larsen *The Lhasa Atlas*, 69.

<sup>134</sup> A major exception to this is the example from the British Library. This work has pared down the monuments in the valley to only a few essentials, but does include Chakpori and its monuments showing the hill in more or less proper scale as compared to Marpori and also depicts pilgrims circumambulating the hill as a part of the Lingkor.

<sup>135</sup> This gate is known by various names, including Bargo Kaling (*bar sgo bkag gling*), Bar Chorten (*bar chos rten*) and Bargo Kani (*bar sgo ka rni*) or Drago Kani (*brag sgo ka ni*). All its names refer to it as a "door" or "entrance" (*sgos*).

<sup>136</sup> Larsen, *The Lhasa Atlas*, 149; Henss, *Cultural monuments*, 36.

base that forms a passageway. The smaller stupas, perched on each hill, are linked to the central stupa via decorative chains. The physical gate provides a visual and experiential separation between the sacred valley and the outside environs. As noted by Michael Henss, the stupa-shaped entrance, symbolic of the Buddha's mind, purifies the minds and intentions of those who enter preparing them to be received in the sacred city.<sup>137</sup> Upon stepping through, the visitor is greeted with a stunning panorama, not previously visible, that encompasses the front façade of the Potala, the town buildings in the distance and the fields and river of the valley. The gate is very visible in Lhasa paintings and was a popular motif, appearing in well over half of the examples collected here.

### **Yuthok Zampa, the Turquoise Bridge (*gyu mthog zam pa*)**

Proceeding forward from the Western gate to Lhasa town, the visitor will next pass through the Turquoise Bridge (Figure 77 and 78). This is another very visible and experiential feature of the Lhasa valley and is found in over half of the Lhasa paintings (fourteen). The bridge was built spanning a marshy area situated between the Potala and the western gate of Lhasa town, almost due west of the Jokhang's main entrance. Parts of the bridge may date to its traditional origin in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, but its iconic turquoise-glazed roof tiles and Chinese-style roof structure are 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>138</sup> The body of the bridge is made of plain-stacked stone in the traditional Tibetan style. It has five rectangular windows in its sides with five corresponding openings in its base for water to flow through. A favorite motif in the paintings is to show it with water rushing through

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<sup>137</sup> Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 36-37.

<sup>138</sup> 1750 according to Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 122.

the openings at its foot. The bridge was wholly reconstructed in the 1990s and today is part of a restaurant.<sup>139</sup>

### **Lukhang (*klu khang*)**

Behind the Potala on the valley floor, is the Lukhang, the Dalai Lama's private chapel, built onto a man-made island in a small lake (Figure 79). The temple, created in the time of the Sixth Dalai Lama, around 1697,<sup>140</sup> is a beautiful multi-tiered gem with a turquoise-colored Chinese-style roof glimpsed through surrounding trees. In the paintings the temple's iconography is simple; it is always found as a small temple set within a tiny lake. Its location, however, is more problematic. Geographically speaking, the temple is located exactly north of Marpori and is thus blocked entirely from view if one is looking squarely at the Potala's main southern face. This did not stop artists from including it; they simply moved its location out from behind Marpori and placed it to one side or the other of the Potala. The altering of the temple's relative location shows that this temple was important to include, though it was neither a public building nor a pilgrimage stop.<sup>141</sup> Passersby on the Lingkor route behind Marpori, would probably have spotted it through the trees. Perhaps it was enough of a curiosity as the "secret" temple of the Dalai Lama that it was memorable and worth placing in the paintings.

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<sup>139</sup> Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 122.

<sup>140</sup> Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 144.

<sup>141</sup> Though it was visited by noble families during the Full Moon holiday (*sa ga zla ba*), Richardson, *Ceremonies*, 85-87.

## **Outlying Estates and the Amban's House**

The flat land surrounding the town and the Potala was given over to farm fields, summer residences, forest groves, picnic grounds and gardens. These are only included in a few Lhasa paintings, where they appear as tree-lined areas along the river (Stockholm, Oxford, Nepal 1-4, Waddel). Among these various fields and estates, the most visually intriguing are the house and grounds belonging to the Chinese Amban and the military practice field known as Trapshi Tsisher.

The Amban was the resident Chinese consul in Lhasa, installed there from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century until 1912 century to protect Qing suzerain interests in the region. Often there were two, a senior and a junior Amban, along with a Qing military garrison. The effectiveness of the Ambans varied through the centuries, but they were a visible official presence in the city, often remarked upon by Western visitors and others.<sup>142</sup> The Amban house and grounds stood just outside the southwest corner of town where the Chinese troop barracks were located. The buildings of this small compound always have a “Chinese” appearance with a gated courtyard containing several distinctive flag-poles, pitched and tiled roofs, round windows, and sometimes red (perhaps lacquer) elements on the buildings (Figure 80). The Amban house appears in nine of the Lhasa paintings often with the Amban himself visible within or nearby.

Trapshi Tsisher, the military parade ground, was once found on the broad plain north of the Potala and Jokhang. In the paintings it appears between the two monuments, typically below Sera. This area was a large, open piece of flat ground used for military

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<sup>142</sup> MacGregor, *Tibet, a Chronicle*, 102, 122 and Fletcher, “Ch’ing Inner Asia,” 100-102.

drills and marksmanship contests. In the paintings, and in photographs from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it seems that it was at least partially enclosed by a wall and that a small observation building stood at one end. Old maps of Lhasa indicate two military parade grounds existing in this area, potentially side-by-side, one for Chinese troops and one for Tibetan troops,<sup>143</sup> however the Lhasa paintings indicate only one distinct field. The British Library painting shows the field with a Chinese soldier and a Tibetan soldier standing in front, perhaps indicating that both troops were present in the area (Figure 81). Sporting events and encampments were often located in a similar spot (see chapter three). From various depictions in the paintings as well as on the maps, the broad fields between the Potala and the mountains seem to have been used for a variety of activities. They were also full of marshy zones (as seen in a few paintings too: ArtStor and Prague).

## **2.6 Monuments from Outside the Lhasa Valley**

One of the more intriguing aspects of this group of paintings is the inclusion of monasteries and monuments located not within the Lhasa valley but days' or even weeks' journeys away. Typically these are Ganden, Samye, Tashilhunpo monasteries and, less frequently, others. Why far-flung monuments were included at all and why these particular ones is not known. Many of these monuments constituted important pilgrimage sites in themselves and would have been opportune places to visit on the way to or from Lhasa. Still others may have been included at the behest of the painting's patron, such as

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<sup>143</sup> 1184 map from the Survey of India and Waddell's two maps from 1905. Larsen. *Lhasa Atlas*, 8, 25.

the addition in the RMA work of the tiny Sangpu Neutog,<sup>144</sup> a lesser-known temple-monastery located about a day's walk south of Lhasa.

### **Ganden Monastery (*dga ldan*)**

Though located about thirty-five kilometers east of town, Ganden is still considered one of the three monastic seats of Lhasa (Figure 82). Indeed, as it is the most important of the three it is not surprising that this monastery may be found in a quarter of the Lhasa paintings (six). Ganden, founded in 1409 by Tsongkhapa, is considered the main seat of the Gelugpa sect and its administrative head, the Ganden Tripa (*dga' ldan khri pa*) or "Ganden Throne-holder," is considered the leader of the Gelugpa sect. Unfortunately, the monastery sustained heavy destruction during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and most of its buildings are no longer extant. The paintings provide valuable documentation of the monastery as it once appeared. Its principal buildings are the tomb of Tsongkhapa (Serdhung Lhakhang), the Great Assembly hall and chapel marking the place Tsongkhapa gave his teachings, the Ngamcho Khang (*ngam chos khang*).<sup>145</sup> In the paintings, Ganden is typically found to the right of Sera monastery (indicating its position to the east), as a tight collection of buildings against a hill with Tsongkhapa's tomb of Tsongkhapa, a large red building with a golden Chinese-style roof, at the center.

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<sup>144</sup> An 11<sup>th</sup> century temple founded by Atisa and dedicated to Prajñāparamita functioned as a summer retreat for Gelugpa and Sakyapa monks. Alexander Berzin, "A Survey of Tibetan History: 2 The Struggle for Religious Survival after the Fall of the Tibetan Empire." Accessed 1/4/15. [www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/unpublished\\_manuscripts/survey\\_tibetan\\_history/chapter\\_2.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/unpublished_manuscripts/survey_tibetan_history/chapter_2.html); Chan, *Tibet Handbook*, 490.

<sup>145</sup> Chan, *Tibet Handbook*, 141-143.

### **Samye monastery (*bsam yas*)**

Samye, Tibet's first Buddhist monastery, is, like the Jokhang, a very old monument integrally tied to Tibet's history and the founding of Tibetan Buddhism and thus is a revered pilgrimage destination (Figure 83). The monastery was built in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century under the direction of the Yarlung king Trisong Detsen (reign: 755-797) with the assistance of Santaraksita and Padmasambhava, two foundational Buddhist teachers from India.<sup>146</sup> Not long after its completion, Samye served as the sight of the famous doctrinal debate over which form of Buddhism, "Chinese" or "Indian," would be adopted in Tibet. The monastery is a "symbol of not just the imperial past but equally as a symbol of the 'later spread'" of Tibetan Buddhism and the flourishing of its new schools.<sup>147</sup> Samye was of such spiritual and symbolic significance that it was a heavily contested sight at the center of Tibetan religion and politics, overseen by each of the different branches of Tibetan Buddhist monasticism over the years.<sup>148</sup> Though it received a great deal of support from the Gelugpa, it cannot be said to belong to any one sect and remains an important site for all Buddhists.

Samye is one of the most beautiful and recognizable Buddhist monuments in Tibet. It is conceived of as a classic mandala, or cosmological diagram, dedicated to

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<sup>146</sup> Padmasambhava (also known as Guru Rinpoche) is credited with the founding of the first Tibetan Buddhist monastic order, the Nyingmapa, the establishment of tantra in Tibet, and the founding of many pilgrimage and holy sites. He is one of the main "fathers" of Tibetan Buddhism, almost universally revered throughout Tibet (COB, 150), and closely associated with Samye monastery, which is traditionally believed to have been founded on the strength of Padmasambhava's mystical ability to subdue local non-Buddhist spirits.

<sup>147</sup> Deitle, Ben and Luke Wagner, "Samyé (bsam yas) Monastery." The Tibetan & Himalayan Library. 5/7/07 <http://www.thlib.org/?wiki=/access/wiki/site/679c2e7e-ca49-462b-0038-a5e0534b709f/samyé.html> .

<sup>148</sup> Deitle, "Samyé (bsam yas) Monastery."

Vairocana Buddha. Indeed, the complex is a true geometric mandala with an outer circle, formed by its circular wall, and central square temple representing sacred Mount Meru (the conceptualization of the universe as a mountain-temple). The four chorten (*chos rten*; stupa) are aligned to the cardinal directions and appear in the different colors appropriate for their direction (white, red, black, and dark-blue, sometimes described as green). In paintings where it is included (four with certainty and possibly seven), Samye is instantly recognizable by these elements. It is typically located in the lower right-hand corner, indicating its location southwest of Lhasa, less than 50 kilometers away as the crow flies (though further by foot or boat). Like the Jokhang, in the paintings Samye is turned so that its main Eastern façade faces the “south” and the viewer. Samye also frequently appears in its own monument paintings.

### **Tashilhunpo Monastery (*bkra shis lhun po*)**

Tashilhunpo monastery is the seat of the Panchen Lama, the second highest tulku (*sprul sku*; or reincarnated lineage holder) of the Gelugpa order after the Dalai Lama (Figure 84). Tashilhunpo is the foremost monastery in the Tsang province, the district west of Central Tibet (*dbus*). It was founded in 1447 by the student of Tsongkhapa who was posthumously designated the first Dalai Lama. It is located against a ridge, opposite the town of Shigatse, a major trading hub on the Nepal-Lhasa route. Tashilhunpo and its head, the Panchen Lama, were important players in pre-modern Tibetan politics, with the Panchen Lama often acting as liaison between the Lhasa government and representatives of foreign interests (in particular diplomats from British India). It was also an extremely



cosmopolitan area, attracting traders, pilgrims and visitors from all over the Asian world and beyond.<sup>149</sup>

Tashilhunpo appears in only three of the Lhasa paintings. It is typically located in the upper left area of the paintings, indicating its location nearly 250 kilometers west of Lhasa.<sup>150</sup> The monastery's most defining features are the large flat wall located just outside the monastery used to hang giant *thangkas* during festivals and the red and golden-roofed tomb-buildings of the Panchen Lamas. If visible, the tombs (built after the death of each Panchen Lama) and the large Maitreya temple, built by 1916, can often be used to date the Lhasa paintings. These should appear lined up in a horizontal row. Tashilhunpo is also frequently the subject of its own monument paintings.

## **2.7 Visual Appearance of the Paintings**

So far discussion has focused on individual monuments and their appearance within the paintings, but of course, it is how these monuments are combined together, how they are placed within the picture plane and how they interact with each other and their setting that creates the entire vision. Examination of layout, composition and other features may also bring to light certain motivations or priorities held by the artists.

### **Format and Composition**

The Lhasa paintings are found in two different formats: horizontal and vertical (a clear example of the vertical format is Guimet<sup>1</sup> and for horizontal format, Basel). While

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<sup>149</sup> Wilm van Spengen, "On the Geographical and Material Contextuality of Tibetan Pilgrimage." In *Pilgrimage in Tibet*, ed. by Alex McKay 35-51; (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998), 38.

<sup>150</sup> However in the Antwerp example Tashilhunpo is on the right.

the vertical format is more typical of the traditional Tibetan *thangka*, the horizontal format is used far more frequently in this group: seven paintings are vertical and eighteen are horizontal. The distribution of format-type across the group is somewhat random, though all “balanced” compositions (see below) utilize the horizontal format and the oldest two works are vertical (V&A, Prague, both 18<sup>th</sup> century). The use of horizontal format may emulate the layout of mural paintings, which probably served as models for the Lhasa paintings (see Chapter Four).

The group can be broken down into four compositional types, which I call “mandala,” “balanced,” “single,” and “other.” The majority of the paintings (ten) fall into the first category (Chart 2.1). There are seven “balanced” compositions. The “single” category includes the six paintings that feature a single monument or Lhasa town alone and “other” describes the two remaining paintings that do not fit into the other three categories (Bod-kyi-thang-ka; V&A).

The “mandala” composition type consists of a large main monument placed at the center of the painting and secondary monuments placed in the four corners. The symmetry of these compositions is reminiscent of a traditional mandala<sup>151</sup> and like a mandala there is an inherent hierarchical structure. The central, and most important, element is always the Potala palace or the Jokhang temple. The monuments placed in the corners have a secondary supporting role and are usually selected from among the most

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<sup>151</sup> Mandalas (Sanskrit: maṇḍala) are diagrammatic descriptions of a Buddhist deity, concept or practice. The spiritual focus or goal of the mandala is its primary element, usually at its center, embodied by a deity or symbol. Supporting figures, placed symmetrically around the main figure, express the character or qualities of the deity or the steps inherent in achieving the spiritual goal. Mandalas may be strictly geometrical, appearing as a series of concentric squares and circles, or they may be informal arrangements set into architectural or landscape settings. In the case of the Lhasa paintings, these are informal “mandalas” which retain a certain degree of symmetry.

important monasteries and sites of the valley and beyond. When people or lesser-known monuments are placed in the corner they take on visual significance simply by virtue of their compositional position, which equates them with the other “great” monuments of the corners (for example ROM, RMA). Additional monuments are placed in whatever space remains and are by necessity smaller and carry less visual impact. In the “mandala” type, compositional symmetry is critical, often prioritized over relationships of scale and accurate geo-spatial positioning. This results in monuments being moved or altered to fit the “mandala” (for example the position of Lhasa in ArtStor). Some works are only “mandalas” in a loose sense, that is, they depict a single central monument with surrounding monuments, but true symmetry is not achieved (for example Olschak, Anonymous, Mongolia). This mandala-like compositional layout is a very traditional one in Tibetan art used frequently for depictions of deities.<sup>152</sup>

More than a quarter of the paintings may be categorized as “balanced,” that is, the composition is evenly divided between its two main subjects, the Potala and the Jokhang, which are of equal emphasis and size. In these balanced works the Potala is located on the left side of the painting and the Jokhang is located on the right side, in keeping with their physical relationship in geographic space. In fact, “balanced” compositions generally display a more realistic sense of geographical space. “Balanced” works also tend to be focused on the portrayal of human activity and festivals. Frequently, secondary monuments are left out of “balanced” compositions or are greatly marginalized.

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<sup>152</sup> See discussion in Chapter Four.

## Depiction of Space

The number of buildings included varies painting by painting. Some Lhasa paintings contain very few monuments (for example, V&A) and some include more than sixty monuments from the valley and beyond (Guimet1). Some paintings crowd these monuments into every available space and others retain a more open feel or more spacious and elaborate landscape. Though space between the monuments is sometimes compressed causing the buildings to appear far closer together than they are in reality, the relative geographical relationships between monuments are nearly always retained. That is, the placement of a monument within the painting roughly corresponds to the monument's geographical location and orientation in physical space. For example, bearing in mind that the top of the painting is usually north, the Jokhang is shown to the east or right of the Potala, Drepung is northwest or above-left of the Potala, Ganden is far east of the valley and therefore placed on the far right of the painting, and so on.

The paintings typically combine multiple viewpoints within single compositions (with the exception of Prague and Nepal 1-4). The expanse of the valley is always shown in "bird's-eye view," that is from an oblique, aerial perspective, positioning the viewer as though he or she were standing half-way up the mountains south of the river looking down into the valley.<sup>153</sup> The valley floor is tipped up rather than receding into the distance. This opens up the composition and allows more monuments to be included and visible. While the valley floor is seen obliquely, the river, when it is shown, is seen from directly overhead (though boats are seen from the side), and the northern mountains are

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<sup>153</sup> This is a view that is not exactly possible to attain physically, please see more discussion in Chapter Four concerning whether artists worked from direct observation.

seen from the side. Certain buildings are always seen from a straight-on vantage point showing a single façade. This includes monuments located on or in hills: the Medicine College, the Potala, the three monastic seats and Tashilhunpo; and monuments that are simple, stand-alone affairs: the Western Gate, the Turquoise Bridge, the Lukhang. Multi-building complexes located on flat ground, such as the Tsuglakhang, Lhasa town, Zhöl village and Samye, are always shown in an oblique and informal isometric view.<sup>154</sup> This viewpoint also allows the viewer to see into the building and often more than one façade of a monument at a time (seen with particular frequency in the Tsuglakhang). With the exception of Nepal 1-4, the Lhasa paintings do not make use of formal three-dimensional one-point perspective. Instead, distance is alluded to through overlapping of elements or by decreasing the detail on a monument meant to be further away.

With the inclusion of monuments from outside the Lhasa valley, geographical separation is typically indicated via specific symbolic motifs. Monuments that are not located in the Lhasa valley may be visually sequestered by a thick ring of dark trees, tightly packed mountain ranges, or pastel-colored cloud banks (Figure 85). This method is sometimes also applied to the valley's monuments when the artist has drastically shifted a monument's geographical placement (examples include ArtStor, Bod-kyi-thangka). In such cases, the thick lines of trees and clouds are a message from the artist to the viewer that the layout of the valley has been purposefully altered.

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<sup>154</sup> In a style typical of older Asian art, the back of the monument is enlarged rather than decreased, which tips up and spreads out the monument so that the viewer may see into the complex and more internal spaces of the complex are made visible.

## **“Recognizability”**

The Lhasa paintings are rife with purposeful distortion, but they are also reasonably “accurate.” Although buildings are relocated and reoriented, space is frequently compressed, and a variety of viewpoints may be utilized, the Lhasa paintings maintain a strong visual link to “reality,” the subject matter reasonably accessible to anyone familiar with the region. Each major monument is distinct, recognizable and readily comparable to photographs. In fact, the ability to distinguish and recognize the included monuments seems to have been the key motivation behind many of the artistic choices and conventions used. These artworks are explicitly *not* esoteric; each monument is presented in a manner that makes it most recognizable, whether by its iconography, its location or its viewpoint.

## **Inscriptions**

The identification of individual buildings is frequently aided by the inclusion of labels. Inscriptions can be found on nine Lhasa paintings. A number of scripts and languages are present, including Tibetan (Ü-can, *dbu can*, and Ü-med, *dbu med*, scripts), various Newar scripts and, more rarely, Chinese and Mongolian. In the case of the Stockholm and British Library works, the monuments are labeled with numbers that must have referred to keys, which are now missing. Inscriptions are frequently incomplete due to surface damage on the paintings, making them difficult to transliterate. It is impossible to know with any certainty why, when or by whom the inscriptions were added. Some examples seem to incorporate carefully rendered labels into the overall visual scheme (V&A, RMA, Guimet1, Mongolia) and were perhaps labeled at the time of creation.

Others bear labels which are messy, misspelled or cover parts of the composition (Antwerp) and seem to have been added by someone who was not particularly skilled at writing at some point after the painting was made or bought. The use of non-Tibetan languages indicates that non-Tibetan viewers were also likely patrons of these paintings, potentially commissioning a painting with labels in their own language or adding labels after acquiring the work.

### **A Visual Program?**

It is clear that artists, or perhaps patrons, had choices when it came to putting together a painting of Lhasa. Monuments were selected for inclusion on the strength of their spiritual, historical or visual impact. These were depicted, labeled and placed together in such a way as to form a cohesive whole, a pictorial space that reflects and recalls the real valley, its sights and layers of cultural meaning, in a visually accessible format. But this was also a process of visual editing and purposeful arrangement. The Lhasa paintings are conceptual constructs; they tell a story that is “biased, partial and selective.”<sup>155</sup>

It is possible that the Lhasa paintings are telling a wholly Gelugpa story. Most compositions leave out any temples strongly associated with another sect.<sup>156</sup> The larger

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<sup>155</sup> Short, *The World through Maps*, 24.

<sup>156</sup> While one can only speculate on which temples may be purposely left out, it is notable that Nechung is rarely shown (exceptions include Pal and tentatively British Library). Nechung is technically a Nyingmapa temple (Erberto Lo Bue, “Scholars, Artists and Feasts,” in *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century, Capital of the Dalai Lamas*, ed. Françoise Pommaret, 179- 198 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 183). It ought to be included in these paintings because of its location within the valley and because the Nechung oracle was heavily patronized by the Dalai Lamas, but it rarely appears and is not at all emphasized. Other monasteries near Lhasa valley that one might imagine

genre of Tibetan monument paintings, those painted prior to 1950 (and of which the Lhasa paintings are a subset), are almost without exception representations of shared sites or those belonging to the Gelugpa sect. It could be tempting to see this as a Gelugpa phenomenon, a notion that makes some sense, as the Gelugpa were a very influential sect, quite artistically active and constantly looking to shore up their own authority. However, Lhasa is an important center for all Tibetans and its spiritual and cultural import extends far beyond simple sectarian divisions. Moreover, the Lhasa paintings do not show the important Gelugpa monasteries from further afield, such as Labrang and Kumbum, both located far to the East. At this point, it is not possible to designate this as an artistic tradition belonging to any specific monastic sect.

Other descriptors, applied by previous scholars, propose a different sort of visual program at work in the Lhasa paintings. These include the labels: “mandalas,” “pure land” depictions and “catalog paintings” (*dkar chag thang ka*).<sup>157</sup> Mandalas and Pure Lands (or heaven realms) are overlapping categories in Buddhism: both are perfected cosmic realms within which the pious devotee may approach the divine presence. Both are conceived of as sumptuously adorned, luxuriant palaces (and/or gardens) in the heaven realms located high above the world system of Mount Meru, the cosmic mountain. Many of the Lhasa paintings capitalize on these traditional conceptual and visual forms. The works may bear a vague mandala-like layout and they are frequently

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could be included but which are not are the Nyingmapa Mindrogling and Kagyupa Tsurphu monasteries.

<sup>157</sup> Marilyn Rhie refers to the work from the ROM as a “mandala” and as a “pureland” (Rhie, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 374-375) and Fisher refers to Guimet1 as a “mandala of Lhasa” (Robert Fisher, *Art of Tibet*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997)). Others refer to these paintings as *karchag thangka*.



filled with heavenly trappings: bejeweled trees, sparkling ponds and streams, beautifully colored flowers, hills and clouds. However, calling this entire sub-genre “mandala” or “pure land” is unsatisfactory.<sup>158</sup> Not all the paintings fit such a lofty designation, either because of their un-mandala-like compositional arrangement, their humble execution or their extraordinary level of literal detail and day-to-day human whimsy (a good example of this is the work from Basel). Most fall into a gray area, somewhere between a fantastical Lhasa and a reified Lhasa. The term “karchag,” or “catalog,” may be a slightly better fit, though it too is not quite adequate. “Karchag” typically refers to catalog-books that inventoried the contents of a particular temple or monastery.<sup>159</sup> Applying this term to the paintings works to some degree as they do present a pictorial “list” of the valley’s holy sites, but this list is selective not comprehensive as the term would imply. Moreover, each painting contains a different selection of monuments and some show only a handful or even a single monument. Such paintings are hardly “catalogs.” Perhaps it is better to leave the designation loose and flexible and to refer to these as “visions” of the Lhasa valley, each as selective and varied as the artist or patron who created it.

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<sup>158</sup> For more discussion see Chapter Five.

<sup>159</sup> For more see Dan Martin, “Tables of Contents (dKar chag),” in *Tibetan Literature, Studies in Genre*, ed. Lhundup Sopa, et al. (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion, 1996), 500-514.

### **Chapter 3: Living Lhasa – Events and Activities Found in the Paintings**

Lhasa's monuments provide the structure and substance of the paintings, but it is the human activity depicted in and around these structures that bring these works to life. Many paintings are filled with humans and animals engaged in a range of endeavors. There are organized activities on a grand scale: the pomp and fanfare of the Dalai Lama's ceremonial processions during Lhasa's high holy days and the accompanying gatherings, games and celebrations. And there are small-scale vignettes full of delight and whimsy that show the everyday doings of people and visitors about town.

These miniature scenes are amusing but they are not frivolous. Such minute details force the viewer to step close to the painting, pulling his gaze into and around the composition. They evoke the sounds, smells and experiences of the Lhasa valley, and through the depiction of ceremonies and celebrations, highlight Lhasa's position of cultural and religious dominance. It is tempting to see these vignettes as offering up a view of life as it was experienced in the capital over a century ago, and indeed, they do provide some degree of cultural information.<sup>160</sup> However, as with the portrayal of Lhasa's monuments, details of human activity were purposefully selected, edited and pieced together to portray a specific ideological understanding. This is Lhasa as it *should* be: clean, lively, pious and, above all, happy.

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<sup>160</sup> See discussion at the end of this chapter.

The extent of human activity displayed in the Lhasa paintings is variable. Twenty-one paintings of the entire group of twenty-five, or approximately 85%, include human or animal figures. The four paintings entirely bereft of human figures are Prague, V&A, Waddell and Nepal 4. Though the examples from Prague and the V&A, both from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, are the oldest Lhasa paintings, there is no indication that the inclusion of human figures was a later development in this sub-genre. In fact, the older prototypes upon which the Lhasa paintings may be based (such as the murals at the Potala and certain 17<sup>th</sup> century *thangkas*) contain human activity of even greater variability and detail.<sup>161</sup> It would appear that the portrayal of human beings situated amongst the buildings was the norm for the monument-painting genre. Of the Lhasa paintings that do contain human figures, approximately one third feature an organized, formal occasion. My discussion begins by outlining the various formal events that appear in the paintings, including some not explicitly pictured but which likely had a role in determining how the Lhasa valley was understood. I then describe details of human and animal activity, including specific and generic forms, which appear in those paintings not featuring formal events.

### **3.1 Formal Processions and Events**

Nine Lhasa paintings contain a formal procession, including those from the ROM, Brussels, Paris, Stockholm, Oxford, Basel, Pal, Antwerp and Mongolia. Ceremonial procession, particularly by the Dalai Lama, was a part of several annual holiday celebrations. The most popular of these, and the one most frequently depicted in the

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<sup>161</sup> See Chapter Four for more detail.

paintings, was the Great Prayer Festival (Mölam Chenmo). Though by far Lhasa's most important and best-known holiday, other festivals appear in a few paintings including the Golden Procession (Sertreng) and the Great Procession (Chipgyur Chenmo).

### **Lhasa's Great Prayer Festival, the Mönlam Chenmo (*smon lam chen po*)**

Mönlam Chenmo, the Great Prayer Festival, was the biggest event of the Lhasa year. Occurring directly after New Year (Losar, *lo gsar*), in the first month of the year, its rituals and festivities lasted for three weeks. The ceremony was conceived by Tsongkhapa, the Gelugpa patriarch, and first held in 1409. It was a symbolic purification and renewal ritual, designed to draw attention to Lhasa, specifically the Jokhang, as the heart of the Tibetan world and “to hasten the coming of the future Buddha Maitreya.”<sup>162</sup> The first Monlam, in 1409, consisted of renovating the Jokhang, making offerings to its principal statues (and the main image at the Ramoche), and lighting many hundreds of butter lamps inside and around the Jokhang and at other locations. Tsongkhapa spent days praying for the wellbeing of all, and teaching stories of the Buddha's lives to the assembled monks. The establishment of the Monlam Chenmo is arguably one of Tsongkhapa's most significant and far-reaching acts, as it ultimately “associated his order [the Gelugpa] with the enduring symbol of Tibet's national identity [the Jokhang], and ensured that the Great Temple would be well maintained for centuries to come by the

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<sup>162</sup> Blondeau and Gyatso, “Lhasa, Legend and History,” 33. For a detailed account of Tsongkhapa's motivations for the establishment of this ceremony and a detailed account of the ceremony itself, see Heather Stoddard, “The First Monlam Chenmo,” in *Jokhang, Tibet's most sacred Buddhist Temple*, ed. Gyurme Dorje et al. (London: Edition Hansjörg Mayer, 2010), 178-192.

monks of the three large monasteries [Drepung, Sera and Ganden].”<sup>163</sup> The Monlam Chenmo rituals and customs were greatly expanded by the Fifth Dalai Lama and continued to evolve over the following centuries.<sup>164</sup> The nearly month-long festivities included religious offerings and lectures, the conferring of monastic degrees, creation of massive butter sculptures, grand parades, feasts, games and competitions. This holiday drew many monks, pilgrims, and visitors to the city, increasing the town’s population from about 20,000 to perhaps as many as 100,000.<sup>165</sup>

First-hand accounts of the Monlam Chenmo are plentiful and useful in understanding the many elements of the holiday. The oldest descriptions come from the 18<sup>th</sup> century accounts of Lhasa’s first European visitors, the Jesuit priest Ippolito Desideri and Italian missionary Cassiano Beligatti.<sup>166</sup> Accounts from Tibetans may be found in various memoirs and reminiscences, including those of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.<sup>167</sup> The most thorough description of the Monlam Chenmo comes from Hugh Edward Richardson, the British diplomat stationed in Lhasa from 1936-1940 and 1946-1950.<sup>168</sup> There also exist numerous old photographs, including color photographs prior to 1959, of the festivities

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<sup>163</sup> Dorje, *Jokhang*, 15.

<sup>164</sup> Erberto Lo Bue, “Scholars, Artists and Feasts,” in *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century, Capital of the Dalai Lamas*, ed. Françoise Pommaret, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 195.

<sup>165</sup> According to William van Spengen, the population of Lhasa around 1900 was 15-20,000 and its numbers grew four or five-fold during the festival. van Spengen, “On the Geographical and Material,” 38.

<sup>166</sup> Desideri’s account can be found in Desideri, *Mission to Tibet*, 319-321; Beligatti’s account can be found in MacGregor, *Tibet, a Chronicle*, 108-109.

<sup>167</sup> Gyurme Dorje, “Personal Reminiscences of the Great Temple by his Holiness the Dalai Lama,” in *Jokhang, Tibet’s most sacred Buddhist Temple*, ed. Gyurme Dorje et al. (London: Edition Hansjörg Mayer, 2010) 31-44; and for descriptions based on a Lhasa noblewoman’s childhood memories see Taklha, *Born in Lhasa*, 38-42.

<sup>168</sup> see Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 11-59.

and in particular of the great procession.<sup>169</sup> These documents are critical in identifying this event, and its distinct elements, within the paintings. Components of the Monlam Chenmo may be found in several paintings, including the Mongolia and Oxford paintings. The example *par excellence* is certainly the meticulously detailed and beautifully executed Basel painting.

Preparations for Monlam Chenmo began immediately after the New Year, on the third day of the month, but the most important day of the festival occurred on the fifteenth when the Dalai Lama emerged at dawn from his residence at the Potala and processed with an enormous retinue to the Jokhang in the middle of Lhasa.<sup>170</sup> This procession is the main subject of the Basel painting (Figure 86), the details of which agree closely with the account given by Beligatti, who witnessed the event in 1741. This suggests that the holiday's core elements changed little over the centuries.

In the painting the procession strings out along the route from the Potala, into and along the Barkhor, and up to the Jokhang-Tsuglhakhang, where the head of the parade approaches the temple's southeastern door (Figure 87). As in Beligatti's report, in the painting, groups of Lhasa's foreign representatives, Newars (Nepalese Buddhists), Indian merchants in gold brocade, and Kashmiri Muslims, are at the head of the procession, approaching the door of the Jokhang. Beligatti says that each group contained many dozen members, but in the painting only one or two individuals of each group are present. Thereupon follow laymen with banners, provincial governors, state ministers and other

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<sup>169</sup> See Harrer, *Lost Lhasa*; Richardson, *Ceremonies*; photographic collection at the Pitt Rivers Museum, "The Tibet Album: British photography in Central Tibet 1920- 1950" on its website <http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk>; and color photographs may be found in Dorje, *Jokhang*; etc.

<sup>170</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies*, 27-28.

leaders, and then musicians, “tambourine and trumpet bearers,” as described by Beligatti, though in the paintings they appear to be playing large drums. Both Beligatti and Desideri mention “two religious people... each leading a richly caparisoned horse carrying a [golden] censer with burning perfumes on its back.”<sup>171</sup> The two horses are found as described in the painting with miniscule looping lines floating above the golden censers indicating the smoke emitted. Because the censer-bearing horses seem to have only been used during Monlam Chenmo they function as iconographic identifiers signifying that the procession depicted is, in fact, Monlam Chenmo.<sup>172</sup> The horses are found in another, rather fantastical, European etching of a Tibetan religious procession published in 1740 (Figure 88), indicating it may also be a representation of Monlam Chenmo.<sup>173</sup>

Following behind the censer-bearing horses are more officials and noblemen, including Qing representatives, and horses laden with the Dalai Lama’s goods.<sup>174</sup> Following this is the Dalai Lama himself with his bodyguard. According to Beligatti, the Dalai Lama rode a horse in the procession; however the Basel painting (indeed most paintings) follows Desideri’s report that the Dalai Lama was borne in a golden palanquin.

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<sup>171</sup> Beligatti describes the censers as silver; as paraphrased by Lo Bue, “Scholars, Artists and Feasts,” 195-196; Desideri describes the censers as golden in his account. Desideri, *Mission to Tibet*, 320.

<sup>172</sup> These horses do not seem to appear in other processions, either in the written reports or in paintings and photos of other processions.

<sup>173</sup> This work, “Customs of Tibetan Religion,” comes from *Missio Apostolica Thibetano-Seraphica*, 1740, by Orazio Della Penna, a Capuchin missionary. The Capuchins were in Lhasa from 1707-1711, 1717-1733, and 1741-45 (John Bray, “Missionaries, officials and the making of the 1826 Dictionary of the Bhotanta, or Boutan Language”). Della Penna, also known as the “white-headed” lama, is known for creating a Tibetan-Italian dictionary and translations of Christian texts into the Tibetan language. Etching found in Brauen, *Dreamworld Tibet*, 14.

<sup>174</sup> Lo Bue, “Scholars, Artists and Feasts,” 320.

The painting shows that the palanquin was carried by twelve bearers and shaded by umbrellas made of gold and peacock-feathers (Figure 89).<sup>175</sup> In the Basel painting, the Dalai Lama's tiny face can be seen peering out of the side of the palanquin. Finally, religious officials on horseback bring up the rear of the parade. These may be the high lamas of the local monasteries or of the Dalai Lama's household.

The Dalai Lama's Monlam procession may be found in two other paintings: Oxford and Mongolia. In the Oxford example, the procession to the Jokhang (one of two different processions included in this painting) is very similar in detail to the Basel version. The parade contains foreigners, the horses with the golden censers, a large number of noblemen and monks, and the Dalai Lama borne in his golden palanquin. The procession in the Mongolia painting is different and much more intriguing. In this example, the Dalai Lama is seen at the main southern gate of the Potala surrounded by a large crowd of monks, musicians, townspeople and even an elephant. He is carried atop a litter or seat without any covering other than the ceremonial umbrellas, a spectacle that is not confirmed by eyewitness accounts or photographs (Figure 7). The parade featured in the Mongolia painting is most likely the Monlam Chenmo based on the inclusion of other Monlam events within the work (see below).

Returning to the Basel painting, one observes that the processional path is lined with crowds of spectators (Figure 91). As reported by Desideri, "the number of people who gather for this spectacle is enormous—the squares and the streets, and the windows

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<sup>175</sup> As reported by Hugh Richardson, who states that these bearers wear green uniforms. In the Basel painting the bearers wear golden uniforms and the Dalai Lama's guard wears green uniforms. Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 83-84.



and terraces of the houses, are completely packed with an immense crowd of people.”<sup>176</sup> Crowds would also be packed into and around the Jokhang-Tsuglakhang. As seen in the Basel painting, row upon row of saffron-robed monks sit in the Jokhang’s two outdoor courtyards and also in the Sungchora courtyard on the south side of the complex, awaiting the Dalai Lama. Laymen sit along the perimeter of the roof, looking down into the courtyard. Scenes like these are documented in several Lhasa paintings (Bod-kyi-thangka, Antwerp, Mongolia, RMA) and in many old photographs. The main services of the Mönlam Chenmo took place in the Jokhang, and as noted by Richardson,

From early morning [on the Fourth] monks from Drepung, Sera and Ganden and from other monasteries stream into Lhasa... Their number is generally estimated at twenty thousand. It is often implied that they all crowd into the Jokhang... the account by Thubten Sangay makes it clear that many have to find places not only in passages in the Jokhang but also in the courtyard at the entrance to the Jokhang, in the Sungchöra to the south and in the Barkhor [buildings] surrounding the building.<sup>177</sup>

Monks congregate here for several days to take part in the “prayer services,” general debates, lectures and “a longer debate between candidates for high religious degrees.”<sup>178</sup> It is at this time that the most learned of monks may earn their *geshe* (*dge bshes*) degree, a title conferred after many years of study. On this day, upon completion of the great procession and in commemoration of the Buddha’s Miracle at Sravasti, the Dalai Lama would lead the morning services at the Jokhang and deliver a lecture to monks in the Sungchora courtyard.<sup>179</sup> In the painting from the RMA, a high lama, undoubtedly the

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<sup>176</sup> Desideri, *Mission to Tibet*, 320-321.

<sup>177</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 24-26.

<sup>178</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 26.

<sup>179</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 27.

Dalai Lama, may be seen seated on a throne delivering these lectures in the Jokhang (Figure 92).

The Monlam Chenmo procession is known to be a good opportunity to catch a glimpse of the Dalai Lama, but one can also see other specific personages during the festivities. Some of these figures may be found in the paintings. The Basel painting includes the depiction of a masked and heavily draped figure located in the Barkhor surrounded by an attendant group of monk-musicians (Figure 93). This is probably the Nechung oracle, who was stationed in Lhasa for the festival and who played an important role on the final day of the celebration.<sup>180</sup> One can also find the “monk-policemen,” the burly security-monks of Drepung who wielded long sticks and whips, chosen to police the populace and protect the *shengo*, the Drepung monastic officials who ruled the town during the days of Monlam Chenmo.<sup>181</sup> In the paintings, they stand along the processional route acting as crowd-control (Figure 94).

The Basel painting contains another Monlam Chenmo event: the review of the Tibetan military (Figure 95). On the second to last day of the festival, the Tibetan cavalry, in ancient ceremonial armor and bearing sacred banners stored in the Jokhang, would proceed to Trapchi (*grwa bzhi*) field north of Lhasa. Detachments were presented, each in turn, to the noblemen and commanding officers who reviewed the troops from tents pitched along the edge of the field. The Basel painting contains a delightful

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<sup>180</sup> Or it may be the Pelden Lhamo image housed in the Jokhang which was paraded along the Barkhor on the fifteenth day of the festival; See Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 39-49; A photo of the Pelden Lhamo image from 1937 can be found in Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 79. It is not clear which “personage” this is. Because the figure in the painting appears to stand on his own two feet, this is perhaps the human being that is the Nechung oracle and not the human-sized sculptural image of Pelden Lhamo.

<sup>181</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 20-22; Harrer, *Lost Lhasa*, 148.

interpretation of this moment. In the painting, the tents are pitched, soldiers in traditional dress stand at attention in orderly lines banners waving and the commanders look on from a small building. But in the center of this order is a wonderfully active and whimsical scene of jousting and combat. Figures engage one another with spears and lances, and in the very center, a soldier appears to jump over a massive pile of shields (Figure 96).<sup>182</sup> If this is a traditional part of the event, it is documented only in this painting to the best of my knowledge.

### **Competitions and Games**

Though not officially part of Monlam Chenmo, the first month of the year was a time for competitions and fantastic feats of bravery. Archery contests (“Sky Archery,” *gnam mda’*) were held in a field north of the Potala. There were also archery contests held on horseback known as “The Gallop behind the Fort” (*rdzong rgyab zhabs ‘bel*), as seen depicted in the painting from the RMA (Figure 97).

By far the most incredible event was the death-defying feat of extreme bravery known as the “Sky-Dancing-Rope-Game” (*gnam bro thang rtsed*) or “Sliding down a rope like a bird” (*bya mkhan thag shur*) held as a part of the New Year celebration (Losar) on the day prior to the start of Monlam Chenmo.<sup>183</sup> The performance of this feat can be found in the Mongolia painting (Figure 98) and in a folio from the British Library set (Figure 99). According to various accounts, including the narrative inscriptions on the British Library painting, a rope would be slung from a turret of the Potala to the stone

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<sup>182</sup> Oddly, numerous pairs of feet appear to stick out from under the stack of shields. I know of no explanation for this. Special thanks to John Huntington for pointing this out.

<sup>183</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 18-20.

pillar in Zhöl village many meters below. Three men of the Tsang district were chosen to slide down this rope headfirst on their stomachs at top speeds.<sup>184</sup> Accidents and deaths were said to be frequent. In the Mongolia painting, the man from Tsang with a white cloth tied about his head, slides down this rope, apparently happily, trailed by wisps of smoke indicating the friction being created and his singeing clothing. According to Richardson, “this duty had been imposed by the Fifth Dalai as a form of retribution for the opposition of the ruler and people of Tsang to [the Dalai Lama’s] seizure of power in 1642.”<sup>185</sup> Richardson further notes that this practice may be a centuries-old form of human sacrifice with connections to Vaishnavite rituals in the southern Himalayas.<sup>186</sup> By the time of Sir Charles Bell’s description in 1921, the rope descent had been moved from the Potala turret to a much shorter, and safer, rope suspended from a tall pole in the Zhöl area below the Potala (as seen in photographs; Figure 100).

Games, competitions, feasts, visiting, the giving of monetary donations, the cleaning of the city, its houses and temples, the shoring up of the river’s dikes,<sup>187</sup> and many more activities were all a part of the nearly month-long Monlam Chenmo. At its core, the rites and rituals of Monlam were a reaffirmation of the power and centrality of Buddhism, the renewal and promotion of Lhasa and its monuments, and a declaration of

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<sup>184</sup> Accounts of this event may be found in Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 18-20; Charles Bell’s diary from 1921 as quoted by the British Museum website, accessed on January 23, 2013; <http://www.britishmuseum.org> (registration number: Bell,A1.11); and Spencer Chapman’s description as quoted by the Tibet Album, a collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum, (website) accessed on January 19, 2015 [http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo\\_BMR.86.1.57.3.html](http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo_BMR.86.1.57.3.html) .

<sup>185</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 20.

<sup>186</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 20.

<sup>187</sup> The stone dikes that lined the Kyichu, preventing it from inundating the town during flooding, may be found in two of the Lhasa paintings (Oxford, Stockholm). These dikes were renewed each year as a part of the Monlam Chenmo by the monks of Drepung and Sera. Blondeau and Gyatso, “Lhasa, Legend and History,” 29.

the dominance of the Gelugpa and Lhasa's Ganden Photrang government over the Tibetan regions.<sup>188</sup> It is therefore unsurprising that elements of the holiday, so wonderfully and expertly expressed in the Basel painting, may be seen in so many other Lhasa paintings, including Mongolia, RMA, Oxford, Pal and British Library, as described above. However, this is not the only event pictured in the Lhasa paintings. Two other ceremonial processions can be found in the Lhasa paintings, the Sertang and the Chipyur Chenmo.

### **Sertreng, the Golden Procession (*tshogs mchod ser spreng*)**

A single example of the Sertreng procession can be found in the painting from Stockholm (Figure 15 in Appendix B). In this work, which is unfortunately not available in color or detailed reproductions, a procession of monks, musicians, dancers, noblemen and foreigners, entirely circle the city and Marpori hill, passing through Zhöl village and the turquoise bridge. The procession is overseen by a figure, most likely the Dalai Lama, observing the event from a high balcony of the Potala. This is the Sertreng, the "Golden Procession" or "Lesser Prayer Festival," which occurred in the second month each year. The Sertreng was instituted by the regent Sangye Gyatso in commemoration of a vision of the Fifth Dalai Lama and was first held in 1694 after the Dalai Lama's death. The 1694 Sertreng festival is the subject of a spectacular mural painting in the Red Palace of the Potala (see chapter four; Figure 101).<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Based on discussion by Toni Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn, Pilgrimage & the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 361.

<sup>189</sup> Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 115-116.

The Golden Procession (Sertreng) festival consisted of two parts. In the morning, a procession of monks, musicians, and dancers left the Barkhor area in Lhasa, crossed the Turquoise Bridge and came to a halt in front of Zhöl at the foot of Marpori. After hours of making offerings and prostrations toward the Potala, the participants would proceed through the Western Gate, past the Lukhang, to the Ramoche and back to the Jokhang in the Barkhor.<sup>190</sup> In the painting, the procession is shown as a single continuous loop, circling the Barkhor, the Potala and the town and filled with a number of different figures. Typically, the Dalai Lama himself did not take part in the parade, but may have watched, as in the painting, from inside (or atop) the Potala. Missing from the painting are two other significant features of the festival: the raising of the two giant *thangkas* against the southern-face of the Potala and the participation of the Dalai Lama's elephant in the events at Zhöl.

### **The Great Procession of the Dalai Lama (*chibs bsgyur chen mo*)**

The "Great Procession" of the Dalai Lama occurred each year in the fourth month and is the subject of one, or perhaps as many as four paintings. In the spring, the Dalai Lama would transfer from the Potala, his winter residence, to the Norbulingkha, his summer residence located west of the city on the Lhasa plain. This relocation, accomplished with a grand and elaborate procession of the hierarch and his long train of attendants, servants and possessions, out of the Potala palace and through the Western gate to the summer grounds, was known as the Great Procession, the Chipgyur Chenmo. People turned out in great crowds to witness the passing of the Dalai Lama and his

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<sup>190</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 74-81.

entourage. Six months later the Dalai Lama would return to the Potala, again with a grand entourage, but this time the parade would pass through the town first, stopping at the Jokhang, before proceeding to the hilltop palace.<sup>191</sup> The Great Procession may be the subject of several paintings, most notably the Lhasa painting from the Richardson collection at Oxford. This painting features two processions, both with a long train and a golden palanquin. By the inclusion of two palanquins it can be inferred that the Dalai Lama is being shown twice. The first procession leads from the Potala beyond the Western Gate to Norbulingkha. This is the Chipgyur Chenmo, recognized with certainty by the make-up of the entourage, which conforms to Richardson's descriptions<sup>192</sup> and by the inscription that confirms the destination of the procession was the Norbulingkha. The second procession is that of the Dalai Lama during Monlam Chenmo, as discussed above.

The paintings from the ROM, Paris and Brussels include simple processions of an unidentified Buddhist hierarch (Figure 102). In the two works, a band of laymen, monks and horses bearing royal symbols speed toward and out of the Western Gate. At the rear is a Buddhist monk of high stature, indicated by his halo and a ceremonial umbrella. If this is the Dalai Lama, a fact which cannot be confirmed with certainty, then perhaps this is the procession to Norbulingkha. This conjecture is supported by the direction the group is headed, out of and to the west of the inner Lhasa valley, and by the fine garments and goods on display, indicating a certain high level of ceremony. However, it may also be any journey that would have taken the hierarch out of the immediate vicinity of Lhasa.

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<sup>191</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 83-85, 110.

<sup>192</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 83-85.

The Dalai Lama often left Lhasa in times of political trouble or potential invasion, including in 1732<sup>193</sup> and in 1904 and 1910, or to visit distant monasteries or even the Chinese heartland. These comings and goings might sometimes have been marked by a procession, such as the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa with a "Chinese honour guard" in 1735 after the threat of Dzungar invasion had been foiled.<sup>194</sup> It is conceivable that processions could have been a part of an enthronement ceremony or the bringing of a newly discovered Dalai Lama to Lhasa. However, the painted processions mostly conform to places and descriptions of the above-mentioned holidays and it seems to me more likely that they were meant to portray annual events rather than specific single events.

### **Other Events of significance to the Lhasa paintings**

Though not depicted in the paintings, several other annual holidays and ceremonies conducted in and around Lhasa have a potential bearing on how the works look and how they would have been understood. The holidays of Lhasa were all "either purposefully religious or reflected an awareness of religion."<sup>195</sup> These events underscored the general sacred nature of Tibet's center, Lhasa, the historical reasons for this sacredness and served to highlight the individual people and places where this sacredness was most concentrated.

Two holidays required that the populace perform a full pilgrimage and visit each holy site in Lhasa, the sites featured in the paintings. On the holiday of the Full Moon

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<sup>193</sup> MacGregor, *Tibet, a Chronicle*, 106.

<sup>194</sup> MacGregor, *Tibet, a Chronicle*, 106.

<sup>195</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies*, 7.



(Saga Dawa, *sa ga zla ba*) in the Fourth Month, Lhasans performed the full Lingkhor circumambulation and made offerings at each major temple or monastery including, according to Richardson, Meru Nyingba (behind the Jokhang), Ramoche, Jebumgang, Norbulingkha, the Potala and the Lukhang, all sites frequently featured in the Lhasa paintings. At the Lukhang, noble families would row out to the island to picnic.<sup>196</sup> In the sixth month, to commemorate the Buddha's first teaching, the populace would again make the pilgrimage and give offerings, this time widening their journey to include not only the buildings on the Lingkhor, the Potala, Jokhang, and Ramoche but also the hermitages on the hills above Drepung and Sera and even to many of the temples and sites beyond.<sup>197</sup> Though townspeople and visitors could and did perform the circumambulation at any time of year, the fact that the entire population turned out to perform it *en masse* more than once a year served to bring together and highlight the religious significance of the valley's monuments within the collective conscious.

The stories and histories that attributed the source of sacredness to Lhasa's remote past were reenacted annually at the Curd Festival (*lha sa zho ston*). During this festival dance companies and acting troops would reenact traditional Buddhist and Tibetan stories at the Norbulingka. The Dalai Lama, his ministers, foreign delegations and great crowds of townspeople would attend the plays. By far the most popular was the story of King Songtsen Gampo, the arrival of his foreign wives and the establishment of the Jokhang. Photographs show the reenactment of the arrival of Princess Wencheng with the Jowo statue, using iconography consistent with many contemporary paintings. Performances

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<sup>196</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies*, 85-87.

<sup>197</sup> This is the Drugpa tsézhi festival (*drug pa tses bzhi*); Richardson, *Ceremonies*, 96.

were required to be consistent with traditional written texts and lapses were punished with fines.<sup>198</sup> These performances were eagerly awaited each year. Audiences had favorite lines and songs and noble families often hired the acting troops to perform the plays in their own homes.<sup>199</sup>

The collective pilgrimages around the sacred sites of Lhasa and the reenactment of Lhasa's founding legends were annual reminders of the elements that made the area so significant. Though these events are not specifically pictured in the paintings, they nevertheless helped to underscore Lhasa's historical and religious associations and to inventory the critical sacred sites of the valley. Because such events were attended by the local and non-local populace in great numbers, it can be surmised that the inventory of the valley and the deep sacred symbolism of each building were known and well-understood by virtually everyone, resident and visitor alike.<sup>200</sup>

### **Why include events in the paintings?**

Formal events are found in ten Lhasa paintings, or a little less than half of the group. In the larger group of Tibetan monument paintings, events are found with a similar

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<sup>198</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies*, 106.

<sup>199</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies*, 107.

<sup>200</sup> The distinction between townspeople and pilgrim is not so clean-cut. In fact, many residents of Lhasa, even today, circumambulate the pilgrimage sites of the town on a frequent basis. Strictly speaking, this makes them pilgrims, or *gnas skor ba* (ones who go around a holy site; See Chapter Five). On the other hand, they are different from the pilgrims that have left their home and travelled for a long time to arrive at Lhasa. These travelling pilgrims have committed to a full-scale pilgrimage and their sacrifice and hardship in doing so are believed to bring them more merit. They are also generally easy to distinguish when on the streets of Lhasa, as their clothes are worn and possibly soiled from travel and because their clothing, headpieces or accents will mark them as being from outside of Lhasa.

frequency.<sup>201</sup> Further, of the formal events depicted in the Lhasa paintings, the vast majority are processions (nine of ten) and of those most are processions featuring the Dalai Lama (eight of nine). Why might some artists choose to include events, specifically processions of the Dalai Lama, in certain paintings? Unfortunately, as the exact circumstances and motivations of the artists remain unknown, this question can only be addressed through speculation.

Large-scale events were held in Lhasa throughout the year. Each event, different in its rituals and symbolism, nevertheless served a common purpose: to renew, enhance and demonstrate the essential sacred nature of Lhasa's great institutions. Ceremonies were focused repeatedly on the holy sites of Lhasa, which were vivified by acts performed by or performed before the living presences of the Buddha (the Jowo) and the bodhisattva (the Dalai Lama). The Dalai Lama, as the human embodiment of Avalokiteśvara, sacred emissary of Amitabha Buddha, protector of Tibet, living present but unseen by the ordinary citizen or visitor for most of the year in his high palace or walled summer gardens, during processions and holidays would come among the people, would become tangible, real, and most importantly would become visible.<sup>202</sup> In part, it

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<sup>201</sup> Examples of Tashilhunpo monument paintings show the display of its large *thangka*, a painting of Labrang monastery shows a gathering and dance ritual.

<sup>202</sup> This argument may be rather redolent of "Shangri-La"-ism, positing the Dalai Lama as a mystical and invisible being locked away in his castle. It may be reasonably argued that the Dalai Lama was quite accessible and visible. In fact, Desideri remarks that the Dalai Lama was always receiving visitors at the Potala in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (ca. 1720; Desideri, *Mission to Tibet* 319). It is possible that accessibility varied from Dalai Lama to Dalai Lama, for example, the sixth Dalai Lama was famous for his frequent forays, though in disguise, into the town of Lhasa. Other Dalai Lamas, particularly as children, rarely left the residence, partly out of fear of the plague. In any case, for the ordinary visitor or pilgrim there were no invitations to the Potala and the best chance of seeing the Dalai Lama in person occurred only during these festivals. This,

was the possibility of actually seeing the high lama that attracted so many on-lookers and visitors at these moments.<sup>203</sup> Further, those who were present at these religious ceremonies, even only as a lay witness, could consider themselves participants in a limited sense and would thus, conceivably, accrue religious merit by association. As Richardson says, “the people of Lhasa and pilgrims from distant places came in large numbers to watch [the great ceremonies] in spite of rough handling from the monk police to make them keep their distance; and from their quiet respectful behavior I believe that they felt that by their presence they were taking part in the ritual.”<sup>204</sup>

Witnessing a religious event in Lhasa, in particular seeing the Dalai Lama in person, would have been a significant moment in the life of many Tibetans and perhaps worthy of being recorded in a painting. It is conceivable that the Lhasa-event-paintings may have been commissioned and sold during these great events and purchased by those who attended. It is also possible that visitors to the city, even long-term guests, may have returned home and described the ceremonies to an artist there. This is potentially the explanation for the Stockholm painting, which is a curious mix of accurate and inaccurate details and which was most likely produced far outside Tibet.

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together with the appeal of the pageantry and games and the potential for the accrual of religious blessing, I believe explains why the events drew such large numbers of on-lookers.

<sup>203</sup> This was true for residents of the town as well. In her memoirs, Namgyal Lhamo Taklha recounts that Monlam was an exciting time, and that she, her family and neighbors all eagerly looked forward to seeing the Dalai Lama on procession as this was the best (sometimes only) opportunity to see him. Taklha, *Born in Lhasa*, 44-45.

<sup>204</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies*, 7.

### **3.2 Informal Inclusion of People and Animals**

The majority of Lhasa paintings are not about pomp and pageantry, most are focused on quieter scenes of the more everyday routines of Lhasa's citizens and visitors. Across the sub-genre, the use of human and animal figures varies in terms of differentiation of individuals and types of activities portrayed. At the very least, generic human figures can be found populating the public spaces and streets of the town (for example, Nepal 1-3). More typically, there are distinct categories of human figures present, including monks, townspeople and pilgrims. The more detailed and finely crafted paintings include expressive figures, tiny dramatic vignettes or well-known individuals and specific ethnic groups. Discussion here begins with specifically identifiable individuals and proceeds to generic "types" or categories of people and finishes with a discussion of animals present in the works.

#### **The Dalai Lama**

The Dalai Lama was, without contest, the most significant human being in town. As the earthly and religious ruler and a deity-on-earth, he was outside, and, literally above, the day-to-day life of Lhasa, except when he was participating in an event or procession. Nevertheless, his presence in the valley, seen or unseen, was a major part of the sacred character of the area and constantly declared by the massive presence of his residence, the Potala, visible from all parts of the valley. The Dalai Lama was the single most important pilgrimage destination embodied by a living individual in all of Tibet;<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Ekvall, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 115.

thus pilgrims to Lhasa made a special effort to acknowledge his presence and to catch a glimpse of his actual person.

The Dalai Lama appears in perhaps as many as nine Lhasa paintings, though with varying degrees of certainty. In several paintings, his physical presence is implied by the inclusion of his golden palanquin in specific ceremonial processions as mentioned above (Oxford, Basel, Pal, Antwerp).<sup>206</sup> The Dalai Lama may also be shown teaching in the Jokhang (RMA, Bod-kyi-thang-ka), though it is impossible to be certain whether the enthroned teacher is the Dalai Lama himself or another high lama of the Gelugpa school. The Dalai Lama may sometimes be found on the rooftop of the Potala (Stockholm, Bod-kyi-thangka). Perhaps most significantly, the Mongolia painting contains not just a Dalai Lama, but specifically the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (1876-1933), setting out on procession during Monlam Chenmo. He is identifiable by his iconic mustache. His aspect here is very similar, and perhaps copied from, well-known photographic portraits (Figures 162 and 163; see discussion in Chapter Four).

The works from the ROM and Brussels include a figure that can only be tentatively identified as the Dalai Lama. This figure, on horseback with a halo and shaded by an ornate umbrella, is clearly a Buddhist lama of high stature. Though the individual carries no further identifying iconography, his physical alignment directly below the Potala suggests a connection to the Dalai Lama. It is possible, though unlikely, that he is some other Gelugpa hierarch, such as a visiting Panchen Lama.

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<sup>206</sup> In the Oxford example the golden palanquin appears twice, in two different processions from different times of the year. This painting combines two events in a single composition and it can be inferred that the Dalai Lama is present twice in this painting.

## **The Qing Amban**

At least three paintings include, indeed highlight, the presence of the Qing Amban (BL, Antwerp, Stockholm). This official, stationed in Lhasa along with an assistant and a garrison of troops, was meant to function as a liaison between the Lhasa government and the Qing court as mentioned in Chapter Two. The Amban is usually very easy to spot in or near his estate located just outside the city. Very often he is found on horseback with a small entourage. The figure's appearance is very "Chinese," appearing as a Qing official with full-length silk robes, small black-brimmed and red-capped hats, brown jackets and, sometimes, a long pipe (Figure 103).

## **Ethnic Groups**

The Amban was not the only "foreigner" included in the Lhasa paintings. Often an attempt was made to show the cosmopolitan nature of the city by including various ethnic "types" within the works. Pilgrims came to Lhasa from all over Tibet and from as far as Mongolia. Traders, merchants and craftsmen also arrived from many neighboring and distant places. The most predominant Tibetan merchants were the Khampa (Tibetans from the Khams region in the east) and prevalent non-Tibetan merchants were the Kashmiris, Nepalese and Han Chinese. The city was also host to Indians, Ladakhis and Buddhists from the Russian Steppes. Less frequent but far more visible, were visitors from Europe and the Americas (and even a few Japanese monks).<sup>207</sup> In the paintings,

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<sup>207</sup> One Japanese visitor was the Buddhist monk, Ekai Kawaguchi, who disguised himself as a Chinese lama and stayed in the city 1900-1902, see Chapter Five and MacGregor, 283; Lhasa's cosmopolitanism is mentioned in many sources, the ethnic groups mentioned here are supported by the following references: Lo Bue, "Scholars, Artists and Feasts," 180; Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner

members of regional or ethnic groups can be identified by their clothing, including distinct headdresses and turbans (Figure 104). Foreign merchants and officials may also be spotted selling goods in the Barkhor, leading pack trains, in encampments outside the city, or participating in ceremonial processions, such as the Monlam Chenmo. The British Library work contains several ethnic “types,” but also a figure on an appended folio, seated and in long pants and top hat, is clearly meant to represent a European man.

The inclusion of “foreigners” in the paintings is due, no doubt, to the fact that their presence in town was a part of the “Lhasa experience.” Many visiting Tibetans would have come from small villages and nomad encampments and might never have seen so many non-Tibetans in one place. The sights and sounds of the city would have included many foreign-looking faces, costumes and languages. In fact, the presence of multiple languages, including Chinese, Mongolian and various Nepalese scripts, inscribed on the paintings themselves, is further testament to the cosmopolitan nature of the town and its visitors. That non-Tibetans might have commissioned, bought, or at least labeled, a Lhasa painting, shows that the town had significance and import outside Tibetan borders.

### **General Activities**

Leaving aside specific personages and ethnic groups, most Lhasa paintings include generic categories of people, monks, pilgrims and townspeople, performing activities relevant to their role.

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Asia, 100; William Woodville Rockhill, *Tibet, a geographical, ethnographical, and historical sketch, derived from Chinese sources*, (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1891), 731; Harris, *Seeing Lhasa*, 96.



Monks are present in most Lhasa paintings. They may be found in their red and saffron-colored robes, with or without the yellow pointed hat of the Gelugpa school. They are shown attending lectures in the Jokhang, debates in the Sera and Drepung courtyards, and giving or receiving teachings at or just outside many of the monasteries shown (Figures 105 and 106). The tradition of logical debate is particularly associated with the Gelugpa monastic sect and often functions as a means of assessing a monk's depth of theological understanding. The examined monk stands and answers the questions of the seated monks and as he delivers his answer he slaps his hands together in emphasis. This activity is shown in several paintings (RMA, Mongolia).

Pilgrims are found in many Lhasa paintings circumambulating monuments on the various *kora* (circumambulation routes; Figure 107 and 108). They are recognized by their heavy layman's clothing and the hand-held prayer wheels that they carry. Tibetan pilgrims generally perform prostrations, bowing their head to the ground or, in full prostration, even lying flat on their bellies before a sacred site, standing up with palms together over the head and then lying down again. Prostration may be performed before the sacred image or in front of the temple, or even moving around the temple. Some pilgrims prostrate the entire distance from their home to Lhasa. This is done as an act of devotion and to gain religious merit. An example of this is found in Guimet 1, where the devotee may be seen outside Samye monastery with his hands held together over his head (Figure 109).

Figures of townspeople, noblemen and general laymen are also found in the paintings within the city and near the Potala. This includes men, women and children

(Figure 110). Some carry water and other bundled loads of unspecified goods. In the ROM and Brussels paintings, many figures carry bundles up the Potala stairs (Figure 111). According to Heinrich Harrer, the Dalai Lama and his attendants received a daily supply of water and goods carried up the long stairs by the townspeople. Sometimes the traditional Tibetan coracle boat is shown, complete with tiny rowers in the Kyichu river (see BL, Stockholm). Often the Barkor is the liveliest spot for human detail, and scenes may include people buying and selling their wares, strollers out for a walk, pack trains of animals, and so on (Figure 112). The most intriguing vignettes, both found on the Basel painting, are a scene showing two criminals in stockades huddled in the Barkhor outside the local jail and another of a “sky burial” taking place in the hills above the town. Sky burial, the traditional means of disposing of the dead in Tibet, involved placing the corpse on a special hill or field to be consumed by vultures. In the painting, two vultures huddle over human remains left just outside Sera monastery (Figure 113).

Many animals are present in the paintings. One may find horses, yak, mules, sheep, camels and even dogs with some frequency. In the past, camel, yak or mule trains were used to bear large loads across long distances (Figure 114), and in the paintings one may find these long animal trains, burdened with goods, being led by a merchant through the town and landscape. Sometimes animals lend a light-hearted air to the paintings, for example, we find nomads in an encampment milking yak while their dogs are staked nearby, in another painting, yak and horses graze and roll in the grass with their young (Figures 115 and 116). Wild animals, including deer and duck, can also occasionally be found in the paintings.

## Elephants

Most noteworthy is the inclusion of elephants in the Lhasa paintings (Figure 117). One or more elephants can be found in three works (Guimet2, Stockholm, Mongolia) and their special stables are found in two works (BL, Oxford), though *sans* elephants. It seems that elephants were frequently given to the Dalai Lama by various heads-of-state and that one or more lived close to the Potala at various points in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Reports by Europeans and their presence in old photographs indicate that one or two elephants were present in Lhasa around the 1870's or 1880's,<sup>208</sup> 1901-1905,<sup>209</sup> the 1920s,<sup>210</sup> 1936,<sup>211</sup> 1949-1950,<sup>212</sup> and potentially at other times.<sup>213</sup> Michael Henss states that the Qing court gave four elephants to the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, though he gives no

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<sup>208</sup> Sand Das's report made 1879 (found in his 1902 publication) states that two elephants were "recently" sent by the Rajah of Sikkim, but only one made it to Lhasa alive, Sarat Chandra Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*, (London: J. Murray, 1902), 100.

<sup>209</sup> This elephant was photographed by the Younghusband expedition and reported by Landon as being a male, in good health, from Nepal or Bhutan, Landon Perceval, *Lhasa*, 404; and T. H. Holdich, *Tibet the Mysterious* (New York F.A. Stokes Company, 1906), 220; and discussed in Beguin, "The Great Monuments of Lhasa," 62.

<sup>210</sup> William Montgomery McGovern, a visitor to Lhasa in the early 1920s, reports two live elephants from Nepal included in a ceremonial procession; William Montgomery McGovern, *To Lhasa in Disguise, a secret expedition through mysterious Tibet*, (New York: The Century Co, 1924), 319.

<sup>211</sup> Photographed by Evan Yorke Nepean; The Tibet Album. "13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's elephant outside Potala" 05 Dec. 2006. The Pitt Rivers Museum. Accessed 02 Feb. 2014; [http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo\\_2001.35.127.1.html](http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo_2001.35.127.1.html).

<sup>212</sup> Photographed by Hugh E. Richardson; The Tibet Album. "Monks and officials, Sertreng festival below the Potala" 05 Dec. 2006. The Pitt Rivers Museum. Accessed 02 Feb. 2014; [http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo\\_2001.59.9.36.1.html](http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo_2001.59.9.36.1.html).

<sup>213</sup> Of course, it is possible that these various reports are in fact referring to the same elephant, or elephants. The lifespan of an Asian elephant is approximately 45 years, though recent studies show that captive elephants, particularly Asian elephants, may only survive two decades. It seems likely that with the dry climate, high altitudes and probable lack of local expertise in their care and feeding, the elephants of Lhasa did not live long lives. Jeheskel Shoshani, "Elephant," Encyclopedia Britannica online; updated Mar. 3, 2015; accessed Mar 14, 2015; <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/184366/elephant>; Maryann Mott, "Wild Elephants Live Longer Than Their Zoo Counterparts." National Geographic News. December 11, 2008; online access <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2008/12/081211-zoo-elephants.html>.

dates.<sup>214</sup> According to Hugh Richardson, “the Tibetan government always tried to have an elephant at Lhasa as a symbol of universal sovereignty but there have been intervals when one has died and a replacement has not been found.”<sup>215</sup> In his study of the second Guimet Lhasa painting, Beguin uses the presence of the elephants as a means of dating the painting, but this may be problematic. Clearly the elephants were more frequent inhabitants of the city than Beguin supposes and there is no particular reason why an artist could not include an elephant in a painting even if there were no elephants alive in Lhasa at that moment. The elephants were important participants in the Sertreng festival and other processions, as seen in the Mongolia painting. They were kept in the “elephant house” (*glang pa che'i khang*), which is easily spotted in paintings by its two enormous doors and its location behind or near the Potala. In the paintings elephants are be found in the Dalai Lama’s procession (Mongolia), in the Zhöl or general Marpori area (Mongolia, Stockholm), or with their *mahouts* on the road in front of the Potala (Guimet2).<sup>216</sup> They are thought of and referred to as “the Dalai Lama’s elephants,” and they must have been considered by visitors to be one of the curiosities of Lhasa.

### **3.3 Why Include People in the Paintings?**

That human activity was an important component in the Lhasa paintings is attested to by the fact that so many paintings include such details. In fact, it could be argued that incorporating humans and animals into these works was the norm and that

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<sup>214</sup> Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 144.

<sup>215</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*, 52-54.

<sup>216</sup> Elephants are also sometimes found in the monument paintings of Tashilhunpo (See Kulturstiftung Ruhr, *Tibet*, 439).

paintings that excluded these elements were anomalies. The importance of the human figures is also underscored by the fact that they are so frequently out of scale with their surroundings, that is, they are nearly always too large in proportion to the buildings. This makes the figures significant visual components within the compositions. Scale and proportion were used in traditional Tibetan art not to express accurate spatial relationships between objects but to more clearly convey relationships of spiritual hierarchy. In the Lhasa paintings, the “more important” figures, such as the Dalai Lama, the Amban and other higher monastic or civic leaders, are frequently larger than the other figures surrounding them (see for example, Basel or Mongolia).

The specific reason for placing people within the paintings is known only to the paintings’ original creators and commissioners. Nevertheless, it is clear that the human activity depicted enlivens, humanizes and makes these works accessible. There is much humor and delight contained within these vignettes. While one may stand back to appreciate the landscape and buildings depicted, the minute human figures invite the viewer close to and then into the painting. The eye follows these tiny ambassadors through the warren of Lhasa, around the flat plains of the valley, around and up to the outlying monasteries. The figures enact the great moments of the year and also the everyday occurrences in and around town. These details form a sort of “catalog” of experiences. If the buildings are the sights of Lhasa, the figures convey the sensation of visiting Lhasa, its smells, its sounds, its goings-on.

### **Are these “documents?”**

Of course, these are not objective “catalogs” of experiences. Human and animal figures are included in the paintings at the whim and discretion of the artist, or perhaps the patron. Though ostensibly offering a “view of daily life,” details are selected, arranged and scaled so as to emphasize particular activities, relationships and performances, and thus convey a specific, controlled vision of Lhasa. On the other hand, some of these details display elements of events and occasions that no longer take place or have been significantly altered, and of which we have only minimal documentary evidence (mostly from Western sources and later times). The Lhasa paintings, editorialized as they are, provide a unique indigenous record of Lhasa’s annual events and daily life. Indeed, these paintings occupy a slippery position between “fact” and “fiction,” somewhere between “document” and “fantasy.”

To a certain degree, the Lhasa paintings do convey anthropological and cultural information. This is particularly true of certain folios from the British Library album (of which the British Library Lhasa painting is a part). This album contains a number of images that depict cultural events and activities in a very clear and almost instructive manner, laying out and labeling the liturgical elements and items of material culture used in performing these activities. Examples include *chams* (traditional Tibetan religious dance performances) and wedding rites, among others (Figure 173).

In fact, it is possible that paintings may have sometimes served as instructional guides. According to Richardson, “the great ceremonies were not mere pageantry but were essential rites for the well-being of Church and State and to be efficacious had to be

performed strictly according to precedent.”<sup>217</sup> Erberto Lo Bue reports that “paintings were occasionally produced to be used as reference sources for particular ceremonies.” An example provided by Lo Bue is a large *thangka* of the Sertreng (Golden Procession) kept in the Jokhang and used to prepare for the ceremony as “a sort of detailed iconographic inventory of the objects to be carried, also illustrating the dances which had to be performed on this occasion,”<sup>218</sup> a painting which is presumably no longer extant. The Lhasa paintings were unlikely to have served such a purpose, with the possible exception of the Basel painting, as their level of detail and specificity is probably inadequate. Indeed, it is probably true that art was not generally efficacious in illustrating religious ceremonies without some additional explanation or knowledge. In his autobiography, the Fifth Dalai Lama reports that the monks of Drepung had “only the drawing (of a *mandala*) on cotton for the summary rite of the diety Phurpa,” and were thus inadequately trained. To learn the rites, they brought in monks from another monastery familiar with the ceremony and the Dalai Lama himself wrote out the instructions.<sup>219</sup>

While they may be replete with cultural information, the Lhasa paintings are neither instructional guides nor snapshots of real life. Lhasa was, of course, an actual city plagued with actual issues, such as inadequate sanitation and a large population of

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<sup>217</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies*, 7.

<sup>218</sup> Lo Bue, “Scholars, Artists and Feasts,” 194; As a related anecdote, showing that explanatory drawings of ceremonies and rituals may have been common, the Fifth Dalai Lama records in his autobiography that the monks of Drepung did not really understand the Phurpa ritual as it was only recorded as a drawing on cotton. So experts from Gongkar were brought out to teach the dance and associated sand mandala and the Dalai Lama himself wrote a text describing the proper performance of the ritual. Nag-dBan Blo-bZan rGya-mTSHo, *The Illusive Play*, 205.

<sup>219</sup> Nag-dBan Blo-bZan rGya-mTSHo, *The Illusive Play*, 205.

beggars and feral dogs.<sup>220</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were frequent moments of political unrest, armed skirmishes, and bouts of the plague. Unsurprisingly these are not the subjects that artists chose to show in their paintings. With the exception of the stockaded prisoners and the corpse disposal in the Basel painting, there is nothing remotely unpleasant included in the Lhasa paintings. Instead, these works promote Lhasa as an ideal and perfected realm: a place where the people, and even the animals, are happy and well.

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<sup>220</sup> Western explorers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries often describe the city as “filthy,” “smelly,” full of feral dogs and beggars, with “nothing pleasing in its appearance.” Thomas Manning and Abbé Huc’s comments here are typical observations from European travellers. MacGregor, *Tibet, a Chronicle*, 219-220, 238.



## Chapter 4: Creating Lhasa - Artistic and Art Historical Sources

The Lhasa paintings arrived on the Tibetan art scene in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, seemingly all of a sudden. There was nothing quite like them before this moment and abruptly there came to be a number of rich and varied examples available. New artistic genres spring up very rarely in Tibetan art and almost never without some sort of precedent or direct and obvious source. So, where did these works come from?

This chapter seeks to answer this question and thereby to position the Lhasa paintings within the wider context of Tibetan art history and artistic tradition. I argue that Lhasa paintings developed out of several distinct artistic traditions, particularly traditional portraiture and the murals found at the Potala. Though their roots may be found in several different traditions, they are nonetheless a distinct genre emerging in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. My discussion is in two parts. The first section assembles and assesses the art historical precedents for the genre. The second section asks how the paintings were created in the direct and practical sense, that is, it outlines the means and mechanisms that may have been available to the artists who created these works. Taken together, this is the story *of* the paintings. It is a discussion of “how” these works came to be, in both the direct and indirect sense, the theoretical and the practical.

## 4.1 The Art Historical Context

The following is a first attempt to sketch out how and when specific monuments and cities came to be depicted in traditional Tibetan art. It looks at the sources for this motif and summarizes the development and evolution of artistic conventions that came to be typical. Discussion here is example-based using specific images to follow what I call the “trajectory” of showing specific existing monuments in art. It forms a rudimentary canon of instances in which places within the actual physical world are depicted and recognizable, whether they are the main subject or a detail in the background of a work. The focus is mainly on Tibetan works, particularly those that show Lhasa, and the discussion moves mostly chronologically. These examples, particularly the earlier ones, are relatively rare and the development of the motif is slow, meandering and non-linear. Nonetheless, there is still a great deal of material here and this could be (and should be) a full art historical study on its own. My treatment of the topic is only a starting point.

### “Real” vs. “Unreal”

A small aside is necessary here. Though this chapter looks at the progressive inclusion of actual monuments in Tibetan painting, it should be stated that the dichotomy of “real” and “unreal” is a construct that would not have been emphasized in traditional Tibetan thought. The vast majority of Tibetan art is Buddhist and can be seen as representational explanations of the world, the cosmos and of life itself according to Buddhist doctrine. Cosmological diagrams such as the mandala, Pure Lands, *bhavacakra*, and Mount Meru world system seek to explain the individual’s specific location in space and time in relation to their own spiritual enlightenment. Such concepts are *bhavana*, that

is, they are understood as existing within the mind.<sup>221</sup> Buddhist thought also posits that the “real world” as experienced through our five senses is, in fact, also an illusory construct. As expressed by Ngawang Zangpo,

In general, no place lies outside the pervasive influence of purelands and the play of enlightened manifestations... therefore the thoughts, ‘this is a sacred place’ or ‘this is not a sacred place’ amount to the erroneous discursive thoughts of an impure mind.<sup>222</sup>

In a way, Lhasa may be as real or unreal (or better said, as literal or abstracted)<sup>223</sup> as the heaven realm of Sukhavati. On the other hand, there is something tangible and deeply physical about Lhasa or any site of physical pilgrimage: these are places that one could, and many did, visit with one’s own two feet. These locations are experienced with one’s body, one’s senses *and* one’s mind. And they are, of course, accessible to virtually anyone in this very lifetime. This, combined with the fact that artists made a distinct effort to make these locations recognizable, indicates that audiences were indeed distinguishing the actual from the abstracted on some level, though perhaps without as much emphasis as is demonstrated by the modern scholar.

### **Early Prototypes: India, Inner Asia and the Himalayas (1<sup>st</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> c CE)**

Though this study is primarily concerned with how physical sites are depicted in Tibetan art leading up to and through the development of the Lhasa painting (18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries), it should be pointed out that precedents for this artistic motif have deep roots

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<sup>221</sup> Discussion with Dr. John C. Huntington in Columbus, Ohio, March 11, 2010.

<sup>222</sup> Ngawang Zangpo and Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mthag-yas, *Sacred ground: Jamgon Kongtrul on "pilgrimage and sacred geography"* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 2001) 157.

<sup>223</sup> Throughout this dissertation I have chosen to soften this dichotomy through the use of particular terms. Rather than “real,” I use “specific,” “existing,” “reified,” “physical,” and “actual.”

in the earliest Buddhist art. The early Indian *stupas*, reliquary mounds that held remains of the Buddha such as Sanci I (1<sup>st</sup> century CE) and Amaravati (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century CE), were decorated with carved stone reliefs showing Buddhist pilgrims at actual pilgrimage sites in India.<sup>224</sup> This includes scenes of devotees propitiating at the *vajrasana*, the “diamond-seat” in Bodh Gaya where the Buddha was enlightened under the Bodhi tree, or visiting built locations such as a *stupa* or a *vihara* (Buddhist monastic hall).<sup>225</sup> In one elaborate scene from the eastern *torana* (gate) of Sanci I a procession is shown moving from a city (on the top span) to the *vajrasana* (in the center of the lower span; Figure 118). The procession includes horses with ceremonial umbrellas held over them, elephants, musicians and many people, some carrying offerings, and is evocative of the processions found in the Lhasa paintings over 1500 years later.

A work much closer in overall feel to the Lhasa paintings is the well-known 10<sup>th</sup> century mural of Wutaishan found in Cave 61 of the Mogao caves at Dunhuang, a large man-made cave complex located on the Silk Road in Inner Asia (in current Gansu province). Wutaishan, a mountain in northern China, has been considered the abode of the Buddhist deity Manjusri from the 5<sup>th</sup> century and a major Buddhist pilgrimage site

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<sup>224</sup> There are numerous examples of these. See for example, images 6.11, 6.12, 9.21-9.24 in Susan L. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India* (New York: Weatherhill, 1985) 99-100, 175-177.

<sup>225</sup> These works are often cited by scholars as evidence of early Buddhist “aniconism,” a theory that espouses a supposed prohibition of anthropomorphic depictions of the Buddha in early Buddhist art. Scholars ascribing to this view describe works, such as the *stupa* reliefs, as “life scenes” of the Buddha with his image replaced by specific symbols. Susan Huntington challenged this notion in her 1990 article, citing compelling archaeological, inscriptional and literary evidence to the contrary. Her work shows that these images are not meant to depict the time of the Buddha, but “rather portray worship and adoration at sacred Buddhist sites,” in a time frame contemporary with the act of worship. Susan Huntington, “Early Buddhist art and the Theory of aniconism,” *Art Journal* 49, No. 4 (Winter 1990): 401-408.

from the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>226</sup> The mural at Dunhuang shows a topographic view of the mountain, with its shrines, stations and local villages all carefully laid out (Figure 119). Like the Lhasa paintings, this is a landscape viewed from an oblique angle, filled with a number of architecturally distinguishable buildings, many labeled, and populated by pilgrims moving to and among the various sites.<sup>227</sup> Wutaishan remained an important site of pilgrimage and was often a subject of pilgrimage-related art in later centuries.

There are also a few known examples of specific architecture in early painted manuscripts from India and Nepal. The miniature paintings on palm leaf found in the Pala sutra, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, depict Buddhist shrines from a variety of locations, both inside and outside India. These are tiny and generic-looking images, identifiable as specific sites only by the accompanying descriptive texts (Figure 120).<sup>228</sup> They are rather similar in style to 11<sup>th</sup> century miniature manuscript paintings from Nepal that show local *viharas* or the famous *stupa* (*caitya* in Nepal) of Svayambhunath in Kathmandu (Figure 121).<sup>229</sup> All of these examples employ simple side-on views of the monuments set against a flat colored background mostly devoid of landscape elements.

The painted images of pilgrimage sites at Alchi can be considered the first images of existing monuments depicted in Tibetan art. This Buddhist monastery complex located

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<sup>226</sup> Karl Debreczeny, "Wutai shan: Pilgrimage to Five-Peak Mountain," *JlATS* 6 (Dec. 2011):1-133.

<sup>227</sup> For more see: Dorothy C. Wong, "A Reassessment of the Representation of Mt. Wutai from Dunhuang Cave 61" *Archives of Asian Art*, 46 (1993): 27; Wen-shing Chou, "The Visionary Landscape of Wutai Shan;" and Chou, "Ineffable Paths."

<sup>228</sup> David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan successors*. (Boston: Shambhala, 1987): Plates 30a-30c and 31a-31b.

<sup>229</sup> Mary Shepherd Slusser, 1982. *Nepal Mandala 2. 2*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982): Images 244, 494.

in Ladakh in the Western Himalayas was a part of the kingdom of Western Tibet in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and beyond (today it is part of Kashmir).<sup>230</sup> Alchi's famous Sumtsek temple (*gsum brtsegs*; 11<sup>th</sup> century) contains three monumental standing images including the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, whose *dhoti* (lower garment) is profusely decorated with numerous buildings and figures. According to Roger Goeppe and Jaroslav Poncar, these represent actual palaces, shrines and sites of Srinagar, the nearby capital of the Kashmir region prior to the advent of Islam.<sup>231</sup> (Figure 122 and 123) Though they are not architecturally precise, the buildings on the *dhoti* mural are distinguishable from one another and potentially recognizable as specific existing buildings. The mural presents an intriguing mix of religious and secular locations, Buddhist and Saivite (Hindu) shrines, royal processions, priests and deities.<sup>232</sup> Each building contains a central figure, or figures, which aid in identification. Often this figure is a representation of a shrine's principal holy object or statue, such as a *shiva lingam* or a Buddha statue. Buildings may be further classified by structural clues. For example, the royal palace appears as a fort-like tower, Shivite shrines are topped with the iconic Shivite trident, and many of the Buddhist temples have a *stupa*-like cap at their apex.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> The founder of Alchi is believed to be the great translator of Tibetan Buddhism, Rinchen Zampo (*rin chen bzang po*; 958-1055), a student of Atisa. Ladakh was one of three regions of the Kingdom of Western Tibet. Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 377-378; Roger Goeppe et al., *Alchi: Ladakh's hidden Buddhist sanctuary : the Sumtsek*. (Boston: Shambhala, 1996): 14.

<sup>231</sup> Goeppe and Poncar's observations are based in part on the work of J. van Lohuizen De Leeuw; Goeppe, *Alchi*, 50.

<sup>232</sup> Though Saivite iconography is included on the *dhoti*, the temple and complex are decidedly Buddhist and counted as an paragon of 11<sup>th</sup> c Tibetan art.

<sup>233</sup> Other monument paintings from a later date can be found at Alchi, for example the mural in the Tsatsapuri at Alchi shows the lama's residence as a part of a biography painting of Jigten Gonpo, dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Rob Linrothe, "Conservation Projects in Ladakh, Summer 2008," *Orientalism* (Nov/Dec 2009): 91; Monument paintings, particularly in the form of murals,

All the works mentioned above are very distant from the Lhasa paintings both in time and space and any direct link is impractical and unlikely. However, they do display certain stylistic and thematic elements that echo the later Lhasa paintings, such as, the portrayal of multiple sites in an image thereby creating a “catalog” of monuments and holy places, an attempt to make these sites recognizable to the viewer through the careful use of visual cues, and the inclusion of people engaged in specific religious activity and ceremony. Further, in the Alchi mural, buildings are “opened up” to reveal their main image, and in the Dunhuang mural the sites are set into a full landscape shown at an oblique aerial perspective. The notion that any of these works had a direct impact on the Lhasa painting is doubtful, though potentially a matter for further study. Rather, what these works suggest is that Buddhist pilgrimage, a major act of Buddhist faith from the beginning, generated art that displayed and glorified the act and emphasized the specific physical locations that were the pilgrims’ goal. Pilgrimage was undoubtedly a chief cultural driver behind the Lhasa paintings (see Chapter Five), but the gradual inclusion of specific architecture in Tibetan art seems to have been more closely associated with the genre of portraiture.

### **Architecture in Portraiture (12 - 16<sup>th</sup> centuries)**

Monument paintings may be a product of new and slowly emerging trends within traditional Tibetan portraiture during and after the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Portraits, be they paintings of Buddhist deities, historical figures, quasi-historical figures, or living

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may be a particularly popular subject in Western Tibetan art in the more modern period (19<sup>th</sup> c and on). This area is as yet unexplored; based in part on personal discussions with Dr. Diana Lange, September 26, 2014, Olomouc, Czech Republic.

teachers, are a mainstay of Tibetan art. Prior to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, Tibetan portraiture was largely based on models from India and Nepal.<sup>234</sup> Though, as David Jackson says, “the early artists of Tibet produced many masterworks of great complexity, subtlety and beauty,”<sup>235</sup> these works may also be said to be very stylized, somewhat abstracted, and to a certain extent formulaic. Strong patterning, flat and bright colors and geometric symmetry are the hallmarks of the early portraits. Landscape and architectural elements, if they appear at all, are very abstract, decorative and generic. Typically they are relegated to the background or a minor supporting position. One may find a generic architectural setting used to frame a figure or the use of sharp geometric blocks to represent mountains (see for example the stylized “mountains” around the main subject in Figure 124).

A unique example of an existing building in an early Tibetan portrait painting can be found in the multiple paintings of Taklungthangpa Chenpo and his lineage (13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries; Figures 125 and 126). The various iterations of this image present the founder of the Taklung Kagyupa sect seated above the representation of what is certainly

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<sup>234</sup> This includes the Sharri (*shar ris*) style based on the Indian Pala-Sena school of art, 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the Beri style (*bal ris*), based on the Newar art of the Kathmandu valley, approx. 13<sup>th</sup>- 15<sup>th</sup> century. For more, see: David Paul Jackson and Christian Luczanits, 2011. *Mirror of the Buddha: early portraits from Tibet : from the Masterworks of Tibetan painting series* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2011): i; and David Jackson, *The Nepalese Legacy in Tibetan Painting* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2010): xi; for a full chart of all styles at play in traditional Tibetan art, see Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *Leaves from the Bodhi tree: the art of Pāla India (8th-12th centuries) and its international legacy*, (Dayton, Ohio: Dayton Art Institute in association with the University of Washington Press, 1990): 614-615.

<sup>235</sup> Jackson, *Nepalese Legacy*, xi.



the Taklung monastery.<sup>236</sup> The monastic complex appears as a series of colored boxes with tiled roofs, monks' faces peer out of the windows, and the yellow domed structure is, according to David Jackson, a thatched meditation hut located at the heart of the monastery.<sup>237</sup> The representation is recognizable as the specific monastery, but barely. Details are stripped down to the absolute essentials and the resulting flat, geometric forms are forced into a single band, or "register," of the painting.

Within traditional Tibetan portraiture exists the sub-genre of biographical portraits. These works depict the human (or divine) subject surrounded by scenes of his own life, or past lives, painted in miniature. In the earlier period of Tibetan art, biographical scenes would be placed around and behind the figure in boxes or linear strips, "registers," creating small and strictly regulated spaces into which all of the life-events must be fit (see for example: "The Third Karmapa and episodes of his life," 14<sup>th</sup> century; Figure 127). In subsequent centuries the use of registers in biographical portraits began to relax and fade, allowing more space for architectural and landscape settings which became, in turn, increasingly elaborate and reified.

The use of landscape as a more fully expressed artistic motif and three-dimensional setting is due in large part to increased contact between Tibet and China from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and on.<sup>238</sup> China, of course, had a famous tradition of landscape

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<sup>236</sup> David Jackson presents five examples of this subject, all are very similar in look and the depiction of the monastery is in the same location and contains mostly the same elements, see Jackson, *Mirror of the Buddha*, 114-115, 118-123.

<sup>237</sup> Jackson, *Mirror of the Buddha*, 115.

<sup>238</sup> Tibetan artists have always drawn on the artistic traditions of their neighbors, including India, Nepal, Kashmir, Central Asia and China, using these sources as inspiration to create their own unique indigenous and hybrid styles. But after the fall of the Indian Pala dynasty in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the decline of Buddhism in India, it was the artistic traditions of Nepal (specifically

painting, which grew out of the wall and scroll paintings of the Tang dynasty (7-10<sup>th</sup> centuries) into an extremely sophisticated, lyrical and expressive art form in the Song dynasty (10-13<sup>th</sup> centuries) and beyond. In these evocative paintings, landscape is no mere decoration or setting, it has presence, energy and atmosphere. These were dynamic and three-dimensional worlds within which buildings and people were the detail elements. Also coming into its own in the Song dynasty was the Chinese painting genre known as *jiehua*. This term translates as “boundary drawing,” and refers to architectural drawings and paintings that are spatially accurate and “made with a ruler,” which is to say, with exact proportions, measurements and lines. Though traditionally thought of as “lesser” works than the classic landscape paintings, *jiehua* images are remarkable achievements of precision that beautifully and accurately portray existing buildings, palaces and even townscapes (Figure 128).<sup>239</sup> These and other genres remained robust traditions over the centuries and would have been encountered by Tibetan artisans.

Tibetan exposure to the arts of China was due in part to the “patron-priest” relationship that was cultivated at various times between the Chinese imperial court and the Buddhist hierarchs of Tibet. Such a relationship was of mutual benefit: the Tibetan hierarch received a degree of political (sometimes even military) and economic support from the Emperor, and the Emperor, in turn, received the religious legitimation and spiritual merit bestowed by the Buddhist priest, as well as a potentially useful strategic

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of the Newari Buddhists) and China that became the prevalent sources for new artistic motifs and forms. Rhie et al., *Worlds of transformation*, 52.

<sup>239</sup> See especially the first chapter in Anita Chung, *Drawing Boundaries: Architectural Images in Qing China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004). An excellent and *a propos* example from the Buddhist context are the wall murals from 1167 at the Yanshansi, Shanxi; see Julia K. Murray, “The Evolution of Pictorial Hagiography in Chinese Art: Common Themes and Forms,” *Art asiatiques*, Vol. 55, (2000), 81-97.

alliance.<sup>240</sup> The priest-patron alliance, which typically involved travel to the Imperial court and the exchange of luxury goods and artistic gifts, was a cultural co-mingling on a grand scale and ultimately responsible for several pivotal moments in Tibetan art history. Sometimes artisans were brought directly to the Imperial workshops (as in the case of Arnige, the Newar artist who was brought to the Yuan court and credited with the development of the “Sino-Tibetan” style in the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>241</sup>). Or, imperial works were brought back to Tibet, a prime example of which is the “Tsurphu handscroll” commissioned by the Yongle Emperor in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 129). Yongle, or Zhu Di (1360-1424) of the Ming Dynasty (14-17<sup>th</sup> centuries), established a patron-priest relationship with the Fifth Karmapa (*de bzhin gshegs pa*; 1384-1415), the reincarnated hierarch of the Kagyupa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The Karmapa was invited to the Ming capital in 1407 and during his stay there many miraculous apparitions were reported, including rainbows, rays of light and rains of flowers emanating from the buildings and temples that he visited or occupied. These visions were recorded in the fifty-foot hand-

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<sup>240</sup> While the patron-priest relationship, present through the Qing dynasty, was mutually beneficial both culturally and politically, it could also be fraught and is, in part, responsible for later confusion and disagreement concerning political history, sovereignty versus suzerainty, and Tibetan autonomy. In Ming annals, such relationships were referred to as “tribute missions,” with the Tibetans positioned clearly as subjects of the Emperor. Modern debates hinge on the question of whether the participation of Tibetans in such relationships constituted a formal agreement and a consignment of sovereignty. Adding to the complexity of modern interpretation, England, Holland, Portugal and Russia were later listed as Qing tributaries; Hugh Richardson, *A short history of Tibet*, (New York: Dutton, 1962) 36-37; For an excellent discussion of these differing perspectives see, Fletcher, “Ch’ing Inner Asia,” 101.

<sup>241</sup> Arnige, or Aniko (1245-1306), was brought to the Mongol-led Yuan court of Khubilai Khan by Phagpa, the nephew of Sakya Pandita. His work there is said to have resulted in the “Sakya-Yuan” style, or the early “Sino-Himalayan” style, a hybrid of Chinese, Tibetan and Newari elements of which there are few surviving direct examples. The murals at Shalu are often cited as an indirect representation of this style. For more see Jane Casey, “Buddhist Initiation Paintings from the Yuan Court (1271-1368) in the Sino-Himalayan Style,” June 16, 2014; <http://www.asianart.com/articles/tsakli-casey/tsakli-casey.pdf> (accessed December 28, 2014).

scroll created in the imperial workshop, which includes forty-nine scenes featuring specific buildings of the capital shown in the *jiehua* style, from a straight-on view and set into a very sparse landscape. The work is inscribed in five languages: Chinese, Arabic, Uighur, Tibetan and Mongolian.<sup>242</sup> The scroll was given to the Karmapa and was kept for five centuries at Tsurphu monastery not far from Lhasa. That Tibetan artists saw this work is attested to by the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century portrait of the Fifth Karmapa which contains an architectural vignette, the Linggu monastery of Nanjing, copied directly from the Chinese handscroll, as noted by Patricia Berger (Figure 130).<sup>243</sup> Though not singularly responsible for the shift in Tibetan art, the presence of this work in Tibet shows that Tibetan artists were being exposed to sophisticated representations of specific architecture.

It was at this time, during the 15<sup>th</sup> and into the 16<sup>th</sup> century, that portrait artists began, sometimes, to loosen the restricting confines of the register and to experiment with larger and more elaborate landscape and architectural images. Examples include a late 15<sup>th</sup> century portrait of Milarepa<sup>244</sup> and the early 16<sup>th</sup> century portrait of the fourth Sharmar lama (Figure 131). The registers in both works have been enlarged to allow for rolling hills, snowy peaks, and trees to appear in each vignette. These are also filled with buildings, the specific buildings that are known from each figure's biography, though here they are still generic and undifferentiated. A different and very innovative work

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<sup>242</sup> For more see Patricia Berger, "Miracles at Nanjing: An Imperial Record of the Fifth Karmapa's Visit to the Chinese Capital," Marsha Weidner, ed. *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. 2001).

<sup>243</sup> Berger, "Miracles at Nanjing," 150.

<sup>244</sup> See Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 238.

from this time is the portrait of an unknown Drukpa Kagyu master, in which the figure is set against a full landscape containing a monastery and hermitage without any registers (Figure 132). This may well be the first of a portrait-type that would later become common: the lama set against a landscape background that contains his most closely associated monastery. Also from the 16<sup>th</sup> century is the well-known painting of Svayambhu *caitya* (*stupa*), a Nepalese work that depicts the 1565 re-consecration of Kathmandu's most sacred Buddhist site (Figure 133). This image, so different in feel from the Chinese paintings of places, shows that Newari artists were also creating images of existing monuments at this time. As Newari artisans were a near-constant presence in Lhasa and responsible for a great deal of Tibetan art, it is logical they too had a hand in the development of the Tibetan monument painting.

### **The First Images of Lhasa (15-17<sup>th</sup> centuries)**

At this dynamic time, when Tibetan artists were at last experimenting with landscape and architecture in a more full and vibrant manner, the first images of Lhasa began to emerge. These were not fully realized depictions of the city and valley as seen in the later monument paintings, for indeed that understanding of Lhasa, as home to the Dalai Lamas and capital of Tibet, did not yet exist. Rather, Lhasa, represented only by the Jokhang, was a minor detail sometimes included in biography paintings of the newly emerging Gelugpa sect. Nevertheless, these works are significant not only as the first appearance of Lhasa in art, but also because they display certain norms of iconography that would become a part of the later painting tradition.

The first purported appearance of Lhasa in any artwork as yet known is the late 15th century painting of Tsongkhapa in the Collection of the Rubin Museum of Art (Figure 134). This large-scale image presents the father of the Gelugpa school in the center, surrounded by registers displaying his spiritual lineage, his associated deities, and miniaturized scenes from his life. The scene in the lower right corner shows the construction of Ganden monastery in 1410, and in a register above, according to Marylin Rhie and Robert Thurman's reading of the painting, is the founding of the Monlam Chenmo in Lhasa in 1409 (Figure 135). The scene in question cannot be fully verified as Lhasa and Monlam Chenmo, but the identification is plausible.<sup>245</sup> The register presents the viewer with a building in a straight-on view, topped with golden roofs and opened to display two figures: at the center, a Buddha figure seated in lotus position on a throne, and to the right, another figure draped in a red garment and seated with legs pendant. These are most likely the Jowo statue and the Maitreya statue, two of the three images most associated with the Jokhang (the third being the eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara not shown here). Outside the building a small yellow-hatted figure, probably Tsongkhapa himself, is seated to the left of the building and three figures, perhaps monks, face him in supplication. This work presents an early and rudimentary form of later Lhasa painting iconography, namely the identification of the Jokhang by its major sacred statues and the inclusion of the Gelugpa hierarch giving lectures at the Jokhang during the Monlam

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<sup>245</sup> Rhie, et al., *Worlds of Transformation*, 349-352; Jeff Watt, description for "Teacher (Lama)-Tsongkhapa" September 2011, <http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/410/alt/410E.html> (accessed February 21, 2013). There appear to be no inscriptions on this part of the painting to prove this identification. This scene is identified in Thurman and Rhie's discussion, though it cannot be said with absolute certainty to which register they are referring. Watt's discussion of the biographical iconography is brief and does not touch on this scene or make any mention of Lhasa or the Monlam Chenmo.

Chenmo. Interestingly, even at the outset, depictions of Lhasa's buildings are accompanied by representations of the city's festivals and rituals.

This is true again in the late-16th century biographical portrait of the Third Dalai Lama (1543-88), a significant landmark in the evolution of the Lhasa painting (Figure 136). This painting employs enlarged registers with more three-dimensional layered landscapes and readily recognizable monuments. The work is from Western Tibet but said to be a copy of an earlier version painted by the artist Trengkhawa (*phreng kha ba*) in 1555 in Central Tibet.<sup>246</sup> It includes numerous identifiable monasteries and monuments of Central Tibet and Tsang. The Jokhang may be found in the middle register on the upper left side (Figure 137). Here the building contains greater detail particularly in the ornamentation of the roof and in the effort to show the temple as a part of the larger Tsuglhakhang complex, indicated by small generic buildings piled before and behind the enlarged Jokhang at the center. The Jokhang is identifiable by the golden, crowned Jowo image at its center and the eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara statue on the left, and another image, perhaps of King Songtsen Gampo, on the right. In this case, the Maitreya statue has been removed from the precinct and can be seen being paraded before the temple on a special human-drawn cart. This ceremony, known as Jampa Dendren (*byams pa gdan 'dren*), was celebrated until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Lhasa as a post-Monlam Chenmo ritual of invitation to the future Buddha, Maitreya (*byams pa*).<sup>247</sup> This depiction shows that the ceremony was already established at this time. Many other sites and monasteries are depicted, including, possibly, the three Gelugpa seats of the Kyichu valley, Ganden,

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<sup>246</sup> Jackson, *Nepalese Legacy*, 163.

<sup>247</sup> Richardson, *Ceremonies*, 52- 55.

Sera, and Drepung, as well as Samye.<sup>248</sup> As a proto- monument painting, this work is significant. It continues the use of registers and the straight-on and opened-up view of buildings, but it also employs new devices such as colored clouds to separate physically distant locales and a broad tipped-up spatial plane with layering of monuments to suggest depth. If each register is thought of as a separate composition they are not unlike the later Lhasa paintings: symmetrical, filled with buildings and people, and edged on the top by rows of mountains and a thin bit of sky. However, though various monuments of the Lhasa valley and beyond are shown here, suggesting an early catalog of Gelugpa sites in Central Tibet, they are placed haphazardly throughout the composition with no attempt to indicate the existing geographical or spatial relationships. Furthermore, this is still fundamentally a portrait.

Until the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, any image of Lhasa was necessarily an image of the Jokhang Tsuglhakhang alone. The Potala palace was not in existence prior to 1645 and the nearby monasteries were not yet pictorially linked to Lhasa. However, this was soon to change. With the advent of the Potala palace came the beginnings of the true depiction of Lhasa, not as simply the Jokhang, but as a town and valley littered with a specific matrix of monuments and dominated by the Potala. Virtually as soon as it came into being the Potala palace inspired its own artistic portrayals. The palace was a favored motif in the very murals that graced its walls, but it also made an entrance into portable works of art even as it was being erected.

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<sup>248</sup> These are tenuously identifiable. According to Rhie and Thurman, the large monastery in the center of the bottom register is Ganden, Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and compassion*, 271.



Athanasius Kircher's etching of the Potala, published in *China Illustrata* in 1667, was the first view of a Lhasa monument, indeed of any Tibetan location, seen outside of Asia (Figure 138).<sup>249</sup> It was based on a sketch "from memory" made by Father Johannes Grueber, an Austrian Jesuit priest who traveled to Lhasa in 1661 with his Belgian companion Albert D'Orville.<sup>250</sup> Grueber and D'Orville were among the very first Europeans to visit Lhasa and they arrived at a pivotal moment as the town was coming into its own under the leadership of the Fifth Dalai Lama. In 1661 the Potala would most likely have consisted of only the White Palace (constructed 1645 to 1648). The etching clearly shows the Zhöl enclosure at the base of the hill, with its entrance and corner towers, and the low-slung and multi-part White Palace built into and along the apex of the hill. While the details of the human and animal figures in the foreground, the relatively flat setting for Marpori, and the domed roof on the Potala do not look authentic to Tibet, but overall the work is a useful and potentially quasi-accurate depiction of the

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<sup>249</sup> The full title of this work is *Athanasii Kicheri e Soc. Jesu China monumentis: qua sacris quæ profanes, nec non variis naturæ & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrate auspiciis Leopoldi primi, Roman. Imper. semper Augusti, munificentissimi I mecaenat* or known also by its shorter names: *China Illustrata* or *China monumentis*. Kircher (1602- 1680) lived and worked at the Jesuit College in Rome where he made this compilation of accounts available from Catholic missionaries who had served in China and the far East. The book was published in Amsterdam in 1667 by Janssonius van Waesberge and Elizer Weyerstraten. A third-party copy was made by the publisher Jacob van Meurs in the same year with new sets of engravings. After a brief legal tussle, Van Meurs was forced to hand over his printing plates, and all editions of the book afterward used his smaller engravings. This is why two different versions of this image may be found. "China Illustrata" from "Beyond Ricci, Rare Books from the Jesuitica Collection at Boston College." <http://ricci.bc.edu/books/china-illustrata> (accessed on Feb 14, 2015) note: this website allows viewers to see the book in its entirety; The work's illustrations are more navigable on the "Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique," <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b20000389> (accessed on Feb 14, 2015).

<sup>250</sup> Michael Henss, *Cultural monuments*, 110-111; One of the more complete and useful recountings of this journey may be found in Chapter Two of MacGregor, *Tibet, a chronicle*, 48-59.

Potala in its interim phase. *China Illustrata* also contains an etching of the interior of a temple containing a seated Buddha-like figure and a multi-headed torso (Figure 139). This is almost certainly an imaginative interpretation of the interior of the Jokhang with its Jowo and Eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara.<sup>251</sup> The etched interpretations of Grueber's drawings indicate a familiarity with Lhasa's sites, but not necessarily a good understanding of their function and significance. Although Grueber brought surveying equipment with him and notes that these devices fascinated the King of Nepal, there is no indication that Grueber made his sketches through direct observation, or that he imparted any European techniques of observation and rendering to Tibetan artists while there.<sup>252</sup> As such, these works remain noteworthy principally as the first images of Lhasa made by a foreigner.

A final early image of Lhasa is found in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century gold-on-red *thangka* of Tsongkhapa (Figure 140).<sup>253</sup> This work contains three enlarged registers behind the main figure portraying his biographical highlights in a manner far closer to the future monument paintings than anything seen before. Lhasa may be found in the top register with the Jokhang on the right and the Potala on the left (Figure 141). The Jokhang's inner sanctum is opened to reveal the Jowo, Avolokiteshvara and Matirya statues, and for the first time the Barkhor may be clearly seen. There is also a festival, the first Monlam

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<sup>251</sup> As Martin Brauen points out, in Tibetan temples sacred statues would never be situated with their backs toward a door. Brauen, *Dreamworld Tibet*, 8.

<sup>252</sup> MacGregor, *Tibet*, 57; As an interesting side-note, a copy of *China Illustrata* was held in the Jesuit library in Peking not long after 1732 according to Anne Chayet, "The Jehol Temples and their Tibetan models," *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization* (1985): 67.

<sup>253</sup> Gold-on-red (*mtshal thang*) and gold-on-black (*nag thang*) are genres of Tibetan painting that may be traced to 9<sup>th</sup> century paintings on silk from Dunhuang and Chinese works done in the Tibetan style from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Rhie, *Worlds of Transformation*, 68.

Chenmo as conducted by Tsongkhapa, with the heirarch teaching in the main Jokhang courtyard and the Sungchora porch. To the left the Potala is readily identifiable: a massive building perched on a hill with a walled enclosure below, crisscrossed staircases lead up the hill, the Zhöl village and the iconic Western Gate at its base. A small procession can be found inside the Zhöl area, consisting of a high lama on horseback with attendants and a ceremonial umbrella. Between the Potala and Lhasa is another, smaller temple with a square outer courtyard and a tall tower-like main shrine occupied by a seated Buddha. This is likely the Ramoche. Other monuments are mentioned in the included inscriptions though they elude exact identification in the work itself.<sup>254</sup>

The appearance of the Potala in this painting is somewhat problematic. Though the Potala Palace was not yet in existence during Tsongkhapa's lifetime, its presence in this painting is confirmed by its iconography and by an inscription, which reads, "in the Potala, [Tsongkhapa] taught many teachings concerning the Guhyasamaja to many sages of monasteries."<sup>255</sup> According his biography, Tsongkhapa was known to have decorated the "Potala" (and many other local sites) as a part of the first Monlam Chenmo.<sup>256</sup> It would appear that in earlier centuries, "Potala" was the name already applied to Marpori hill and whatever structure may have stood there prior to the later palace.<sup>257</sup> The artist of

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<sup>254</sup> These include include Yarlung Namgyal, Dewajen, Sera, Gadong, Drepung, and Skyormolung monasteries; Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 457.

<sup>255</sup> Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 457.

<sup>256</sup> See Kurtis Schaeffer's translation of the Tsongkhapa biography *rje btsun bla ma tsong kha pa chen po'i ngo mtshar rmad du byung ba'i rnam par thar pa dad pa'i 'jug ngogs*, by Khadrupje Gelekpelzang (*mkhas grub rje Dge legs dpal bzang*, 1385-1438) in Kurtis R. Schaeffer, Matthew Kapstein, and Gray Tuttle, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013): 521.

<sup>257</sup> There was a small cave sanctuary present associated with King Songsten Gampo. There was also the Phagpa Lhakhang, a small temple dedicated the statue of Phagpa Lokeshvara though

this painting has anachronistically rendered the “Potala” of the 15<sup>th</sup> century biography as the Fifth Dalai Lama’s 17<sup>th</sup> century palace. In a catalog entry, Rhie and Thurman place this painting sometime in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, probably earlier than about 1675, based on stylistic comparison.<sup>258</sup> There is little reason to doubt this reading, but if correct this would mean the painting was created during the interim stage of the Potala’s construction, between the completion of the White Palace (1645-48) and the beginning of the Red Palace (begun perhaps around 1673 or later).<sup>259</sup> Because this is a duo-chromatic painting of gold on red and because the rendering of the Potala is somewhat imprecise, it cannot be ascertained with certainty whether this image shows *both* the Red and White Palaces, or *only* the White Palace (perhaps with the section that was later removed to make way for the Red Palace).<sup>260</sup>

Whatever stage of construction the Potala may be in, this painting is important for it presents the first fully formed view of Lhasa in the manner that was to become typical. If the top register is viewed as a discreet whole and one ignores the presence of the central portrait, this work could be called the “first” Lhasa painting. It is a “balanced”

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supposedly devoid of the statue for many years until its reinstallation during the building of the White Palace. The *Blue Annals* also records that the hill was used for monastic residences and hermitages. Exactly how the hill appeared prior to the erection of the White Palace is wholly unclear. See Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 98-99, 105.

<sup>258</sup> Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 457.

<sup>259</sup> According to Michael Henss, the dates of construction for the Red Palace are not known with certainty. Traditional texts state that it was built under the regent Desi Sangye Gyatso in 1690 to 1694, but certain oral traditions maintain it was begun far earlier; Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 110; Grueber’s sketch suggests the Red Palace was not in existence in 1661.

<sup>260</sup> The presence of the one, or perhaps two, Chinese-style roofs on the building could well be the Red Palace’s decorative roofs covering the Phagpa shrine and the Fifth Dalai Lama’s tomb (which was completed, with certainty, in 1694). Though some sort of decorative roof on the White Palace is attested to in Grueber’s illustration and possibly in the murals of the Great Western Assembly Hall (which has an unsubstantiated date falling somewhere between 1682 and 1694); Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 110.

composition with the Potala on the left and Lhasa town on the right (similar to Basel), it includes festivals and processions, spatial representation is decidedly more three-dimensional than previously seen, and buildings are given adequate ground and are not squeezed together. Though the Potala and Jokhang are arranged in correct spatial alignment, enhanced with the appropriate placement of the Ramoche, the Jokhang is turned away from the Potala to face the viewer. In many ways, this is a nearly fully-fledged Lhasa painting appearing in the Tibetan artistic canon before or just after the Potala was completed. On the other hand, the painting continues to rely on registers, the straight-on view of buildings and is not strictly about Lhasa.

### **The Murals of the Potala (1645-48 and 1691-1701)**

The murals of the Potala, first appearing in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, are arguably the true prototypes for the Lhasa paintings, which were soon to appear on the Tibetan artistic scene. The discussion here will focus on the three pictorial cycles which may be the most critical works in establishing the norms and iconographies of portraying Lhasa's monuments: the murals of the Eastern Assembly Hall in the White Palace (1645-48), of the Great Western Assembly Hall in the Red Palace (1691-93) and of the "Picture Gallery" (1695-1701). Moving chronologically through these cycles, one finds that these works make a gradual transition from an emphasis on portraiture with buildings as background pictorial support to paintings that feature the buildings alone on their own merit.

The Eastern Assembly Hall (*tshoms chen shar*), located on the fourth floor of the White Palace on the east side, is a large, square pillared-hall once used for state

receptions, Losar ceremonies and the enthronement of the Dalai Lamas<sup>261</sup>. All four interior walls feature large-scale portraits of the old Tibetan kings and Dalai Lamas with a continuous landscape background that is filled with vignettes displaying the history of Tibet following the account written by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1643.<sup>262</sup> The mural cycle begins on the northern wall with the portrait of King Songsten Gampo and scenes of the genesis of the Tibetan people, the descent of the first Yarlung kings from heaven, the arrival of the two foreign queens and the building of the Jokhang.<sup>263</sup> Continuing clockwise, the eastern wall contains the portrait of King Trisong Detsen, the next Yarlung *cakravartin*, surrounded by further scenes of religious history. The southern wall shows Samye monastery and portraits of the first four Dalai Lamas with moments from their lives. The western wall portrays scholars of traditional Tibetan medicine and some of their key biographical moments. As reported in his autobiography, these murals were planned by the Fifth Dalai Lama and executed by “many skilled artists from U and Tsang led by Trulku Choying Gyatsho [*chos dbyings rgya mtsho*].”<sup>264</sup> This famous artist is

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<sup>261</sup> Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 106-107.

<sup>262</sup> This work is known as *History of Tibet, The Song of the Cuckoo (the Queen of Spring)* or in Tibetan *deb ther dpyid kyi rgyal mo'i gky dbyangs*; For the English translation see, Nag-dBan Blo-bZan rGya-mTSHo, trans. Zahiruddin Ahmad, *A History of Tibet*.

<sup>263</sup> This room is closed to the viewing public and re-creating the mural-layout proves to be a slight challenge. Pictures of these murals are plentiful, but they are typically only details of the murals with no context provided either photographic, diagrammatic or written. The excellent resource, *A mirror of the murals in the Potala*, does contain descriptions, but the English translation has a tendency to confuse cardinal directions. The layout described here is a best guess based on *A mirror of the murals in the Potala (Pho brang po ta la'i ldebs bris ri mo'i 'byung khungs lo rgyus gsal ba'i me long /Budala gong bi hua yuan liu)*. 2000. (Beijing: Jiu zhou tu shu chu ban she, 2000): 262.

<sup>264</sup> Nag-dbañ-blo-bzañ-rgya-mtsho and Samten Gyaltzen Karmay, *The illusive play*, 216.; Sometimes mural programs were altered by the Depa (*sde pa*; or Desi, *sde srid*, the Dalai Lama's chief minister, at this time an office held by Sonam Raptan, r. 1642-58) who oversaw the project

credited with a fresh hybrid style known as “New Menri” (*sman bris gsar ma*),<sup>265</sup> which shows, perhaps, “new Chinese compositional and coloring ideas,”<sup>266</sup> and “the ability to integrate figures with landscape in a meaningful way.”<sup>267</sup>

The murals of the Eastern Assembly hall are magnificently beautiful and sensitive (Figure 142). Behind the portraits, these are essentially large-scale landscapes of green undulating hills flowing across all walls in deep colors blending softly into one another and frequently edged. Clouds with scalloped edges, gold-lined rocks and bluffs, knarled tree trunks, carefully articulated leafy crowns, water flowing throughout, and symbols of blessing and beauty, including peonies, cranes, and bright jewels, scattered about; this is a heaven-realm of Tibet and it recalls the landscapes of the finer and more densely colored Lhasa paintings such as the ROM and Guimet1. It includes a number of known and recognizable monuments, including the Ramoche and Samye (Figure 143).<sup>268</sup> Unlike the Lhasa paintings, in this mural the relationship between buildings is read as temporal (moving along the wall sequentially through history) rather than spatial. This is not one place at one time, but many places and many times all presented together. Furthermore, the composition is still a form of portraiture, for the focus of the paintings are the large

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or by the artists. Nag-dBan Blo-bZan rGya-mTSHo, *The Illusive Play*, 217; Kapstein, *The Tibetans*, 141.

<sup>265</sup> According to the Dalai Lama’s account, this style came about because the artist, trained in “Old Menri,” was exposed to artists working in the Khyenri style while at the Potala and his unfamiliarity with his subjects led him to create this new style that combined the two traditions. Karmay, *The Illusive Play*, 216-217.

<sup>266</sup> David Paul Jackson, 1996. *A history of Tibetan painting: the great Tibetan painters and their traditions*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996): 219-222.

<sup>267</sup> Rhie and Thurman, *Worlds of Transformation*, 68.

<sup>268</sup> Unfortunately, it is not possible to find the built Jokhang in available photographs of the murals, though a scene of its construction is available, *A mirror of the murals*, 63. It can be hoped that Thomas Laird’s forthcoming book on Tibet’s mural paintings will provide a more thorough resource.

portraits. The landscape provides a backdrop and the buildings provide vignettes, taking “biographical portraiture” into the realm of “historical portraiture.”

The mural cycle of the Great Western Assembly Hall (*tshoms chen nub*), on the first floor of the Red Palace, is similar in layout and theme to the earlier Eastern Assembly Hall, with a focus on large-scale portraits, but in these paintings the rendering of the background architectural monuments is more developed. The murals were created concurrently with the Red Palace itself, said to be 1691-94 or earlier, overseen by the regent, Desi Sangye Gyatso, most likely after the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1682.<sup>269</sup> The large and sumptuously decorated assembly hall was used for official audiences, and was most likely the room in which foreign delegations (such as Colonel Younghusband’s in 1904) would have met with the Dalai Lama. The mural cycle makes a very *a propos* and unequivocal visual argument for the authority of the Dalai Lama as the head of the Gelugpa sect, Tibetan religion in general and the Tibetan peoples.

The hall is entered from the East and directly opposite the door, down a long corridor of pillars, is the Dalai Lama’s ornate raised throne. The murals begin to the right of the throne with a large painting of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, and proceed clockwise with the Buddha Amitayus and his emanational-*bodhisattva* Avalokiteshvara on the northern wall, the two Yarlung *cakravartins* on the eastern wall, and on the southern wall, Dromtönpa (*‘brom ston rgyal ba’i ‘byung gnas*, 1005-1064; Atisa’s disciple and founder of the Kadampa school) and Nyangrel (*nyang ral nyi ma ‘od zer*, 1595-1657 the great *terton*, *gter ston*, or treasure-revealer of the Nyingma school). The

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<sup>269</sup> For a discussion of the disputed date of construction of the Red Palace, see Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 110.



final portrait to the left of the throne is obscured by a tomb-*chorten*, but it may well be of Tsongkhapa, Gelugpa founder, thus completing an abbreviated pseudo-lineage which shows that the Dalai Lama on his throne is the heir to a line of spiritual leaders stretching back to the Buddha himself.<sup>270</sup> These portraits are set against landscape filled with scenes from the Great Fifth's own biography, from his birth to his final acts before his death.

Behind the dominant portraits, the murals of the Western Audience Hall feature a continuous, brightly colored landscape densely packed with buildings. While the style of the landscape is very similar to the murals from forty to fifty years earlier in the Eastern Assembly Hall, though less finely wrought, it is the buildings and how they are set into the landscape that has most changed. The many monuments where the Dalai Lama studied, taught, or visited are rendered here with a little less precision but with, perhaps, greater recognizability (see, for example, the readily identifiable Samye monastery, or the Jokhang Tsuglhakhang complex during Monlam Chenmo; Figure 144). The viewpoint has changed and now all monuments are seen from a three-quarter aerial perspective and are recognized by their architectural accuracy rather than by an exposed interior image. The Potala is also shown, in various stages of completion. Of particular interest is the section showing the Dalai Lama's meeting with Emperor Shunzhi (1638-61) in the Forbidden City in Beijing in 1652 (Figure 145). The many layers of the palace are laid out as a series of perfect squares and full of people, exotic animals, streams and pagodas, the two leaders seated next to one another in the center. The murals of the Western Audience Hall are an important stepping-stone in the evolution of monument paintings.

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<sup>270</sup> This layout is described by Michael Henss, the designation of the final portrait as being of Tsongkhapa is my own guess. Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 141.

Buildings are now readily recognizable by their architectural appearance and they are places where the action happens, not simply a background location. As in the Eastern Hall murals, the narrative displayed here is a sequential one. Buildings may be shown multiple times, even within a single wall section, in order to provide proper biographical context.

A final step toward the Lhasa paintings are the landscape murals on view in the “Picture Gallery” (*bar kyams ldebs bris*) on the upper floor of the Great Western Assembly Hall, painted after 1694.<sup>271</sup> This mural is a continuous landscape showing, in great detail and completeness, the building and consecration of the Potala’s Red Palace under the supervision of Desi Sangye Gyatso (Figure 146). Many monuments of the Lhasa valley can be found, but the primary focus is on the Jokhang complex and the Potala, both of which are depicted numerous times. The details showing the construction of the Red Palace are whimsical and entertaining. Its stones are quarried and ferried up river, religious consecrations and good-luck offerings are bestowed, and dances and oracle ceremonies are performed. In one vignette, a workman is killed by a falling stone when a mouse startles a worker on the floor above. The great celebrations held once the palace was completed are also documented here, including the first Sertreng ceremony, shown here as a procession comparable to the Stockholm work and with the two giant silk applique *thangkas* hung on the Potala’s façade (Figures 147 and 148). Again, as on the first floor, monuments appear multiple times, repeated images even stacked on top of or adjacent to one another. These are multiple moments in time, not a single view of the

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<sup>271</sup> Typically said to date 1694-1701. They were possibly repainted in 1922-24. Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 115.

valley. The frieze does contain a single portrait, this time of Desi Sangye Gyatso seated next to the Mongol ruler, Dalai Khan. While the portrait is large, it seems to be the only one contained on these walls, thus leaving the majority of the composition focused on architecture in landscape. This has effectively freed architecture from its role as a biographical or historical supporting element and placed it as the main subject of a composition. It is not surprising then, particularly given the number of artists working in and on the Potala murals, that the Lhasa paintings seem to arise not long after this moment.

### **The Lhasa Paintings & further Portraiture (18<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> century)**

It is at this point that the story begins to feel far less linear. After the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the inclusion of existing architecture in paintings became much more frequent and elaborate but also more scattered and varied. In fact, it seems that this motif underwent a florescence. Specific buildings can be found in a large number of portraits, biographical and historical paintings and in their own right as the subject of the new genre of monument painting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and on. Establishing an exact and specific chronology for this period proves to be difficult. Specific architecture is found in works with a wide variety of style, quality and provenance, and dating the paintings, when possible, does not result in a clearly articulated trajectory of development. Older forms persisted alongside newer forms and while some artists were experimenting with composition and accuracy, others were simply emulating the masterworks of prior eras. Rather than move chronologically, my discussion here is organized by category, describing the typical types of paintings in which are found images of existing

architecture, and highlighting a few instances in which specific architecture is featured in a unique or experimental manner.

It was in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, not long after the completion of the Potala palace in 1701, that the first portable monument paintings began to emerge. Though still a nascent artistic genre in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it can still be said that this is when true Lhasa paintings first came to be. The earliest works, Prague and V&A, may be considered Lhasa paintings for they feature monuments of Lhasa (the Potala and the Jokhang, Ramoche and Gyurme Dratsang, respectively), but while these two works bear some similarity to one another, interestingly they do not bear much similarity to later Lhasa paintings (Figures 1 and 3 in Appendix B). Most notably, both take a minimal number of buildings as their subject and position them alone within an open landscape. There is no attempt in either work to indicate a townscape or other nearby monuments or sites. Perhaps it was an infrequent or early practice to feature only single monuments in paintings. Or perhaps these were each part of a set of paintings, similar to those used in lineage painting, in which monuments were featured individually and hung side-by-side to form the full townscape. While this is plausible, how and where sets would have been displayed and the impetus for creating them is difficult to know for certain.<sup>272</sup> Also, one might expect these two very early works to be stylistically similar to the Potala murals, but in fact, the shading and style of the landscapes seem to conform more closely to art of the same period from Eastern Tibet (comparable to a work that Jackson says is probably

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<sup>272</sup> See individual paintings' analysis in appendix B for further discussion. Also, it should be noted that sets of Lhasa paintings are attested to in a brief aside made by Urygen Gyats'o who was in Lhasa in 1883. See chapter five for more and Graham Sandberg, *The Exploration of Tibet, Its History and Particulars from 1623 to 1904*, (London: W. Thacker & Co, 1904): 192.

made by an Eastern Tibetan artist attempting a more Central Tibetan style<sup>273</sup>). Moreover, in the V&A work, the Jokhang faces the “correct” cardinal direction (West or left), rather than being turned to face the viewer, as seen in later Lhasa paintings and at the Potala. It can be assumed that the bulk of 18<sup>th</sup> century monument paintings are now no longer extant, or have yet to be found. The number of surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century Lhasa paintings is too small to make conclusive statements, but it is clear that even at this early time the sub-genre showed surprising accuracy and variation in style. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, other monuments became subjects of paintings thus bringing about the larger “monument painting” genre. These include images of Tashilhunpo monastery and Samye monastery.

The genre of monument painting, and its significant sub-genre, Lhasa paintings (which seem to represent nearly half of the larger group),<sup>274</sup> really came into its own in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Monuments were no longer depicted alone; this century saw the artistic promulgation of the Lhasa valley as a full and integrated matrix of monuments, presenting a view of the city from one vantage point and in (mostly) a single moment of time. In the only case of multiple moments being shown (Oxford; Figure 23 in Appendix B), it is the figure of the Dalai Lama that is repeated in the single image, not the buildings. Thus the buildings in the paintings take on a permanent, rooted and monumental feel. They do not move around the people as in the Potala murals, the people move around them.

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<sup>273</sup> David Paul Jackson, Robert Linrothe and Christian Luczanits, *Place of Provenance, regional styles in Tibetan painting*, (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2012), 106.

<sup>274</sup> Based on my informal attempt to collect, categorize and analyze monument paintings other than those of Lhasa, that I conducted concurrently but with less thoroughness.

Many of the 19<sup>th</sup> century works are large in scale, finely wrought and carefully detailed (the ROM painting may be the best example from this century; Figure 8 in Appendix B). It is a genre that appears to have been popular among artists with a variety of backgrounds, for the works are highly variegated in style, format and appearance. There is also a great deal of variation in terms of architectural and geographic accuracy. It is tempting to see a progression toward increased geographic accuracy and a gradual adoption of a map-like appearance. However I would point out that Tibetan artists' contact with non-native mapping traditions would have been minimal in this century (see chapter five for a broader discussion on this), and that there were examples of very inaccurate paintings being created at this time (for example, Vienna; Figure 50 in Appendix B).

It seems the real florescence of Lhasa paintings may have occurred in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, prior to the 1930s. As many as half of the group, perhaps even more, were created at this time. This was under the tenure of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, who was far more active in world-politics than his predecessors and who began to usher Tibet (gradually) onto the modern world-stage. It is probably not surprising that painted images of Lhasa from the 20<sup>th</sup> century are much more map-like and display greater spatial accuracy as foreign artistic and cartographic techniques, topographic and urban maps and even photographs were finally entering Tibet (although it is still debatable to what degree these were available to the common artisan, see below). Although many Lhasa paintings, and other monument paintings from this time (notably the large-scale images of Labrang monastery), were fairly "accurate" it should still be pointed out that this remained a

motley and variable genre and these works continued to be more “artistic” than “cartographic.” The desires and whims of the artist always took precedence over accuracy and odd artistic tricks persisted, such as the turning of monuments and the inclusion of non-local monuments, right up to the middle of the century (for example, Mongolia, Oxford or Anonymous).

At the same time that some artists were developing the monument paintings, others continued to include existing architecture as a background or supporting element in portraiture. This included various types of portraiture, including biographical paintings that include life-scenes taking place at specific built sites, lineage-trees or lineage-sets that portray multiple masters of a tradition with some or many of the monasteries associated with that tradition, or images of hierarchs in a landscape setting with their associated monastery in the background. All of these modes are the inheritors of the portrait traditions of earlier eras. However, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century the appearance and specificity of buildings, as well as the dimension and depth of the landscape, had become far more elaborate.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century portrait of the Fifth Dalai Lama from the Collection of the Rubin Museum of Art is a stunning example of architecture used in biographical paintings (Figure 149). The large figure of the Dalai Lama is positioned in the center of the composition with the important moments of his biography arranged around him and set within a single continuous landscape. The composition is not unlike the murals of the Potala and the appearance of the buildings is certainly influenced by those works (the scene of the Dalai Lama meeting with the Chinese Emperor in the Forbidden City

(middle right side) is an obvious copy of the mural in the Potala's Great Western Assembly Hall).<sup>275</sup> Other buildings included are the Potala itself, featured twice, the Jokhang and Sera and Ganden monasteries.<sup>276</sup> Drepung may also be present. Throughout the scenes, the Dalai Lama moves about in ceremonial procession and can be found in many scenes teaching, conferring initiations and performing other acts. Unlike the Potala murals, here the landscape is soft and recedes somewhat. The setting is spaciousness and monuments are not crammed together. Biographical portraits that include Lhasa's monuments are numerous, and unsurprisingly tend to feature Lhasa's greatest historical figures, including Songsten Gampo, Tsongkhapa and the various Dalai Lamas. Further excellent examples may be found in a number of collections.<sup>277</sup>

A peculiar example of this sort of painting is the unidentified lama portrait from the Rubin Museum of Art (accession # C2002.4.1), which probably dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 150).<sup>278</sup> The Buddhist teacher, from an unknown sect or tradition, is seated in the center with a small Shadakshari Avalokiteshvara above him against a dark green background of high-piled mountains and thick clouds. In the upper left corner is the Jokhang Tsuglakhang with a Gelugpa hierarch teaching in the courtyard. In the lower corner is a representation of Svyambhu Mahacaitya, the great stupa of Kathmandu, the spiritual nexus of the Kathmandu valley and of extreme importance to Nepalese

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<sup>275</sup> Also the image of the Dalai Lama conferring sacred initiations on the Mongol leader in his camp above; compare to *A Mirror of the Potala*, 93.

<sup>276</sup> Jeff Watt, "Teacher (Lama)- Dalai Lama V, Ngagwang Lobzang Gyatso; (item no. 65275)" February 2005. <http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm?icode=65275> (Accessed on January 13, 2012).

<sup>277</sup> An interesting example of a very large, horizontally oriented work is Item # 1533A-D4 (Tsongkhapa, 18<sup>th</sup> c) from the National Gallery of Victoria.

<sup>278</sup> "Teacher (Lama)- (unidentified)," *Himalayan Art Resources*, [www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/65050.html](http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/65050.html) (accessed on Jan. 14, 2015).



Buddhists. This is an interesting and highly unusual combination of major Tibetan and Nepalese monuments in a very early image. Without knowing the identity of the subject, it is difficult to say why these monuments are presented together. Another interesting example of biographical paintings are those in which the main portrait is removed leaving only buildings with figures in a landscape.<sup>279</sup>

Portraits of religious hierarchs can be frequently found in lineage sets. These sets are formed of many individual paintings of each successive Buddhist teacher through which a specific practice, tradition or reincarnated position (“tulku”) passed. The portraits are meant to be displayed together, in chronological order, and can often be found hung around the interior of a monastic assembly hall. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century, many portrait- sets included the buildings and locations pertinent to the lives of these masters and their students. The “Khon Family” set showing the lineage of the Sakyapa Tridzin is one of the oldest, dating to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 151).<sup>280</sup> This set displays a very sophisticated landscape that presaged the developments of the Potala and shows a fair degree of familiarity with Chinese works being brought into Tibet. Other sets worth noting display the masters of the Lamrim teachings taught by Tsongkhapa. This set dates to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> to mid-18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>281</sup> And there are, as one might expect, numerous sets of the Dalai Lamas.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> See Jackson, *Place of Provenance*, 107 for image.

<sup>280</sup> Jeff Watt states that these may be no later than 1621. Jeff Watt, “Painting Set: Khon Family Lineage (Sonam Wangpo & Tutob Wangchug),” March, 2014 <http://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=748> (Accessed on February 27, 2015).

<sup>281</sup> “Painting Set: Teachers (Lamrim lineage),” Himalayan Art Resources, <http://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=1462> (accessed on 12/10/14).

<sup>282</sup> In fact, Figure 41, the image of the Fifth Dalai Lama with his life scenes discussed above is actually one of a set of paintings. for more see Jeff Watt, “Teacher (Lama)- Dalai Lama V,

Another sort of portrait became common in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, the image of the Buddhist hierarch within a landscape with his associated monastery in the background. These are not biographical paintings. Very little activity is shown and typically only one monument is featured. The format is reminiscent of Chinese and later Tibetan *arhat* paintings, in which the *arhat* is seated to one side of the painting within a rich and intimate landscape setting. In these paintings, the landscape tends to be somewhat more broad and deep and architecture has become a major feature. Often these works are created as sets. An example of this type is the Kundeling Incarnation lineage set from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which show the successive tulkus of this Gelugpa lineage seated within a landscape with their monastery in the background. From this set, the image of the First Tatsag, Baso Chokyi Gyaltzen (*ba so chos kyi rgyal mtshan*; 1402-1473; Figure 152), shows the hierarch with Lhanwa Sogon monastery in the background. In this era visual recognition was key and portraits had become more individualized and specific. By this time, portrait artists often attempted to show how the sitter actually looked, frequently done in an abbreviated manner through the inclusion of simple clues: a moustache, a very large nose, or peculiarly-shaped head.<sup>283</sup> Perhaps the inclusion of the monastery functions as another visual identifier of the subject.

A related image, though very unique in its composition, is the painting from a private collection of Tsongkhapa, the Panchen Lama and Dalai Lama and the monastery

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Ngagwang Lobzang Gyatso,” Himalayan Art Resources # 65725, May 2005  
<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/65275.html> (accessed 4/12/15).

<sup>283</sup> For more detailed discussion on this phenomenon, see David Paul Jackson, *Patron and Painter, Situ Panchen and the revival of the encampment style*, (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2009), 28-30.

of Tashilhunpo (Figure 153). This is, ostensibly, a lama-with-monastery image, but it is a much more complex visual statement and can be considered part lineage portrait and part monument painting. According to Jeff Watt, the main figure in the center is Tsongkhapa, flanked by his students Gyaltsab (*rgyal tshab rje*; 1364-1432) and Kedrub (*mkhas grub dge legsal dpal bzang po*; 1385-1438; 1<sup>st</sup> Panchen Lama), beneath them is the 8<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and two Panchen Lamas, at the top of the work is Maitreya Buddha's paradise (where Tsongkhapa went after his death) and at the very bottom of the image is Tashilhunpo monastery.<sup>284</sup> The monastery itself is a sophisticated and accurately portrayed monument painting set into a landscape. The work can be dated by the presence of the three Panchen Lama tombs (1780-1853) and the 8<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (1758-1804) to sometime between 1780 and 1804. The Panchen Lamas, the second highest Gelugpa hierarch after the Dalai Lama, presided over Tashilhunpo monastery (which was also under the purview of the Dalai Lama prior to the move to Lhasa). Here the monastery is not a background element, but forms a major part of the overall image compositionally equal to the teachers and heaven realms and located directly below. This painting draws a clear connection of temporal and religious legitimacy stemming from the teachings of Tsongkhapa, which emanate from the heaven realms, through the embodiments of that authority in the contemporary Gelugpa leaders, to the earthly placement of those authorities and the teachings within the physical edifice of the great Tashilhunpo monastery. Though unique, this is a very important painting. It neatly bridges the conceptual gap between portraiture and monument painting, for it is both, and

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<sup>284</sup> HAR item # 69912, see Jeff Watt, "Location- Tashi Lhunpo," *Himalayan Art Resources*, Jan. 2013, <http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/69912/alt/69912Z.html> (accessed on 4/6/15).

it very clearly proclaims the connection between the physical sacred location and the divine teachers through whom that place is linked to the heavens.

### **The Relationship with Portraiture**

In fact, there is more than a passing connection between monument paintings and portraiture.<sup>285</sup> As this discussion has shown, the portrayal of specific monuments was an artistic motif that emerged and developed within the genre of traditional portraiture. Even after monuments came to be featured on their own, the two genres remained interrelated and continued to develop side-by-side. There are even instances of cross-over such as the Tashilhunpo painting above, essentially a portrait containing a monument painting, and the Lhasa painting from Mongolia, a monument painting containing a portrait of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.

It could also be argued that monument paintings, in terms of compositional layout, are rather like portraits with the human subject replaced by an architectural subject. The basic layout of the traditional portrait, whether it is of a divine or earthly subject, is very like the “mandala” composition found so frequently among the monument paintings. David and Janice Jackson’s charts showing standard modes of compositional layout used in creating portraits could just as easily apply to many of the Lhasa paintings (Figure 154).<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> This connection was suggested to me by Martin Mills at the International Association of Tibetan Studies Conference in Ulaan Batar, Mongolia on July 24, 2013. Specifically, Mills suggested that the Lhasa paintings could be thought of as (and potentially called) “portraits.”

<sup>286</sup> David Paul Jackson and Janice A. Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka painting: methods & materials*, (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala, 1984), 48, 70.

All of this suggests a series of larger questions: should monument painting be considered a subset of portraiture? Where does the line fall between portrait and monument painting? Could Lhasa paintings be called “portraits of Lhasa?” It is not uncommon to find the term “portrait” applied to an artistic or even a literary description of a specific urban environment. In fact, even some of the earliest of city views, such as those created in 15<sup>th</sup> century France or Italy, were sometimes referred to as “portraits” of a city.<sup>287</sup> The term “portrait” when applied to any subject could be said to convey the notion of “likeness,” a descriptive and observation-based rendering of a distinct and individual subject, a work that seeks to express its subject’s very presence and essence. In this sense, the Lhasa paintings could certainly be referred to as “portraits.” Perhaps this should simply be considered an issue of semantics. Or perhaps the answers to these questions hinge on whose point of view is being considered. I would argue that while the genre of monument painting owed much to the tradition of portraiture, it remained a distinct sort of representation to the local artists and collectors directly responsible for the phenomenon. That is, for their likely intended audience, Buddhists from local and neighboring regions, the Lhasa paintings were mementos and reminders of a place, useful, referential and visually appealing, but never confused with portraits of deities and Buddhist teachers which were consecrated and propitiated as embodiments of the subject itself. How these works may have been understood and valued by various audiences is the subject of the following chapter.

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<sup>287</sup> Caroline and Marine Laffon, *Mapping the World, Stories of Geography* (Buffalo, New York: Firefly Books, 2008): 97.

## 4.2 Artistic Methods & Sources

Returning to the main theme of this chapter, the origin of the Lhasa paintings, my discussion will now turn from the contextual and theoretical to the practical, examining the direct sources that may have been utilized by artists to create the paintings. How, and by whose hand, did these works actually come into being?

### The Artists

In the past Tibetan artists have been characterized as anonymous, the individual creator subsumed into a larger category of stylistic-, regional- or sectarian- designation. Nonetheless, the names of many artists are recorded, appearing in rare instances in inscriptions on the works themselves, or more often named in Tibetan treatises, catalogs and biographies. This is true particularly from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, when entire schools of painting were named after particularly accomplished individual artists. Verifying the existence of specific artists and connecting their names to individual works has presented a mighty challenge for Tibetan scholars, but this lacuna is beginning to be filled by the careful and diligent work of recent art historians and literary experts.<sup>288</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of Tibetan artworks are still without specific attribution and this is true of the Lhasa paintings, with one exception.

The single known artist of a Lhasa painting is the creator of the work at the Zanabazar Museum in Ulaan Batar, Mongolia, Balduugiin ‘Marzan’ Sharav (1869-1939). This famous Mongolian painter came from Zasagt Khan province and trained in Ih Huree under the painter, Gendendamba. His training was in traditional Buddhist art, but Sharav

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<sup>288</sup> Particularly useful in this regard are the works of David Jackson; see Jackson, *History of Tibetan Painting*.

began to independently produce portraits of himself and others, ultimately developing his own modern style. His most famous painting is “One day in Mongolia,” a large-scale scene depicting life and customs among Mongolian nomads at the turn of the century (Figure 155). After the People’s Revolution of 1921,<sup>289</sup> Sharav joined the new national art academy and produced propagandistic works and illustrations for the new communist government.<sup>290</sup> His Lhasa painting is a fascinating work, which marries Sharav’s training in traditional Buddhist art with his strong interest in portraiture and the portrayal of indigenous customs.

A second shadowy artist is the “Nepalese photographer” responsible for as many as four Lhasa paintings but who has as yet eluded specific identification. The four “Nepal” works are alike enough in style and composition to suggest that they were multiple copies made by a single artist or, less likely, copies made by multiple artists following a single model extremely closely. One of the pieces, Nepal 2, currently in the Omiya Library collection of Ryukoku University, bears an inscription, “the Bird’s eye sketch of “Lhasa” by a Nepalese Photographer of Lhasa in 1905-1912,” (Figure 40 in Appendix B).<sup>291</sup> This date is problematic for another nearly exact version of this work, Nepal 4, appears in a 1901 article by Sir Thomas Holdich (1843-1929; Figure 44 in Appendix B). According to Holdich, the Lhasa picture “appears to be taken from a

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<sup>289</sup> In 1921, with the military assistance of the Soviets, the Mongolians expelled the Russian White Guards from Mongolian territory. In 1924, what is now Outer Mongolia became the Mongolian People’s Republic and a satellite state of the Soviet Union, which it remained until 1990.

<sup>290</sup> Based on information available on the museum’s exhibition hall wall-plaque. Viewed in July 2013.

<sup>291</sup> Larsen, “A Perspective Drawing,” 230.

drawing of the city of Lhasa by a native artist.”<sup>292</sup> This is not particularly helpful in identifying the artist, nor is the fact that Holdich neglects to mention when or where he himself came across this work.<sup>293</sup> However, he also includes in the same article a photograph of the Potala with the caption “by a member of the Nepal Embassy to Peking.”<sup>294</sup> (Figure 156) Is this the “Nepalese photographer” responsible for the Ryukoku version of this work? Possibly. That Nepal 1, currently in a private collection in Oslo, was found in Kathmandu further supports the notion that an artist from Nepal may have been responsible for these works.<sup>295</sup>

The Lhasa paintings that have identified, or theoretically identifiable, artists are very, very few and come only from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the vast majority of the works, individual artist names are entirely unavailable. Still, the paintings themselves may provide clues regarding their creators.

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<sup>292</sup> Holdich, “Lhasa,” 606.

<sup>293</sup> As a geographer engaged on the survey of India and the Boundary Commissions in Afghanistan, Pamir, Tasmara and Perso-Baluchistan (varying dates 1880’s and 1890’s), a military officer in Bhutan (1865), an active member of the Royal Geographic Society and a writer of a number of geographic books, including *Tibet the Mysterious* (1906), Holdich could have come across this painting of Lhasa virtually anywhere, in India, the Himalayas or even London. The Holdich Family History Society, <http://www.holdiches.com/sir-thomas-hungerford-holdich-1843-1929/> (Accessed March 3, 2015). T.H. Holdich Obituary in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol LXXV No 3 (Mar 1930). It should also be noted that the same drawing, with the same caption, and also the same photograph of the Potala are included in the 1902, Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*. It is not clear which of these two men found the original images.

<sup>294</sup> Holdich, “Lhasa”, 607.

<sup>295</sup> Perhaps versions of this work were available in Nepal and around the Himalayas in general. The third version, Nepal 3, comes from a private collection in London, potentially the collection of Dekyi Rhodes, daughter of S.W. Lhaden La (1876-1936) a prominent political figure in Buddhist Sikkim who visited Lhasa in the early 1920s in the entourage of Sir Charles Bell. It is possible that Nepal 3 was obtained by Lhaden La in Sikkim, in Lhasa or at some point or place between. Parshotam Mehra, a review of “A Man of the Frontier: S.W. Lhaden La (1876-1936): His Life and Times in Darjeeling and Tibet,” *Himalaya* XXVIII,1-2 (2008): 97-98; the version now held in Japan, could have been collected by Ekai Kawaguchi who travelled to Tibet in the very early 1900’s, see chapter 5 for more.



The Lhasa paintings are quite varied in style and format suggesting that the artists were from diverse backgrounds and schools of training. As discussed, painted images of Lhasa were first developed in Central Tibet, particularly by the Potala artisans for the palace's murals. The New Menri style founded at the Potala by Chöying Gyatso developed into a "national" (even international) style over the centuries that followed.<sup>296</sup> As described by Rhie, "the [New Menri] paintings overflow with figures and every space is filled with floral or landscape elements in a rich tapestry effect of design, dense, brilliant color and complex, fluid forms."<sup>297</sup> More modern interpretations of the New Menri- Potala style can be found, with varying levels of proficient execution, in many of the Lhasa paintings (including Bod-kyi-thangka,<sup>298</sup> Guimet1, and Oxford). It is entirely logical to posit that many Lhasa paintings must have been created in Lhasa itself and even within the Zhöl workshops of the Potala. Not only would the subject matter have been readily at hand, but it is plausible that the most enthusiastic consumers of these works would have been the valley's own citizens and visitors. That Lhasa's buildings were being included in the masterworks produced by Potala workshops even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century is proved by Phillip Neame's 1936 photograph (Figure 157). This picture, taken on an official visit to the palace, shows the Potala artist at work on a historical portrait that includes the Dalai Lama's palace, the Jokhang and a procession.

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<sup>296</sup> This style was used by the artists of the major Gelugpa monasteries throughout Tibet and also to Mongolian and Chinese artists connected to the Gelugpa tradition. Rhie and Thurman, *Worlds of Transformation*, 68.

<sup>297</sup> Rhie and Thurman, *Worlds of Transformation*, 68.

<sup>298</sup> The *bod kyi thang ka* set of paintings was probably a thangka collection originally made by Potala artisans for the Potala collection. See Appendix B for further information.

Other works bear a stronger affinity with the art of Tibet's neighbors, created by or in the style of Chinese, Mongolian, Nepalese and even European artistic traditions. Rhie and Watt have independently pointed out the Chinese elements in the ROM painting, suggesting an eastern origin for the painting.<sup>299</sup> The Stockholm painting is overwhelmingly Chinese in flavor, which is particularly apparent in the human figures. And many of the later paintings, most notably the set of four mentioned above, "Nepal 1-4," show a familiarity with linear perspective that belies exposure to Western artistic methods. The inscriptions on the various works, which often are in non-Tibetan languages including Chinese, Mongolian and Newari, further suggest that these works may have been created by (and for) non-Tibetans. It cannot be said with certainty whether the paintings were inscribed by their makers, by their owners, by subsequent collectors or via some other combination of circumstances. Nevertheless, in general, the foreign languages included on many of the paintings conform to the various "foreign" styles found throughout the group.

Signs of the artist's, or artists', hand and method of working can be found by studying the paintings closely. Many of the works show evidence of the traditional technique of sketching. In the traditional method of creating a *thangka*, the artist would lash the base material to a rectangular frame, size it with coats of gesso, lay down axis lines to ensure symmetry and proper alignment and then the subject would be sketched

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<sup>299</sup> Rhie notes that this work draws on landscape styles from the Qianlong era (1735-1796) and that the drapery is in a Chinese or Mongolian style. Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 374; Watt has said that the multi-colored pastel clouds are a Chinese (or Chinese-inspired?) device. In-person conversation, Himalayan Art Resources Office, New York, May 15, 2009.

onto the prepared surface, first with charcoal and then with brush and ink.<sup>300</sup> The sketch established first the layout and relative sizes of the main elements and then the details of the figures and additional elements. For particularly large projects work was divided among multiple painters: the ink sketch was created by the master artist and the colors were filled in with mineral pigments by assistant painters.<sup>301</sup> In many of the Lhasa paintings the original ink sketch is visible in places, either because the pigment has chipped off the surface or because the ink may be seen through the pigment layer. In certain cases, there is inconsistency between the “underdrawing” and the final painting, showing that the original sketch has been altered or ignored by the subsequent pigment painter (Figure 158). In other cases parts of the painting, such as faces, are more carefully rendered than the rest of the painting. This seems to indicate that some paintings may have been created by more than one painter or in a painting workshop, by both master-artists and less skilled apprentice artists.

It is also clear that the artists of the Lhasa paintings ran the gamut from highly skilled to naïve “folk”-artists. Few of the works reach the level of quality that would have been required to belong to the collections of the Dalai Lama or the Chinese Emperor, but some paintings come very close and may be considered to have been fit for the wealthiest of collectors. The quality of these works is found in their sumptuous style, the depth and richness of their pigments (particularly if gold is present), the great detail and care taken in the rendering and in the grandiose size of the composition. This group may be considered to include ROM, Bod-kyi-thang-ka, Guimet1, Stockholm, Basel, ArtStor,

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<sup>300</sup> Jackson and Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 15-71.

<sup>301</sup> Jackson and Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 93.

RMA, Oxford, and Mongolia.<sup>302</sup> The paintings of lesser quality, determined by their lack of precision, awkwardness of execution, poor materials or smaller size, may include Vienna, Waddell, and “Anonymous.” Other works fall somewhere in between.

It becomes clear upon examination and logical deduction that the artists of the Lhasa paintings are as diverse as the paintings themselves. They are trained and untrained, from various places or beholden to various styles, and may have worked on the paintings singly or in groups.

### **Methods & Materials of Production**

Many of the Lhasa painting may be considered *thangka* paintings in the traditional sense, based on their materials and format. The majority of the works are paintings on cloth. Cotton is the classic material used by traditional artists.<sup>303</sup> The Lhasa paintings range in size from about 45 x 60 cm (Guimet2) to 285 x 182 cm (Stockholm). The Stockholm work is unusually large, far more so than any standard *thangka* from Tibet. For very large works, multiple pieces of cloth could be sewn together to form a larger canvas.<sup>304</sup> This was done with the Basel work, which has two visible raised vertical seams, each about a third of the way into the painting. The British Library work is a collected album of map-like paintings on paper. The entire set is comprised of approximately thirty folios, each made of rice paper and of slightly varying sizes. The appended descriptions are on British-made stock paper of a different weight and size. The Lhasa picture from Waddell’s book was most likely a paper sketch copy of a painting, or

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<sup>302</sup> It should be noted that Bod-kyi-thang-ka and ArtStor are presently a part of the Potala collections and may have always been a part of that collection.

<sup>303</sup> Jackson and Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 16.

<sup>304</sup> Jackson and Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 16.

perhaps a sketch *for* a painting. The Nepal works that have been examined by scholars appear to be works on rice paper, either large single sheets of paper or several pasted together.

Most of the works make use of the deep, bright colors ground directly from minerals, used by traditional artists. To determine the exact minerals used, their purity and strength would require testing, which is beyond the scope of this study. However, in general, most works display bright primary colors, particularly blue, green, white, red, brown and black. Pastel colors are sometimes used in the clouds and gold appears with surprising frequency. Certain works are heavily saturated in color (Guimet, RMA, Oxford), while others make use of lighter washes and gradual fading between colors, particularly in the landscape (Basel). Often important details such as the faces of figures and the roof tiles, decorative finials and other details of important buildings were outlined in very thin black, red or gold lines. Black or dark brown textured brush-strokes were also added to trees or along hilltops to achieve the gnarl of tree bark and clumpy vegetation of the hills

Once complete, a *thangka* would be removed from its stretcher and typically framed for hanging. Traditional frames were brightly colored silk borders stitched along the sides of the painting. A cord could be affixed for hanging. Many of the Lhasa paintings have, or had, cloth borders, but it is difficult to know whether any of these were original to the paintings. Some are known to have been added by later collectors or curators (eg., ROM and Prague) as indicated by museum records.

## **Models, Copying, Sketchbooks & Printing**

Traditional Tibetan artists relied necessarily on the study and application of iconography and iconometry to render the various figures of Tibet's enormous pantheon. Because images were considered not only offerings to the deity, but a locus of divine power and efficacy, it was absolutely critical that they be executed correctly. To render the incredibly extensive Tibetan pantheon with its many multiple figures in multiple forms and aspects, artists were trained in an exhaustive system of iconography in which specific physical and facial features, held and worn attributes, haloes and even settings and entourage, were learned as discrete units and assembled together to form a specific and whole figure.<sup>305</sup> To ensure the full figure came together properly a system of iconometry was used which laid out very precise ratios and proportions for each figure type and its components (Figure 159). Unlike figures of teachers and deities, the visual appearance and iconographic elements of Tibet's monuments were not formally codified; they do not ascribe to a single standardized set of iconographic rules and they certainly make no use of iconometry. The visual cues used to understand the paintings are found in the appearance and detailed attributes of the individual buildings and the spatial relationship between these buildings within the landscape. As discussed in previous chapters, the ability to read these cues is critical in identifying specific sites, particularly if there is no label, but the inclusion and use of these symbols were not entirely consistent. It seems it was up to individual artists to render the buildings in the way and

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<sup>305</sup> Jackson and Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 69.

mode that they saw fit. This may explain the wide disparity between the individual paintings.

If strict iconography and iconometry do not apply in the case of the Lhasa paintings, how were artists able to recreate Lhasa's monuments with enough fidelity to make them recognizable? A variety of means may have been used including direct observation, sketching from memory and copies made from other sources. Unfortunately, conclusive evidence of the use of such methods is sparse. Thus, I am left to make tentative inferences based on the meager evidence that is available.

While it is alluring to imagine Tibetan artists using direct observation to depict Lhasa's holy sites, this seems improbable in most cases. Records of traditional Tibetan artists working directly from life are few. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, under the direction of Desi Sangye Gyatso, the regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama, a great illustrated encyclopedia of medicine was compiled and its images verified through direct visual observation of actual corpses and medicinal plants.<sup>306</sup> As Janet Gyatso points out, the accurate portrayal of visual information was of particular use and benefit in a medical treatise and would not have been deemed necessary for other sorts of illustrations.<sup>307</sup> Nevertheless, the stressing of accuracy in this work by the Desi is striking, particularly as this was the era in which the first truly accurate images of Lhasa were being created on the Potala walls also under the Desi's direction. Prior models for depicting the Jokhang and Potala were largely nonexistent or inadequate, so mural artists were left to render the works presumably from

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<sup>306</sup> Janet Gyatso, *Being human in a Buddhist world: an intellectual history of medicine in early modern Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015): 54-57.

<sup>307</sup> Gyatso, *Being Human*, 56.

their own knowledge of the buildings. Of course, this was very easy as the artists lived near the Potala and were direct witnesses to its construction (as well as the reconstruction of other Lhasa monuments during the great 17<sup>th</sup> century building campaigns). So, while it is not very likely that artists stood on the banks of the Kyichu sketching the Potala, they were nonetheless intimately familiar with how the building looked. The murals could be easily rendered based on experience and memory and, when in doubt, unfamiliar or unknown details could be glossed over, left out or rendered generically. Once created, the murals potentially formed an acceptable model for subsequent renderings, thus creating an informal database for Lhasa's iconography and appearance.

Those individuals with a keen eye for detail and excellent visual memory may have been able to paint Lhasa without a direct model at all. Modern examples of highly accurate maps of Lhasa drawn "from memory" by Tibetans in exile show that the mind can be a reliable resource for creating pictures of places even decades after having been there.<sup>308</sup> Conceivably, a visitor to the city could have created, or commissioned based on his description, a painting of Lhasa once he had returned home. However, it is more probable that the paintings created outside of Lhasa were based on some sort of model.

One model for the Lhasa paintings turns out to be other Lhasa paintings. That is, there is clear evidence that artists copied directly from existing works. This is the case with the three paintings from the ROM, Brussels and Paris (Figures 8, 10 and 13 in Appendix B). These works are virtually identical in layout, iconography, and overall look. They all feature the Potala at the center, the Jokhang in the lower right with a

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<sup>308</sup> Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 30.



generic and minimal townscape and a riding lama figure with an entourage in the lower left. They even duplicate “mistakes;” for instance, the walls in Zhöl village that extend upwards to the base of the White Palace, are, in life and in most paintings stepped walls flush against the hillside; however, in the three “copies” these walls are not well-understood and uniformly do not resolve into proper spatial alignment. Some differences are apparent among the works, not in terms of look but in terms of size and level of richness in the pigment. Perhaps a standard image was copied for patrons of varying means, thus producing works at differing levels of quality. The three images are obviously copied, either from one another or perhaps from another source such as a fourth *thangka*, a wall painting or a sketched image. The works from the ROM and Brussels were purchased independently by Europeans, George Crofts and Léon Verbert respectively, in Beijing or Tianjin in or around 1920.<sup>309</sup> Ironically, in his record books from 1921, Crofts says of the ROM piece, “we consider [it] very valuable from an artistic point of view and also in a monetary sense, because [it is] unusual and uncommon.”<sup>310</sup> The four “Nepal” works are also obvious copies, though in this case it is supposed that they were all copied by a single artist who was also the original creator, as discussed above.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>309</sup>Crofts purchased the ROM work in June 1921. Verbert’s work was donated to the museum in Brussels between 1922 and 1926, however the collector, a Belgian diplomat, had been in China since 1907. There is no record indicating in which specific year Verbert bought his painting. There is little available information on the work from a private Parisian collection which appears only in Chayet, *Les Temples*.

<sup>310</sup> George Crofts and assistants, Record Book, year 1921, Volume VI No. 2141-2528,p 519 held in the archives for the George Crofts Collection at the Royal Ontario Museum.

<sup>311</sup> Knud Larsen’s article on these works, which only examines Nepal 1 and 2, indicates this; See Larsen, “A perspective drawing of Lhasa.”All four are so unique from the rest of the Lhasa

There is some scant evidence that artists may have created the Lhasa paintings through the use of sketchbook models. Traditionally, Tibetan and Newar artists have relied on sketchbooks to learn and recreate specific artistic forms. Blanche Olschak found the Lhasa painting that appears in her book, *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet*, in an unnamed Tibetan monastery in Northern Nepal. According to Olschak, the work was based on “an old sketch,”<sup>312</sup> which suggests that it was painted outside of Lhasa with the aid of a separate drawing or sketchbook brought, perhaps, from Lhasa itself. Olschak’s claim that the work does not show all the 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings of the Potala is erroneous; in fact, this work is one of the most geographically and architecturally accurate works in the group and dates with certainty to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nonetheless, the idea that artists might be passing around sketches of Lhasa’s monuments to use in the creation of these paintings outside of Lhasa makes a good deal of practical sense although to date no such sketchbooks or sketches have come to light.

Another intriguing but more remote possibility is the use of printed reproductions. Woodblock printing, known throughout Tibet and used frequently to create iconographic reference aids, was used to create multiple versions of an image of Wutaishan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The original blocks were carved in 1846 by a Mongolian Buddhist lama, Gelong Lhundrup (*dge slong lhun grub*), living at Cifusi monastery in Wutaishan. The black-and-white images printed from these blocks created a large and intricate monument image that, much like the Lhasa paintings, presented the multiple monuments in a mountainous

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paintings and are so alike to one another that it seems logical to assume a single creator for them all.

<sup>312</sup> Olschak and Wangyal, *Mystic Art of Tibet*, 78.

landscape with tiny pilgrims and monks moving among them. They also included an inscription in Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese. The many multiple versions of this print can today be found in a variety of museum and library archives around the world.<sup>313</sup> Though similar in terms of style and look, there is no direct evidence to show that the printing method used to create the Wutaishan images were used to create images of Lhasa.

### **The role of Photography**

Finally, to what extent might photographs have been used as models for the Lhasa paintings? There are two instances in this sub-genre where photography may have been directly involved: Mongolia and Nepal 1-4. In his article on the Mongolia painting, Jeff Watt points out that at least two elements appear to have been based on photographs: the image of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and the image of Ganden monastery in the lower right corner.<sup>314</sup> Both resemble well-known photographs (Figures 160-163). The portrait of the Dalai Lama, in particular, appears to be directly copied from a very specific photograph taken by Sir Charles Bell at Norbulingka in 1921. In the photograph and the painting, the seated Dalai Lama wears heavy formal robes and the peaked hat of his order, his hands placed on his lap, his expression neutral. While Bell's photograph is a convincing visual match to the painting, its timing makes it problematic. The year it was taken, 1921, was also the year of the People's Revolution in Mongolia, after which the artist Sharav, creator of this painting, became a propaganda painter. How quickly could Sharav have

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<sup>313</sup> The foremost scholar on these works is Wen-shing Chou, see for example: Wen-shing Chou, "Introduction" from Chou, "Maps of Wutai Shan" 372-388; See also, Wen-shing Chou, "Ineffable Paths," 108-129; and Wen-shing Chou, "The Visionary Landscape."

<sup>314</sup> Watt, "Himalayan Buddhist Art 101: Cityscapes."

obtained this photograph after it was taken and was it politically possible for Sharav to paint such an overtly religious subject under the new regime? It is difficult to know. Perhaps in the early days of Mongolian Communism the political atmosphere was still relatively open and if Sharav obtained the photo early enough in the 1920s it may have been possible for him to create this work even under Communist rule. Certainly it would have had to be prior to the “Great Terror” (1936-39), the period in which Mongolian leaders under the directive of the Soviets purged the country of its Buddhist clergy, destroying all Buddhist monasteries and holy sites.

The Nepal set of paintings may also be connected to the practice of photography. There are several pieces of secondary evidence suggesting this. First is the inscription found on Nepal 2, the piece from the library at Ryukoku University, which states that the creator was a “Nepalese photographer.”<sup>315</sup> Secondly, in his discussion of Nepal 4, Holdich remarks, “there is some appearance of the drawing itself having been made from a photograph.”<sup>316</sup> And finally, André Alexander claimed that photos of the Kathmandu version of the painting (Nepal 1) could be found in modern Lhasa homes.<sup>317</sup> It is unknown whether the artist was indeed a photographer, but it is certain that this view of Lhasa could not have been captured via photography. In order to obtain this view down into the town from the west, one would have to stand on a non-existent hill just beyond the Turquoise Bridge. Chakpori hill, while due west of town, is not close enough to get a snapshot with the necessary level of clarity as demonstrated by John Claude White’s

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<sup>315</sup> Larsen, “A Perspective Drawing,” 230.

<sup>316</sup> Holdich, “Lhasa”, 606.

<sup>317</sup> Larsen, “A Perspective Drawing,” 232.

1904 photograph taken from atop that very hill (Figure 164). In this example Lhasa, located directly in the center of the panorama, is a blur in the distance. Even if its buildings were more visible, from this angle, one would not see down “into” its streets and buildings making it totally unsuitable as a model for the detailed Nepal works. More plausible is Alexander’s report that photographic reproductions of Nepal 1 could be found in Lhasa homes. It seems that photography was useful, not necessarily in creating the Lhasa paintings, but perhaps in reproducing and disseminating them.

There is no further evidence, direct or indirect, that photographs were used as models for the Lhasa paintings. But that is not to say it was impossible. One question is the availability of photographs to the painters of the Lhasa monument paintings. It is sometimes erroneously believed that the first photographs of Lhasa were taken by the members of the 1904 Younghusband Expedition, but in fact, photographs of Lhasa were taken as early as 1901 and were available in publication around the world even that very same year. These early photographs include the photo of the Potala taken by a “member of the Nepalese embassy to Peking”<sup>318</sup> (Figure 156), and more notably, the fifty photos of Lhasa and of Tibet taken by G.Ts. Tsybikov (Gonbochzhab Tsebekovich, 1873-1930) and Ovshe M. Norzunov in 1900-1901. Tsybikov, a Buriat Mongol, and Norzunov, a Kalmuk Mongol, technically citizens of Russia and both practicing Buddhists, were each given a camera by the Russian Geographical Society<sup>319</sup> and set out independently from one another for Lhasa as genuine Buddhist pilgrims in early 1900. Their photos of Lhasa

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<sup>318</sup> Holdich, “Lhasa,” 606.

<sup>319</sup> Sjoerd De Vries, “A Present from the Tzar,” Erberto F.Lo Bue (ed.), *Art in Tibet: Issues in Traditional Tibetan Art from the Seventh to the Twentieth Century*. (Boston: Brill, 2011): 219.

include several views of the Potala, Lhasa town from a distance and a handful of specific sites, including the Turquoise Bridge, the Potala, and the Western Gate (Figure 165).<sup>320</sup> The photos, taken mostly in early 1901, were immediately brought to St Petersburg and then widely circulated among international geographic societies the very same year. By that autumn, the photographs were published or mentioned in French, English and American geographical reports and heralded as “the first photographs of Lhasa.”<sup>321</sup> Some twelve complete album sets were later distributed and more extensive publications and reports, some by Tsybikov himself, came out in 1903 and 1904, including in Russia, the Netherlands, and in the 1904 *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution*.<sup>322</sup>

While photographic images rapidly made it out of Lhasa and around the world at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were these actually available to the artists living within or near Tibet? It is not clear that this was the case, at least at first. From the Younghusband expedition in 1904 and through the following decades, photographers such as John Claude White (1853-1918), Charles Bell (1870-1945), Frederick Spencer Chapman (1907-71) and many others, including local Tibetans, created a number of

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<sup>320</sup> Most of the images of Lhasa were taken by Norzunov; De Vries, “A Present from the Tzar,” 220; Copies of the album, gifts of the Russian Tzar, are now held by various institutions including the American Geographical Society Library and collected online by the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee <http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/tibet>.

<sup>321</sup> J. Deniker, “La première photographie de Lhassa,” *La Géographie*, Paris, Tome IV, 2<sup>o</sup> semestre (1901): 242-247; for the Royal Geographical Society- Holdich, “Lhasa,” 602-607; “Photographs of Lhasa,” *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (1901): 456-457.

<sup>322</sup> There appear to have been 12 sets. See De Vries, “A Present from the Tzar,” 213-244; *Nederlandche Staatscourant* 209 (Sep 7, 1904); G. Ts. Tsybikoff, “Lhasa and Central Tibet.” *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904): 727-746.

photographs of Lhasa's monuments and festivals.<sup>323</sup> Early on, photographic plates would have been exposed in Tibet but developed back in India or abroad. Also, as most of these photographers were in Lhasa as emissaries of the British government, their photographs were considered property of the British government and "hence should be deposited in an appropriate institution such as the India Office at the heart of Empire in London."<sup>324</sup> This makes it unlikely that the local Tibetans actually saw many of these early images. By the 1930s, however, things were different. Chapman had his own darkroom in Lhasa and thus was able to take and distribute photographs on request. The inhabitants of Lhasa frequently asked for portraits of themselves and their families and these were then displayed and circulated around town with great enthusiasm.<sup>325</sup> Photos of Lhasa's monuments were also known. A photograph of Marpori and Chakpori hill, taken by Dasang Damdul Tsarong, was sent as a card to Sir Basil Gould in Lhasa in 1937.<sup>326</sup> It seems that photographs may not have had a strong impact upon most of the Lhasa paintings directly but may, perhaps, have come to replace them. This possibility is examined in further detail in the following chapter.

This chapter has asked *how* the Lhasa paintings came to be. Practically, artists must have used some combination of knowledge and copying to achieve recognizable renderings of the valley's monuments. Historically, Lhasa paintings appear to be outgrowths or byproducts of Tibet's prolific portraiture tradition. But why elevate what

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<sup>323</sup> Many of White's photos date to the Younghusband expedition of 1904; Bell's photographs mostly date to his tenure as head of the "British Mission" in Lhasa from 1920-21 though some go as far back as 1903; Chapman's photos were taken during the Diplomatic Mission to Lhasa 1936-37. For more see Claire Harris and Tsering Shakya, *Seeing Lhasa* (Chicago: Serindia, 2003).

<sup>324</sup> Harris and Shakya, *Seeing Lhasa*, 62.

<sup>325</sup> Harris and Shakya, *Seeing Lhasa*, 61-62.

<sup>326</sup> See Harris and Shakya, *Seeing Lhasa*, 61.

was essentially a background detail to the position of main subject? The question of the meaning and value that such a painting might hold is addressed in the following chapter.



## **Chapter 5: Arriving at Lhasa - Pilgrims, Maps and the Purpose of the Lhasa Paintings**

It is an odd thing, but in my experience almost no one stops looking at a Lhasa painting long enough to ask “why?” Why does this exist? Perhaps it is that most viewers feel they already know the answer- it is simply a picture, a lovely picture, of a place. Interesting to look at and relatively uncomplicated to interpret (particularly in comparison the esoteric and ideologically complex Tibetan art likely hung next to it), the Lhasa paintings are sometimes easy to dismiss as “obvious.” But obvious... *what?* What are these paintings? What were they meant to be? And for whom?

This chapter examines the purposes, functions and perceptions that surround the Lhasa paintings, that likely prompted their creation and that they acquired over time. Basically, this comes down to a question of audience: who was purchasing (or commissioning) the Lhasa paintings and for what reason? Very broadly speaking we might say that there were two audiences, and thus two purposes. The first was the “original” or “intended” audience, those for whom the paintings were created, who were very likely Tibetans themselves or indigenous groups from neighboring countries. It is commonly assumed that the Lhasa paintings, and other monument paintings like them, were intended for Tibetan Buddhist pilgrims, that they were some sort of artifact related to the rich pilgrimage tradition. A second, largely unintended, audience consisted of non-

Tibetans, often foreigners, who ended up taking the paintings home for a far different purpose. These collectors, which included Qing cartographers and artisans and European scholar-explorers and imperialists, saw the paintings as a source of valuable information, useful images communicating place, power and territory. From this perspective, the Lhasa paintings enter the realm of “maps.” Accordingly, my discussion addresses in two parts the validity of and the factual evidence that may support these two interpretations: the Lhasa painting as pilgrimage artifact and the Lhasa painting as map.

### **5.1 Original Purpose: Pilgrimage?**

It is a frequent assumption that the Lhasa paintings were created for Buddhist pilgrims and that they functioned as mementos of the Lhasa pilgrimage. This understanding is espoused by well-regarded specialists including Jeff Watt, Giles Béguin and, notably, E. Gene Smith, the renowned Tibet scholar who told me in a personal discussion in May 2009 that these works should be considered “pilgrimage souvenirs.”<sup>327</sup> While current scholarly work has not described the evidence or reasoning that supports this assertion, my own research has led me to believe that this issue is rather more complex than has been previously supposed. Though there are arguments to be made in support of the pilgrimage explanation, there are also some considerations that undermine that idea, or at least question it as a sole explanation for the paintings. Instead, I would propose a broader interpretation: that perhaps the works were originally intended for a

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<sup>327</sup> Watt, “Himalayan Buddhist Art 101: Cityscapes;” Béguin, “The Great Monuments of Lhasa;” 63. Discussion with Gene Smith, May 14, 2009 at his office in New York City.

wider audience and more varied purposes beyond pilgrimage, though, of course, with the extreme dearth of hard evidence in this area much of this discussion remains conjectural.

### **Background: The Lhasa Pilgrimage**

At the very core of Lhasa's identity is the notion of its centrality to the Tibetan Buddhist faith and its role as a major, arguably *the* major, site of pilgrimage in the entire Tibetan Buddhist sphere. Scholarly writings and accounts of the Lhasa pilgrimage, and Tibetan and Buddhist pilgrimage in general, are plentiful so here I include only the briefest sketch of the tradition to provide background and context for discussion of pilgrimage within the Lhasa paintings.<sup>328</sup>

Pilgrimage is a primary act of the Buddhist faith, in particular for lay practitioners, and one of the oldest practices of Buddhist devotion. According to tradition it was prescribed by the Buddha himself as a means of accessing his presence beyond his death by “visit[ing] and look[ing] with reverence”<sup>329</sup> upon sites associated with the

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<sup>328</sup> On the Lhasa pilgrimage: Ekvall and Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*; Buffetrille, “Lhasa, City of Pilgrimage,” 157-156; Richardson, *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*; Ferrari, *mKyen brtse’ Guide to the holy places of Central Tibet*. On Tibetan pilgrimage see the writings of Toni Huber, Niels Gutschow, Charles Ramble, Katia Buffetrille, and many others; On Buddhist pilgrimage there are innumerable works, I found the following particularly useful: John Huntington, “Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus: A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism”, part I [Lumbini and Bodhgaya], in *Orientations*, vol. 16, no. 11 (Nov. 1985), pp. 46-61; John Huntington, “Pilgrimage as Image: the Cult of the Astamahapratiharya”, part I, in *Orientations*, vol. 18, no. 4 (April 1987), pp. 55-63; John Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004); And special thanks to Dr. Susan Huntington and our discussions in her graduate class on Relics, Spring 2008.

<sup>329</sup> This is stated in the *Mahaparnibbana* sutta from the Buddhist Pali canon, specifically the *Digha Nikaya* of the *Tripitaka*. DN 16, verses 16-22, quoted here from the translation by Sister Vajira and Francis Story, *Maha-parinibbana Sutta: Last Days of the Buddha* (Access to Insight, Readings in Theravada Buddhism, 1998) <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.1-6.vaji.html>. The idea of “audience” with the Buddha can be connected to the South Asian concept of *darshan*, or *darśana*, a term typically used in the Hindu context, which refers to the notion of divine sight and describes a complex spiritual interaction between the divine and the

significant events of his life. These became the Aṣṭamahāprātihārya, the Eight Great Sites of Pilgrimage in India. Each site is a “seat,” *pitha*,<sup>330</sup> or point of contact between the Buddha and the devotee. Taken in total the group demonstrates to the pilgrim, physically and to some degree experientially, the life of the Buddha and the nature of Buddhahood.<sup>331</sup> As Buddhism spread through the Asian continent, Buddhist pilgrimage spread with it. Not only did pilgrims from all over Asia travel to India to perform the original Buddhist pilgrimage, local pilgrimages were established at Buddhist sites in Central, Southeast and East Asia. These local pilgrimages were no longer directed toward sites directly associated with the historical Buddha,<sup>332</sup> but to places imbued with divine presence on the strength of a divine vision, association with a major Buddhist deity or previous incarnation of the Buddha, the placement of secondary “relics” (for example, the word of the Buddha embodied by sacred texts or the image of the Buddha embodied by the physical sacred image), or connection with the lives and relics of great Buddhist leaders and teachers.<sup>333</sup> Certain “local” pilgrimages, such as the Wutaishan pilgrimage circuit in Northern China and, of course, the Lhasa pilgrimage, became international destinations in their own right.

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devotee, a simultaneous “seeing and being seen” by the god (or the Buddha) when in his presence (either at a specific site, before an image of the god, or during a spiritual vision).

<sup>330</sup> A *pitha*, a “seat [of kusa grass belong to a deity or holy man]”; Huntington, “Pilgrimage as Image, Part I,” 55.

<sup>331</sup> Huntington, “Sowing the Seeds, Part I,” 48.

<sup>332</sup> There are exceptions to this, for example, the Buddhist pilgrimage in Sri Lanka celebrates Sri Lankan sites where the Buddha was said to have visited, Adriana G. Poser, ed., *Pilgrimage and Buddhist Art*, (New York: Asia Society, 2010), 57.

<sup>333</sup> Buddhists were also known to appropriate or share sites considered sacred by another religious tradition, as was the case with Mount Kailas, or Tise in Tibet (sacred to Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and the Tibetan tradition of Bön).

Buddhist pilgrimage in Tibet, “a universal feature of Tibetan society,”<sup>334</sup> is a very old practice observed by all major sects of Buddhism and by the vast majority of the lay populace. The earliest written documentation of the practice dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but the tradition was almost certainly observed long before and possibly, although perhaps on a smaller scale, during the times of the Yarlung kings, in the 7<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>335</sup> Of the innumerable pilgrimage sites in Tibet, the two most significant destinations are Mount Kailas (Tise in Tibetan) and Lhasa. As Van Spengen says, “for ordinary Tibetans from outlying areas, the pilgrimage to Lhasa was a dream of a lifetime.”<sup>336</sup>

The principal object and focus of the Lhasa pilgrimage is the Jowo image housed at the Jokhang in the center of Lhasa. As discussed in Chapter Two, this sculptural image, which portrays the young Shakyamuni Buddha and believed to be from the time of the Buddha, is understood as the embodiment and point of contact with the living essence and presence of the Buddha in Tibet.<sup>337</sup> The Jowo, and by extension the Jokhang, is the quintessential “ney” (*gnas*) of Lhasa, a term that roughly translates as “holy place” but is both a noun: “place,” “abode,” or “site;” and a verb: “to exist,” “to reside,” and “to

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<sup>334</sup> Alex McKay, ed., *Pilgrimage in Tibet*, (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>335</sup> As discussed by Katia Buffetrille: early Tibetan Buddhist teachers would have been aware of the Indian pilgrimage sites, visits to “holy mountains” are mentioned in Tibetan biographies as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and early Tibetan Buddhist temples were built with ambulatories around the central shrine suggesting the existence of the practice of circumambulation, a major feature of Tibetan pilgrimage. Katia Buffetrille, “Reflections on Pilgrimages to Sacred Mountains, Lakes and Caves,” in *Pilgrimage in Tibet*, ed. by Alex McKay (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998), 19-20.

<sup>336</sup> Van Spengen, “On the Geographical and Material,” 45.

<sup>337</sup> For more see Warner, “Re/Crowning the Jowo Sakyamuni,” 1-30; also an interesting discussion on the Jowo as a “living” being and Buddha by the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama may be found in Gyurme Dorje, *Jokhang*, 43-45.

be.”<sup>338</sup> The holy place, the “ney,” generates, expresses and *places* sacred power and it can be a topographic feature, a man-made structure, an artifact, or a person.<sup>339</sup> In the context of Lhasa, its many temples, monasteries, the three hills, the Jowo statue (and all other sacred images) and the Dalai Lama himself are all “ney,” and thus are all potential objects of pilgrimage.

The two main aims of the pilgrim in Lhasa are to “behold and be blessed by contact with the Jowo” and to literally “make the rounds of [Lhasa’s] numerous temples and monasteries.”<sup>340</sup> These goals, beholding and being beheld by the divine presence and circumambulating the holy site, are fundamental to the practice of all Buddhist pilgrimage and are expressed in the Tibetan terms most typically used to refer to pilgrimage: “ney kor” (*gnas bskor* or *gnas skor*) and “ney jel” (*gnas mjal*; *bskor* meaning “circle,” “encircle,” or “rotate;” and *mjal* meaning “to meet” or “have audience with”).<sup>341</sup>

The Tibetan Buddhist pilgrim interacts with the “ney” through circumambulation, walking around and around the holy site, always keeping it on their right. In Lhasa, the

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<sup>338</sup> This discussion is partially based on discussions in Tibetan language class with Dr. Gareth Sparham at Ohio State 2006-2009, the THL Tibetan to English Translation tool, <http://www.thlib.org/reference/dictionaries/tibetan-dictionary/translate.php>; Huber, “Putting the Gnas back,” 24. A loose interpretation may be that *gnas* expresses the locus of the spiritual animate, a concentration of sacred power into a precise earth-bound place. It is both the power and the place of that power, both the abiding “Buddhahood” and its abode. See Ekvall and Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 2.

<sup>339</sup> Ekvall and Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 2 and 100; Toni Huber gives further terms based on *gnas* including *gnas chen* (“nay-chen”), *gnas mcog* (“nay-chog”), which both translate roughly as holy place/ sacred site/etc.; and *gnas ri* (“nay-ree”) a holy mountain; Huber, “Putting the *Gnas*,” 23.

<sup>340</sup> Matthew Kapstein, “The Guide to Crystal Peak,” in *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, ed. by Donald S. Lopez, 103.

<sup>341</sup> *Skor* also expresses the sense of “a going and a returning,” which in this context can refer to the entire act of leaving one’s home, journeying to the distant holy place and returning home again. Ekvall and Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 24; term definitions are based on THL Tibetan to English Translation tool and Ekvall and Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 25.

repeated circumambulation of the Jowo is done within the Jokhang and also on the three *kora*, or pilgrimage paths, that surround the Jokhang in ever-widening concentric circles (Figure 67 and 68). The outermost *kora*, the Lingkhör, encompasses the entire lower valley and its multitude of “ney,” however most pilgrims make additional trips to specific temples and monasteries of the valley to circumambulate each individually. At any “ney” they may prostrate themselves repeatedly, burn juniper and incense, give offerings (such as money, valuables, foodstuffs or butter for butter lamps), and even attend ceremonies and lectures, view sacred artworks and relics, and pay homage to the high Buddhist teachers and incarnations residing there.

The point of going on pilgrimage, at the most fundamental and individual level, is the accrual of merit (*bsod nam*), or spiritual benefit. Merit is accrued by the hardship experienced during the journey, the pious acts performed at the holy site and, most importantly, through the “experience [of] the divine presence and vital energy of a sacred site or person... which transforms body and mind.”<sup>342</sup> Such a transformation offsets prior transgressions, propels the pilgrim further down the spiritual path, and may help bring about an auspicious rebirth in a heaven realm.<sup>343</sup> In the Mahayana context, it also brings the devout closer to the realization of their own Buddha-nature and brings benefit to all beings everywhere.<sup>344</sup> While any type of pilgrimage may accomplish this aim, the Lhasa

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<sup>342</sup> Toni Huber “Pilgrimages in Tibet,” in *Tibet: Klöster öffnen ihre Schatzkammern* (Essen: Kulturstiftung Ruhr, 2006), 41-47, as quoted by Michael Henss, “Tibet- Monasteries Open their Treasure Rooms, a Review,” *Asian Arts* (2007), 43.

<sup>343</sup> The idea that pilgrimage can be performed to counteract serious misconduct such as incest and murder, is discussed in Katia Buffetrille “Pilgrimage and Incest: the Case of Chorten Nyima (mchod rten nyi ma) on the Tibeto-Sikkimese border,” *Bulletin of Tibetology* (Spring 2004) 5-38.

<sup>344</sup> Tibetan Buddhism is a form of Mahayana Buddhism (the “Greater Vehicle”) and specifically holds that all beings are potential Buddhas (or are already Buddhas) and that the devout

pilgrimage is regarded as particularly potent because its chief “ney” (the Jowo and the Dalai Lama) are among the most important and powerful in all Tibet. Furthermore, the location is the heart of Tibetan Buddhism (as it is centrally located, metaphorically the heart of the demoness that embodies the land, historically the accepted point-of-origin of Buddhism in Tibet, and the seat of government, both religious and secular).<sup>345</sup>

Pilgrimage, at heart a religious practice, also functions as a significant cultural, political and economic force. This is particularly the case for the Lhasa pilgrimage, which once attracted pilgrims from all over and beyond the Tibetan sphere: from Ladakh, Ngari, Khams, Amdo, and from Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, Mongolia, and Siberia; all places with strong local connections to Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>346</sup> This had a centripetal and centrifugal effect, a drawing in and a broadcasting out of people, ideas and, of course, money. The pious ideal was for pilgrims to support their journey by begging, but in reality many pilgrims relied on donations from family and friends, carried valuable goods and offerings for the “ney,” and frequently traded labor for supplies. Wealthy pilgrims might even travel with a large pack train, servants and lavish supplies.<sup>347</sup> In Lhasa, the continual influx of pilgrims, always in need of food, beds and provisions, supported trade and the local economy. Some traders even combined these activities, bringing goods for sale to the large markets of Lhasa (or Tashilhunpo) and completing pilgrimage rites during their stay. Not only did pilgrimage help redistribute wealth throughout the greater Tibetan

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individual holds the goal of becoming a *bodhisattva* so as to assist all other beings in realizing their own Buddha-nature.

<sup>345</sup> Ekvall and Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 4.

<sup>346</sup> Van Spengen, “On the Geographical,” 38.

<sup>347</sup> Ekvall and Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 148-149.



region, it was also an important cultural unifying mechanism. As Ekvall states, “the process of pilgrimage brought Tibetans [and others] from widely separated areas into association on the trail, at inns and shelters and camping grounds at the foci of pilgrimage...[and] acted as a brake to forces of cultural separatism.”<sup>348</sup> Further, the very holiness of Lhasa’s pilgrimage sites are predicated on a sense of a collective religious history and identity, through their association with the ancient Yarlung kings, creators of the original “Tibetan Empire,” and the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s worldly leader and divine protector. Lhasa was considered the “center” of Tibetan Buddhism, but it was the enactment of the Lhasa pilgrimage, repeatedly and on the large scale, that supported and reinforced this notion for the majority of the general populace.

### **Were Lhasa paintings intended for Pilgrims?**

One may be quick to draw a connection between the Lhasa paintings and the Lhasa pilgrimage simply by virtue of the critical role that pilgrimage plays in the significance and identity of the city. Though direct, or even anecdotal, evidence supporting the purchase or use of these paintings by pilgrims appears to be non-existent, there are three potential arguments in favor of such a claim.

First, in terms of subject matter, the Lhasa paintings appear to be “about” the Lhasa pilgrimage. That is, they feature as their main subject the “ney,” the holy sites which are the object of pilgrims, including prominently, of course, the two most important sites: the Jokhang and the Potala (which has its own small *kora*, the *tsekhor*,

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<sup>348</sup> Ekvall and Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 147.

that encircles Marpori; Figure 67).<sup>349</sup> Other sites of pilgrimage are featured as well, such as the Ramoche, Chakpori, various temples within the city, and the monasteries in the hills beyond. Pilgrims often extended the trip to Lhasa to include sites of pilgrimage in nearby valleys, as in the “Central Region Middle Circuit” (*dbud ru bar skor*) which consists of Lhasa, Samye, Tsethang (*tse thang*), and Drag Yerba (*brag yer ba*); and the longer “Southern *gnas* Expanse” (*lho gnas rgya pa*) which took the pilgrim nearly to southern border of Tibet and back to Lhasa.<sup>350</sup> Tashilhunpo was also a popular location for pilgrimage.

As discussed in Chapter Two, a number of the Lhasa paintings include the holy sites that are located outside the Lhasa valley. Guimet 1 in particular may be demonstrating many of the sites on the “Central Region Middle Circuit” (Figure 21 in Appendix B). That the sites included in the paintings are often labeled may suggest that the works were intended for, or owned by, someone not inherently familiar with the sites, that is, a traveller and not someone local. It is possible that the pilgrim wished to remember the individual sights that he or she visited and had a painting commissioned to include these sights with labels as an *aide memoire*. Furthermore, the various languages that the labels appear in, Tibetan, Nepalese, and Mongolian, reflect the regions that the vast majority of Lhasa’s pilgrims came from.

Many paintings include the pilgrims themselves and show them engaging in typical activities and events. One may find pilgrims circling the Barkhor and Lingkhor, swinging prayer wheels as they walk, and listening to lectures and debates at the

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<sup>349</sup> See route map, Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 77.

<sup>350</sup> Ekvall, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 80.

monasteries, and can be identified by their plain clothing and attitude of reverence before the holy sites (Guimet 1; Figure 108). One of the clearest and best examples is the British Library folio, which shows three pilgrims climbing around Chakpori on the Lingkhor path (Figure 107). Further, many of the paintings feature the Monlam Chenmo or other holy festivals of Lhasa, which were events of great popularity among pilgrims.<sup>351</sup> Many timed their visits to coincide with the Monlam Chenmo because, among other reasons, it offered one of the few chances to see the Dalai Lama in person. As the Dalai Lama was himself a “ney,” seeing him with one’s own eyes conferred a blessing akin to seeing the Jowo. As reported in Desideri’s 18<sup>th</sup> century account of the Dalai Lama’s procession during Monlam,

when the Grand Lama passes by, besides clamorously applauding him with joyous shouts, [the gathered on-lookers] prostrate themselves on the ground and reverently worship him, and many also burn perfumes or other fragrant substances in homage to him.<sup>352</sup>

Thus the Dalai Lama was venerated in much the same way as a holy relic or statue, and so, unsurprisingly, his figure often shows up in the Lhasa paintings. The content, subject matter and labeling of the Lhasa paintings make them very relevant to pilgrims. One may

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<sup>351</sup> According to Van Spengen, due to an influx of pilgrims during Monlam Chenmo, the population of the city would increase four or five-fold, Van Spengen, “On the Geographical,” 38; Ekvall estimates as much as 10% of Tibet’s population was present in the city at these times, Ekvall, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 151.

<sup>352</sup> Desideri, *Mission to Tibet*, 321; Father Ippolito Desideri, S.J., was a Jesuit missionary who lived in Lhasa 1716-1721. Namgyal Lhamo Taklha, in her reminiscences of her childhood in Lhasa in the 1940s and 50s, also mentions the Summer plays at Norbulinkha (“the Curd Festival,” Shotun) and the processions of the Dalai Lama to and from Norbulinkha (“the Great Procession,” Chipgyur Chenmo) as “some of the few opportunities the public had to glimpse His Holiness the Dalai Lama.” Taklha, *Born in Lhasa*, 44; Descriptions of these holidays are found in Chapter three.

imagine that these works could have served as reminders of the places, activities and events that pilgrims witnessed on their trip.

A second point of discussion hinges on the tradition of “souvenirs” for pilgrims. Tibetan pilgrimage generated a certain amount of material culture. Pilgrims carried prayer wheels, wore amulets in ornate boxes and carried other items intended to convey blessings or protection.<sup>353</sup> There were also pilgrimage “manuals” or “guide books” (*gnas bshad*, *gnas yig*), which were typically compilations, often of oral accounts, that explained Buddhist doctrine, ritual, and the specific site(s) and holy objects related to a particular pilgrimage.<sup>354</sup> In other parts of the Buddhist world pilgrims made use of maps created specifically to aid in navigating the multi-site routes, and pilgrims might have these or other items marked, stamped or signed at each stop along the route (Figure 166).<sup>355</sup> There is no evidence of the Lhasa paintings being used as pilgrimage navigational aids and I am unaware of the practice of collecting pilgrimage “stamps” in the Tibetan context.<sup>356</sup> However, we may assume that the practice of souvenir collection

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<sup>353</sup> Hand-held prayer wheels contain mantras, such as “Om Mane Padme Hum,” on the surface of the wheel and often on tiny pieces of paper contained within. The turning of the wheel activates the mantra and broadcasts it. In turning the prayer wheel it is understood that the pilgrims is asking for the blessing and spiritual aid for all beings in all realms.

<sup>354</sup> See more discussion in: Toni Huber and Tsepak Rigzin, “A Tibetan Guide for Pilgrimage to Ti-se (Mount Kailas) and mTsho Ma-pham (Lake Manasarovar)” in *Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan Culture*, ed. Toni Huber (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1999) 125- 154; Toni Huber, “Guidebook to Lapchi,” in *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, ed. Donald Lopez (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) 120-134; and Van Spengen, “On Geographical,” 38; Martin argues that dKar chag (catalogs or “tables of contents”) could be included in this category, Martin, “Tables of Contents (dKar chag).”

<sup>355</sup> This last is particularly true of Japanese Buddhist pilgrimages, such as the Yoshino mountain pilgrimage. Proser, *Pilgrimage*, 74.

<sup>356</sup> Though Ekvall does mention that pilgrims may have brought back “signed proof of a vicarious pilgrimage” done on behalf of someone unable to go, Ekvall and Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 134.

was very likely in existence in Tibet. Pilgrims may have received sacred items at the holy site, such as “tsa-tsa” (*tse tsa*, small clay votive tablets) and “men-drub” or “tse-drub,” (*men drub* or *tse drub*, sacred medicinal pills created by a high lama),<sup>357</sup> and, particularly in the cosmopolitan setting of Lhasa, may have purchased works of art, books or other sacred objects as mementos of their trip. Even today one finds the shops and stalls of the Barkhor teeming with souvenirs for sale, including sacred art and text of varying quality and authenticity, and, significantly, a large selection of images of Lhasa.<sup>358</sup> These include reproductions of old photographs and modern composite images in which Buddhist deities are superimposed over the city’s sacred monuments. One may be tempted to see this as a modern iteration of what might have been a centuries-old practice of selling images of Lhasa, including Lhasa paintings, to the city’s visitors (most of whom would have been pilgrims).

A third, more tenuous, consideration is the possibility that the Lhasa paintings served as aids or props for explaining, envisioning or mentally performing the pilgrimage. Sometimes a pilgrimage would be undertaken on behalf of someone who could not go, perhaps a deceased or incapacitated relative. By performing the ritual on their behalf and sharing the experience afterward, the pilgrim in some sense “brought” their loved one with them and thus accrued merit on behalf of that person.<sup>359</sup> Images of Lhasa’s holy sites would have helped convey the visual experience of the pilgrimage to

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<sup>357</sup> Perhaps “packets” containing scraps from the Jowo’s old clothing, as reported by Françoise Pommaret, “Encounter with a Dream: Bhutanese Pilgrims in Tibet—Performing a Ritual?,” *Tibetan Ritual*, ed. Jose Cabezon, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 255.

<sup>358</sup> This is based on my own experience during my visits to Lhasa in 2006 and 2007.

<sup>359</sup> Ekvall and Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage*, 131.

those unable to go. Further, the paintings may have provided a mechanism, or “support,” for performing the pilgrimage mentally rather than physically. In a 12<sup>th</sup> century Japanese account, the patriarch of an important family received a painting of his ancestral shrines and,

for seven days he performed ablutions, made offerings, and recited sutras in front of the painting. ‘I and others,’ he wrote, ‘confirmed in our dreams that the shrine had come here.’ The painting had allowed for the pilgrimage and the complete repertoire of rituals without ever leaving home.<sup>360</sup>

John Huntington, in his study of the iconography related to the Great Buddhist pilgrimage of India, suggests that images of the pilgrimage sites (or of the Buddha’s life- events ascribed to those sites) could allow the devotee to “pay homage to the whole of the *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya* without ever leaving his home monastery.”<sup>361</sup> It is possible that the Lhasa paintings could have served a similar function as supports for performing an “inner,” or mental, pilgrimage of Lhasa rather than a physical one.

In fact, Toni Huber notes that these should be considered sacred images, as “ten” (*rten*),<sup>362</sup> that is as a “support” for the essence of enlightenment. An art object that displays an enlightened person is a “ku-ten” (*sku rten*) or body-support and because temples are also considered “body-supports,” a temple or picture of a temple may also be considered a “ku-ten.”<sup>363</sup> Furthermore, according to Huber, these paintings of holy places

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<sup>360</sup> This account comes from Kujō Kanezane, *Kundoku gyokuyō*, entry dated Juei 3 (1184). 5.24, vol. 5, 275.5, as quoted in Proser, *Pilgrimage*, 146.

<sup>361</sup> Huntington, “Pilgrimage as Image, Part I”, 63.

<sup>362</sup> Huber, *The cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

<sup>363</sup> See Jackson and Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 25, 43 (FN 1).

have the power to “‘liberate by sight’ of them”<sup>364</sup> (*mthong grol*; “tongdröl;” literally “see - released”) and they were “worshipped and treated with respect for the empowerment with which they were charged.”<sup>365</sup> Typically, however, we would expect a “ten” image to have been officially consecrated. The consecration ritual (*rab gnas*; “rap ney;” or “intensification of the ‘ney’”) was completed by writing the sacred Sanskrit syllables (such as, OM ĀḤ HŪM) in vermillion on the back of the painting. This brought the Buddha- essence into the painting and made it “function as a sacred object.”<sup>366</sup> Among all the Lhasa paintings I examined, none had these consecration marks on the back, or indeed, any marks. It is thus not clear that these images were truly meant to be sacred objects or objects capable of liberating upon sight.<sup>367</sup>

Though much of the preceding discussion would appear to confirm that the Lhasa paintings were created specifically for pilgrims to Lhasa to take home with them, there are some observations to be made which cast a slightly different light on the issue.

One consideration is the practicality of the paintings serving as “pilgrimage souvenirs.” Given that most pilgrims travelled lightly and cheaply, would the average pilgrim be able to purchase and transport one of these paintings? The answer would appear to be, probably not. The work referred to as “Anonymous” is one of the few paintings that one can imagine a typical pilgrim acquiring. Its low quality probably made it relatively inexpensive and it appears to have been folded into a small square packet,

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<sup>364</sup> Huber, *Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

<sup>365</sup> Huber, *Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

<sup>366</sup> Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 143.

<sup>367</sup> When Huber mentions these as *rten* he refers specifically to a painting of Tsari (or Lhodrak) which is indeed consecrated. See Huber, *Pure Crystal Mountain*, 239 FN 1.

suggesting it could have been easily transported in a pocket or pack (Figure 34 in Appendix B). However, the majority of the Lhasa paintings are too fine and too large for the average pilgrim. A painting like the enormous (and heavy) Stockholm work, which measures 285 by 182 cm (112 x 71.5 in), would be challenging to transport even with a pack team (Figure 15 in Appendix B). Though, of course, the Stockholm painting was probably created in China and perhaps purchased or commissioned *in situ*. Which brings up a second consideration: some Lhasa paintings were almost certainly created outside, even far outside, of Lhasa itself. The Mongolia piece was created in Mongolia, the Olschak piece was purportedly created in Nepal (though based on a sketchbook that could have come from anywhere), and other works may have been created by East Tibetan, Chinese or Mongolian artists, the exact place of their creation is not known (see previous chapter). If paintings of Lhasa were created and sold outside of Lhasa, can they be considered “pilgrimage souvenirs?” The term “souvenir” tends to imply that the item was acquired *at* the place with which it was associated, though it is entirely plausible that a pilgrim might commission a painting upon their return to their hometown (or home country). I would suggest that, looking at the paintings we have available, the term “pilgrimage souvenir” is inadequate as it carries implications that are not true of many of the works. If these were indeed collected by pilgrims, they were wealthy ones with pack trains, and though these could have functioned as remembrances of the pilgrimage, they were not necessarily “souvenirs” in the strictest sense of the word.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> The term “souvenir” also has a dismissive quality, probably because souvenirs are often small, trivial and inexpensive items of sentimental but little intrinsic value (e.g. cheap models of the



Furthermore, to say that these paintings are “about” the Lhasa pilgrimage seems imprecise and somewhat over-reaching. As described above, the paintings of course feature Lhasa’s holy sites and events, which *do* happen to be of interest to pilgrims. But were the paintings intended to be about or for pilgrims alone, would we not expect the Jokhang, as the heart of the pilgrimage, to be at the center of every image? And would not the true “ney” of the pilgrimage, the Jowo statue and the person of the Dalai Lama, also be displayed with greater emphasis? Often the Dalai Lama is a very small figure hidden away within a palanquin and, except for the three “copies” (RMA, Brussels, Paris) which contain a figure only tentatively held to be the Dalai Lama, he is almost never shown explicitly as a “ney” or as a being of otherworldly status worthy of propitiation (indicated by visual devices such as a halo or sacred accoutrements). Moreover, certain critical aspects of the pilgrimage experience, such as the *kora* routes, are not explicitly shown, and Chakpori, one of the three nodes of the Lingkhori and a major feature of the circumambulation route is typically relegated to an extremely minor position on the edge of the painting. Finally, though pilgrims do appear in the paintings, monks appear with the same or even greater frequency, and, as discussed, many paintings feature the activities of other people living in or visiting Lhasa including, foreign dignitaries, townspeople, athletes, musicians, nomads, traders and herders.

### **A Wider Audience**

The designation of these works as “pilgrimage souvenirs,” or even as “pilgrimage objects,” has always seemed problematic to me. I would suggest that this interpretation is

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Eiffel Tower, etc.). The Lhasa paintings, while of varying quality, are certainly not trivial or lacking intrinsic value.

overly narrow and that, in fact, these works served a wider and more varied audience to whom they broadcast a more general message. The paintings clearly promote and celebrate Lhasa. They are carefully pieced together visions of Lhasa, displaying its sights and attractions and underscoring the essential sacred nature of the valley through the emphasis of its sacred (and visually impressive) buildings and activities. It is not coincidental that many paintings include symbolism typically seen in images of other-worldly paradises, such as bejeweled trees, gems and holy symbols scattered across the land and sky, jewel-toned flowers, rocks and clouds, and a peaceful and verdant countryside. These are meant to be spectacular visions of an idealized and perfected place. They present an image of Lhasa as paradise. And they could have been relevant to any follower of Tibetan Buddhism, and particularly to any follower of the Gelugpa sect (as Lhasa was the epicenter of the Gelugpa order), which included non-Tibetan groups such as Mongolians, Siberian Buddhists, Nepalese and so on, even if those Buddhists had never visited the city. Further, they are potentially relevant to anyone with general knowledge and interest in the city. The associations commonly ascribed to Lhasa, as not only a center of pilgrimage, but also as the historical center of Tibetan Buddhism and the seat of the central government, were commonly known and would have been inherently understood as subtext in these paintings. Though it is impossible to prove who the specific consumer of the Lhasa paintings might have been, there is some slight anecdotal evidence pointing to an audience beyond pilgrims.

Pilgrims were not the only visitors to Lhasa; monks came to stay for years, even decades, in pursuit of higher monastic education and degrees.<sup>369</sup> They too may have wished to own a memento of their time in Lhasa. Diana Lange has found old murals in a Ladakhi monastery showing Central Tibetan monasteries, which, according to the current residents, were painted in commemoration by local monks who completed their studies at Central Tibetan monasteries and then returned to their home monastery in Ladakh.<sup>370</sup>

Original collectors of the Lhasa paintings could have also included local residents and foreign dignitaries stationed in the city. As mentioned in Chapter Four, according to Knud Larsen, André Alexander found reproduced Lhasa paintings in modern Lhasa homes. Larsen suggests that local townfolk may have displayed these images because they could spot their own home in them.<sup>371</sup> Today one may find images of Lhasa, whether artistic or photographic, in a place of prominence within the homes of Tibetans living outside Tibet or of Tibetan Buddhists from other countries. I came across images of Lhasa hanging in Bhutanese shops and homes, though the owners had never visited the city (Figure 167).<sup>372</sup> A colleague familiar with the Tibetan community of Sichuan province related to me that a painting of Lhasa is considered an auspicious item to have in the home along with images of the major Tibetan Buddhist deities.

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<sup>369</sup> As an example, Gyatso, *Memoirs of a Tibetan Lama*.

<sup>370</sup> In-person discussion with Dr. Diana Lange, Humboldt University of Berlin, in Olomouc, Czech Republic on September 26, 2014.

<sup>371</sup> Knud Larsen, "A Perspective Drawing," 232.

<sup>372</sup> As I noted travelling in Bhutan, July 2010.

A very intriguing report comes from Urgyen Gyatsho, a “native” employee of the Trans-frontier Survey Department of British India, who travelled to Lhasa in 1883, and was received at the Nepalese diplomat’s house, where,

he was kept amused and interested by the resident’s conversation and by the pictures that were shewn [sic] him of some of the principal buildings in Lhasa, including the palace of the Potala and the great monasteries of Tibet. All these pictures were hung with silk.<sup>373</sup>

It would seem that the Nepalese resident, or ambassador, owned a Lhasa painting (or perhaps a set of individual monument paintings), which he may have purchased or received as a gift. This anecdote suggests that the paintings were sometimes valued simply as artistic amusements, not necessarily as sacred objects.<sup>374</sup>

Though it is impossible to determine exactly who was driving the creation of the Lhasa paintings through purchase or commission, clearly the paintings had the potential to serve multiple audiences at once. Pilgrims may have found these works to be useful mementos, but the same could be said for monks, members of the devout lay community, local residents, foreign visitors and, truthfully, anyone, including those who never visited the city. One might imagine, though without any evidence this remains purely conjectural, that Lhasa paintings were not originally intended for any single consumer group, but rather were a means of promoting the sacred nature and importance of the city

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<sup>373</sup> Gyatsho worked with Sarat Chandra Das and the account of his journey to Lhasa was written up by Sir T. H. Holdich, both of whom were critical to the collecting and use of the Lhasa painting as a map-like image, see discussion further on in this chapter. Sandberg, *The Exploration of Tibet*, 192.

<sup>374</sup> Of course most Nepalese in Lhasa were Newars, Buddhists who would have seen Lhasa as a sacred center. And, of course, the presence of Nepalese inscriptions on several paintings shows that they were sometimes collected by or created for a Nepalese audience.

(and by extension Tibetan Buddhism and the Gelugpa sect)<sup>375</sup> to any and all audiences. Certainly, the images held meaning and significance for audiences perhaps never intended or expected by the original creators.

## 5.2 Secondary Purpose: Maps?

Whatever the original intent, Lhasa paintings came to serve unique, and probably wholly unintended, purposes for new audiences external to Tibetan culture and religion. These secondary audiences likely included artisans, scholars and cartographers of the Qing court and of non-Asian countries, particularly those with imperialist ambitions in Central Asia such as Great Britain and Russia. This “outsider” audience valued the Lhasa paintings as sources of information and legitimation. The works were collected and utilized as “maps,” “blueprints,” or charts. In part, this was based on the presumption that they presented accurate and practical knowledge of the architectural, cartographic and even anthropologic realities of Lhasa, but also that they could be useful for their capacity to bestow authority and promote state agendas. It should be pointed out that these two “outsider” audiences, the Qing leaders and European imperialists (and their, possibly unwitting, agents, the artisans and scholar-explorers that directly participated in map-collection and creation) had certain common goals which no doubt colored their reception

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<sup>375</sup> Indeed, according to Martin Mills, the authority of the Gelugpa *tulkus* was based not only on their spiritual standing, but also on the increasing size of their land-holdings. Mills, *Identity, Ritual and State*, 333; Mill’s book traces the ritualized networks and power mechanisms that extended Gelugpa authority into satellite monasteries far from Lhasa. In fact, it is possible that the Lhasa paintings played an important role in displaying and disseminating Gelugpa authority and power (see Chapter Two), through the depiction of its land holdings (which was also the case in the portraits of lamas-with-their-monasteries-and-landscape). This is no doubt a fruitful area for further research.

and use of the Lhasa painting. Both sought means of exercising control over Tibetan territories: the Qing in *maintaining* their authority in the region, and Europeans in *obtaining* authority over the region.

This section explores these potential secondary uses for the Lhasa paintings, particularly their relationship to maps. I present specific examples of the paintings being used as practical charts or maps promoting external, rather than Tibetan, ideologies and aspirations, and consider the ways in which local and non-local cartographic traditions may have impacted, or been impacted by, the Lhasa paintings.

### **Lhasa Paintings as “Blueprints” at Chengde**

In 18<sup>th</sup> century China, during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor (1711-1799; r. 1735-1796), Lhasa paintings may have had a novel application as architectural “blueprints.” French scholar Anne Chayet has put forth a persuasive argument that Lhasa paintings were used in the creation of Putuozongchengmiao, the Potala replica, at the imperial mountain resort of Chengde (*bishushanzhuang*; or Jehol or Rehe) northeast of Beijing, built between 1767 and 1771.<sup>376</sup> Established as a summer retreat under Qianlong’s grandfather, the Kangxi emperor (r. 1662-1722), the resort is comprised of a series of temples, gardens, palaces and other architectural fancies built into the valley’s rolling green hills over the span of nearly a century (1703-1792). Many of its buildings are modeled on, or at least pay homage to, well-known historical monuments. Several of Chengde’s Eight Outer Temples (*waibamiao*), so-called because they lie outside the inner

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<sup>376</sup> Chayet, *Les Temples de Jehol*; dates from Gosta Montel, “The Lama Temple Potala of Jehol.” *Geografiska Annaler*, Vol. 17, Supplement: Hyllningsskrift Tillagnad Sven Hedin (1935), 175-184.

resort wall, are built to emulate Tibetan architecture and even specific Tibetan monuments, such as Samye (Puning temple at Chengde) and Tashilhunpo (the Xumifushoumiao temple, built for the visit of the Panchen Lama to Jehol in 1780).<sup>377</sup> In fact, Qianlong frequently hosted high officials, Tibetan lamas, and dignitaries representing groups from the edges of his newly acquired territory at these “ethnic”- style temples at Chengde. The buildings were, both literally and symbolically, sites of diplomacy and places for negotiating new roles and relationships, political and cultural, between frontier ethnic groups (Mongolians, Tibetans and Muslim peoples) and the Chinese hegemony (embodied by the Qing Manchu rulers, rather than the Han elite).

Under Qianlong, the Chinese empire had grown, via a series of military campaigns, to incorporate Mongolia, Xinjiang (the Uighur homelands) and, to a certain extent, Tibet.<sup>378</sup> The effort to bring these groups into submission and to legitimize the imperial project produced interesting, sometimes peculiar, schemes and policies at the highest level.<sup>379</sup> Qianlong himself embodied these efforts, learning the many languages of his subjects, receiving annual tribute from these “outer” peoples at his residences in

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<sup>377</sup> MacGregor, *Tibet*, 169; In fact, Qianlong frequently hosted high officials, Tibetan lamas, and dignitaries representing groups from the edges of his newly acquired territory at these “ethnic-“ style temples at Chengde. For more discussion of the religious and political motivations of Qianlong, see Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*.

<sup>378</sup> Exactly to what degree Tibet was subjugated under Qing leadership and the nature of the political and cultural exchange that both sides enjoyed (or suffered) is a point of strong debate and disagreement, as is well known. There are numerous studies to which one might turn for additional discussion. Here I base my thoughts primarily on the insightful and rich work of Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists* and Patricia Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*, 5.

<sup>379</sup> To this era can be ascribed, the notion of “*wuzu gonghe*” or “Republic of Five Races,” which puts forth the notion that ethnic or racial differences are subsumed within collective Chinese political identity. This is in stark contrast to Qing policies around intermarriage and relocation meant to discourage the intermixing of Han Chinese and Inner Asians. See Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists*, 31.

Beijing and Chengde, and styling himself (in writings, performance and, even, artwork) as simultaneously “an enlightened Chinese layman” and an embodiment of the bodhisattva Manjusri within a mainly Tibetan-Buddhist context.<sup>380</sup> Whether Qianlong’s devotion to Tibetan Buddhism was genuine or not is the matter of some debate, but the Emperor maintained close relations with Buddhist teachers, such as Mongolian lama Rolpa Dorje, and his artisans were kept in constant employ producing materials (even temples and palaces) in support of this identification. The creation of the Potuozongcheng (Potala) temple was wrapped up in these complex issues of rulership, ethnicity, mediation and religious identification.<sup>381</sup> Qianlong intended this temple, a gift to his mother, to consciously emulate the Dalai Lama’s own residence in Lhasa.<sup>382</sup> However, as Tuttle has pointed out, Qing knowledge and resources concerning Tibet were surprisingly limited.<sup>383</sup> We might therefore easily imagine that to fulfill their emperor’s directive Qing architects and artisans would turn to Lhasa paintings, possibly already a part of the Imperial art collection, as a ready-source of information, as “blueprints.”

Potuozongcheng temple is an architectural facsimile of Lhasa’s Potala meant to intentionally imitate that great fortress (Figure 168 and see Figure 169). At first glance, the similarity is striking. Potuozongcheng is a multi-level white fortress sprawled along a hilltop, with a massive, rectangular red building at its center, golden peaked roofs at its apex, and a series of buildings cascading down the hill to a monumental entrance gate. Chayet believes that Lhasa paintings were a direct source used by architects in the

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<sup>380</sup> Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*, 4.

<sup>381</sup> Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*, 4.

<sup>382</sup> As he proclaimed in his founding edict in 1771; Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*, 14-15, 19.

<sup>383</sup> Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists*, 29-30.



creation of this monument. She notes that “distortions” found in the paintings are also found at the monument.<sup>384</sup> Specifically, Chayet refers to the way in which artists of the paintings tipped up the visual plane so that monuments could be peered into, which led to a misinterpretation on the part of the Chengde architects wherein the buildings recreating Zhöl village are built along the rising face of the hill (literally tipped up) rather than flat along the valley floor as at the original Tibetan Potala.<sup>385</sup> Chayet’s architectural illustrations more readily show that Qianlong’s architects must have been working from strictly frontal images of the Potala (such as the paintings), for while its façade is very similar, the interior of the building in no way matches the interior of the actual Potala.<sup>386</sup> Chayet’s examination of this building reveals that the “Tibetan” look of the building is truly only a façade and “as a whole is essentially a Chinese-style temple complex, axial in plan and crowned with an example of Chinese terrace architecture, the Wanfaguiyi Pavilion, which is cloaked and hidden from casual view by its Tibetan masonry veneer.”<sup>387</sup> Chayet also cites a Japanese study that claims Lhasa paintings were held in the Jehol temples up to the 1930’s,<sup>388</sup> which, if true, corroborates sparse evidence that suggests two of the Lhasa paintings may have been purchased there (Stockholm and Prague, purchased in 1921 and circa 1918, respectively). Chayet’s analysis is useful, not only in explaining the appearance of Potuozongcheng temple, but also because it demonstrates that Lhasa paintings may have been collected and available at the Chinese

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<sup>384</sup> Chayet, “The Jehol Temples,” 67.

<sup>385</sup> Chayet, “The Jehol Temples,” 69.

<sup>386</sup> Chayet, *Les Temples*. Fig. 24.

<sup>387</sup> Berger summarizing Anne Chayet’s argument; Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*, 19.

<sup>388</sup> Chayet, “The Jehol Temples,” 67.

court in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, it may be that the Lhasa paintings were used in the creation of gazetteers and atlases during a similar moment in the Qing dynasty.

### **Qing Dynasty Cartography & the Lhasa Painting**

Cartography, as a visual and descriptive discipline, has an exceptionally long history in China. The Qing dynasty (1644-1912), which roughly coincides with the era of the Lhasa paintings, was a particularly prolific period for the creation and dissemination of maps, gazetteers and atlases, and also for the use of new, non-native, cartographic methods. Of particular concern to this study are the 18<sup>th</sup> century cartographic endeavors of the Jesuit missionaries stationed in Beijing, for it has been proposed that Jesuit map-making pursuits could have impacted Tibetan cartography and perhaps the development of the Lhasa paintings.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, at the behest of the Kangxi emperor, Jesuit cartographers undertook an extensive project to survey and map the entirety of the Qing Empire and its border regions, including Tibet. The project took ten years, from 1708 to 1718, and produced accurate, to-scale maps in several languages (including Manchu, Mandarin and various European languages).<sup>389</sup> According to several sources the Jesuits did not actually travel to Tibet but instead trained and dispatched “lama surveyors.”<sup>390</sup> In his 1734

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<sup>389</sup> Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, 4.

<sup>390</sup> MacGregor attributes this to D’Anville’s Atlas from 1747; MacGregor, *Tibet*, 121. Jean Baptiste D’Anville was a French cartographer who created map illustrations for Du Halde’s “Description géographique de la Chine,” published in 1734. Jean-Baptiste Du Halde was a French Jesuit who compiled his Description of China based on multiple reports available in the Jesuit library in Paris, which must have included some of the Kangxi-commissioned maps. Tsering Wangyal Shawa, Geographic Information Systems Librarian Head at Princeton University, has written that it was due to the initial failure of the Manchu officials in surveying the frontiers that prompted the training and employment of “Tibetan lamas,” who, he says, carried

compendium, Jean-Baptiste Du Halde recounts specific encounters and perilous moments endured by “*nos Lamas Géographes*” (“our Lama Geographers”) while attempting to complete the survey in Tibet.<sup>391</sup> It is generally assumed that these “lamas”<sup>392</sup> were Tibetan lamas, though no contemporary account specifies whether these trained lamas were Tibetan or actually Mongolian or another ethnicity. Although this event represents the first attempt to scientifically map the Tibetan region, it is very unlikely that it had any direct impact on Tibetan maps or monastery plans. Much like the issue with photography, gaining access to the finished Jesuit maps within Tibet would have been very problematic. Moreover, though the Jesuit cartographic project has in the past been touted as a transformative moment in Chinese cartography, recent studies tend to downplay its influence. This is the stance put forth by Cordell Yee, who states, “the Jesuit atlas did not change provincial and local practices... mixed pictorial modes remained common up to the twentieth century, and the popularity of religious and magical maps [in China] was not threatened [by the Jesuit mapping project].”<sup>393</sup> Indeed, with its accurate scale and

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out their mapping project from 1715 to 1717. Tsering Wangyal Shawa, “Mapping the Tibetan World,” *Maps of Tibet, Historic Images of the High Plateau, Calendar* (Washington DC, , Campaign for Tibet 2008). Schwartzberg, “Maps of Greater Tibet,” 614.

<sup>391</sup> Jean Baptiste DuHalde, *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l’empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise* (Paris: P.G. Lemerancier 1735), 557; I extend my special thanks to the Rare Books Department at Stanford University for allowing me to examine this book in person.

<sup>392</sup> Technically *lama* (*bla ma*) refers to a teacher, specifically a high-ranking teacher, a term equivalent to *guru* in Sanskrit. However, until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the term was generically applied by Western writers to all Tibetan monks of any status. In fact, Tibetan Buddhism was known as “Lamaism” for a long time.

<sup>393</sup> Summary of Cordell Yee’s remarks in Nathan Sivin and Gari Ledyard, “Introduction to East Asian Cartography,” *History of Cartography, Vol 2, Book 2*, ed. John B. Harley and David Woodward, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 31.

Beijing prime meridian, the Kangxi Imperial map seems to have little to do with the typical Lhasa painting. In reality, the relationship may have been the other way around.

The Lhasa paintings may have had some sort of impact on official Chinese cartographic works. A gazetteer, *Wei Ts'ang t'u chih* (*Wei Zang tu shi; Topographical Description of Central Tibet*) by Ma Shaoyun and Shung Maihai, published in 1792, was intended to function as a “government handbook” for the Qing army stationed in Tibet. It included a topographical description of the route from Chengdu to Lhasa and a discussion of Tibet’s history, culture and customs.<sup>394</sup> It contains the following description of Lhasa, as translated by William Rockhill in 1891,

a myriad hills encircle it and a hundred streams meander through it, making it the most beautiful country in the Western Regions. A temple has been built on top of Mount Pota and there the Talé [sic] resides. Its gorgeous green and dazzling yellow colours fascinate the eye. Around it have been built the lamaseries of Drépung, Séra, Gadän, and Samye facing it on the four sides...the pavilions, the streets and markets (of Lh’asa) are all most admirable. The Tibetans call it Lh’asa and their successive Talé lamas dwell there.<sup>395</sup>

This passage must be based on a Lhasa painting, or related conceptual understanding of the valley, rather than first-hand knowledge or scientific survey of the valley’s physical layout. Not only is the imagery redolent of the paradisiacal scenes found in the paintings, it also reproduces “inaccuracies,” such as the inclusion of Samye and Ganden, monasteries from outside the valley, in a mandala-like symmetrical arrangement “on the four sides” of the Potala, typical of some paintings but not the case in reality. In this context however it is clear that the Lhasa painting was understood and utilized as a map,

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<sup>394</sup> “Travel, Atlases, Maps & Natural History,” Lot 13401, Sotheby’s Auction Catalog Entry, London, (May 14, 2013, 10:30 AM).

<sup>395</sup> Rockhill, *Tibet*, 70-71.

as an authoritative description of topographical space and perhaps even for physical navigation. Of course, once on the ground in Lhasa, this inaccurate guide would have proved utterly inadequate.

This story of this gazetteer has a delightful twist that I happened to stumble upon; though the original *Wei Ts'ang t'u chih* contained only a handful of basic cartographic illustrations (and there are none of Lhasa itself; Figure 170),<sup>396</sup> later “Western” translations of the work included printed images of Lhasa copied directly from Lhasa paintings. In 1828, the gazetteer was translated into Russian by Orthodox missionary and self-taught Sinologist, Iakinf Bichurin (1777-1853). Bichurin’s translation included a hand-colored image of the Lhasa valley clearly based on a traditional-style Lhasa painting (Figure 171). In the image, the Potala and Jokhang are balanced in the foreground and the Jokhang is “turned” to face the bottom of the composition. In the upper half of the composition are the three monastic seats, Drepung, Sera and Ganden (again including this monument that is actually located outside the valley). This image does not include Samye, though the gazetteer itself describes it as part of the Lhasa valley. This image is not a direct interpretation of the text, but must be instead copied from a Lhasa painting or sketchbook. In 1891, the gazetteer was again translated, this time into English by an American diplomat stationed in Beijing, William Woodville Rockhill (1854- 1914). Rockhill had actually travelled through parts of Tibet, though not to Lhasa itself, and

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<sup>396</sup> At least this is true of the versions I have examined. An example can be viewed here: <http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.gen-vn472374> These simple woodcut images are reminiscent of the later and much more elaborate Wutaishan images. They also conform somewhat to the basic properties of the Lhasa painting, with an up-turned picture plane, three-quarter aerial view and the enlarged view into monuments.

completed his translation of the gazetteer with the assistance of a Chinese expert and a “Tibetan lama from Drepung.”<sup>397</sup> Rockhill’s translation included a colored foldout “View of Lhasa,” in which the Potala and Jokhang with its surrounding town appear in a balanced composition (Figure 172). This image is more geographically accurate as the Jokhang is not “turned” and monuments from outside the valley are not included. Nonetheless it is in the style of the traditional Lhasa painting with its verdant appearance, viewpoint from the South, the use of aerial perspective and the combination of generic and specifically rendered buildings. Again the image is more imitative of a Lhasa painting and does not closely match the description contained within the book itself. These two examples also demonstrate that Lhasa paintings were available outside of Lhasa, particularly it seems in Beijing, and to foreigners as early as the 1820’s,<sup>398</sup> and through the rest of the century.

### **A Demand for Knowledge & Maps**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was fairly common for foreigners to view, and reproduce, traditional-style Lhasa images as authoritative maps and sources of factual information, a use very much inline with imperialist aspirations and 19<sup>th</sup> century fantasies about what Tibet might be. Though today we may see these images as more conceptual and abstracted, for the 19<sup>th</sup> century European these works were very valuable sources of knowledge in a field that seemed bereft of hard fact. This lack of information was more perception than fact, propagated by colonial unfamiliarity with local forms of

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<sup>397</sup> Rockhill, *Tibet*, 2-4; Rockhill was the first American to learn Tibetan.

<sup>398</sup> Bichurin remained in Beijing from 1807- 1821; Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity, Accessed: February 26, 2015, [www.bdconline.net/en/stories/b/nikita-yakovlevich-bichurin.php](http://www.bdconline.net/en/stories/b/nikita-yakovlevich-bichurin.php)

knowledge. However, I would argue that this sense of informational scarcity was partly borne of the (seeming) inability of Europeans to physically explore, measure, quantify, categorize and chart Tibet's land and its people directly.

In this era, Tibet was thought to be inaccessible, unknown and mysterious among Europeans and Americans. This was, in part, a product of Tibet's closed-door policy,<sup>399</sup> which prohibited the entry of any non-Asian person into Tibetan lands, a reaction by the Lhasa government to political threats from Tibet's neighbors, particularly the machinations of British imperialists in South Asia.<sup>400</sup> In fact, the Tibetans' fear that they would become an imperial target was well founded. The region was attractive to colonial and capitalist entities for its potential mineral resources, overland routes between South and East Asia, and as prime real estate critical in gaining political domination of Central Asia. This last was the object of the British and Russian governments and their on-going tussle over the region, a clandestine affair carried out through espionage, covert missions and political subterfuge, known as "The Great Game," a term introduced to the public by Rudyard Kipling.<sup>401</sup> The closing of Tibet's borders also posed an alluring challenge to foreign explorers and adventure-seekers. In what is sometimes referred to as the "Race to

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<sup>399</sup> In effect from the 1790's until 1904, MacGregor, *Tibet*, 195- 209; In fact, Tibet had held some of this "mysterious" quality for Westerners prior to this policy. Early missionary reports and accounts show that much myth-making and misinformation about Tibet abounded. It was a "blank" area on maps into which Western imagination could place its fantasies, both good and bad, about the land and its people. One enduring belief was that Tibet was home to a lost branch of Christianity, possibly established by the legendary Prester John. For an extensive discussion of this phenomenon, see Brauen, *Dreamworld Tibet*.

<sup>400</sup> The policy came close on the heels of a small war between Tibet and Gurkha-led Nepal during which the British declined to intercede on Tibet's behalf. See Chapter 11 "Closing of Tibet," in MacGregor, *Tibet*, 195- 209.

<sup>401</sup> Peter Hopkirk, *Trespassers on the Roof of the World: the Race for Lhasa*, (London: John Murray, 1982), 3.

Lhasa,” travellers from all over Europe and North America competed in an informal rivalry to be the first to breach the sanctum of Tibet’s holiest city, Lhasa.<sup>402</sup> Though the “Great Game” and the “Race to Lhasa” came to an end when the British marched into Lhasa in 1904, these events did much to stimulate interest and inquiry into Tibet, its land, people and cultures. Of particular interest to both explorers and imperialists were maps of the region, which they seem to have collected with enthusiasm.

Information and maps are, of course, critical tools for the acquisition and operation of an empire. They become even more critical when the Empire acquires, or attempts to acquire, disparate and distant territories with unfamiliar customs, administration, climate and terrain. This is true in the practical sense. Colonizers, as newcomers to a region, need accurate and explicit information to navigate and survive in unfamiliar territory. But the gathering and sorting, charting and reproducing of information was also part of a less innocent agenda. Information, or more precisely the control of information, how it was presented and perceived, was (and is) a means of asserting power and authority, a tool frequently utilized (whether consciously or unconsciously) by colonial powers and their agents to designate and subjugate their domain, as well as to shore up support for further endeavors.<sup>403</sup> This is “dominion by knowledge.”<sup>404</sup> The imperialists themselves would likely agree, though with less strident language and in the belief that their projects were beneficial and necessary to their

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<sup>402</sup> According to Hopkirk, the foreigners who made an attempt on Lhasa came from some nine different countries; Hopkirk, *Trespassers*, 2; after 1904 the competition shifted to ascending the summit of Mount Everest.

<sup>403</sup> As Tuttle recounts, this is summed up in Michel Foucault’s book *Power/Knowledge*, when he say “it is impossible to govern a State without knowing its population.” Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists*, 29.

<sup>404</sup> Chou, *The Visionary Landscape*, 65.



subjects and even to the world. As Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905, gave voice to this view, saying that knowledge and study were “a part of the necessary furniture of empire,” and, moreover, “a great imperial obligation.”<sup>405</sup> Curzon’s attitude was typical of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which Westerners felt a “duty to dig and discover, to classify, reproduce and describe, to copy and decipher, and to cherish and conserve,”<sup>406</sup> all that they encountered, particularly in foreign territories. Though in part borne of a genuine curiosity and desire for scientific exploration (one may think of the great scientific explorers of the day, such as Charles Darwin, Alexander von Humboldt, and Georges Cuvier), this gathering, codifying and dissemination of information was not a neutral activity. It was simultaneously an imperial and scholarly endeavor, helping to measure, delineate and describe, and, thereby, to lay claim to the world.

Explorers, officials and specialists attacked the effort of large-scale of documenting and mapping Asia with gusto. Gentlemen explorers intent on being the first to Lhasa typically kept detailed diaries in which they noted local terrain, altitudes, landmarks, and custom. They also frequently used their travels to hunt for the Tibetan sources of India’s great rivers.<sup>407</sup> For the British government, mapping and documentation was touted as practical necessity for the defense of India’s “buffer” zones along its borders, though their forays deep into those exterior zones would suggest they

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<sup>405</sup> Dodin and Räther, *Imagining Tibet*, 231; Curzon said this in 1917 at the inauguration of London’s School of Oriental Studies, now known as the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

<sup>406</sup> Said by Lord Curzon; Dodin, *Imagining Tibet*, 72.

<sup>407</sup> A very fine example of this are the extensive notes taken by Swedish explorer and scholar, Sven Hedin. His diaries also include many sketches and even watercolors of the terrain, people and animals he encountered. Hedin was also very interested in the discovery of the river sources.

were performing reconnaissance for future acquisition.<sup>408</sup> The British governors of India set out to systematically chart the entirety of the Indian subcontinent in an extensive survey process that lasted for decades. Part of this endeavor was the mathematically rigorous and scientifically pioneering Great Trigonometrical Survey of India, which was conducted from 1802 to approximately 1837,<sup>409</sup> and which produced very accurate maps. The survey process continued up to and beyond British borders. Where thorough survey mapping proved difficult, British officials made use of any type of geographic information they could lay hands on, including collecting native maps and commissioning maps from locals.<sup>410</sup> British surveyor Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Montgomerie (1830-1878) even trained native Indians in survey techniques and sent them into Tibet as spy-surveyors, or “pundits.” Members of this group, including Nain Singh and Kishen Singh,<sup>411</sup> entered Tibet disguised as pilgrims, collecting data constantly as they proceeded to Lhasa. They counted their every stride so as to measure distances, noted the boiling point of water to determine altitude, and made extensive notes of river crossings, locations of forts, temperature and weather conditions.<sup>412</sup> Their efforts and their findings remained British state secrets for years. Even for these travellers who appeared to be Indian pilgrims, such a trip was a difficult and dangerous one. Robbery,

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<sup>408</sup> The notion of a territorial “buffer” was coined by Lord Curzon, MacGregor, *Tibet*, 251.

<sup>409</sup> 1802- 1837 according to Short, *The World*, 144; other sources include the Himalayan and border region mapping projects within the GTS, thus extending the end-date of the project to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and sometimes even into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>410</sup> Such as the map of the Chinese- Burmese border created in 1859 for the British superintendent of the area; Short, *The World through Maps*, 166-167.

<sup>411</sup> See Chapter 14 “The Pundits,” in MacGregor, *Tibet* 251-277; Nain Singh entered Tibet in 1866 and Kishen Singh in 1880.

<sup>412</sup> See T.G. Montgomerie, “Report on the Trans-Himalayan Explorations, in connexion with the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India, during 1865-7...” *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1867-1868): 146-175.

assault and even murder was rife on the routes to Lhasa and, if caught with survey equipment, maps or conducting any sort of reconnaissance, local officials could seize the explorer and his possessions and have him, and his party, expelled from the country.<sup>413</sup>

In such a setting, it is easy to see why the Lhasa paintings might have been perceived as valuable sources of information. Indeed, the paintings do convey a certain degree of practical information, particularly architectural, about the Lhasa valley and its inhabitants. Though more knowledgeable viewers may see the topographical and architectural inaccuracies present in nearly all of the paintings, it is not known how critically 19<sup>th</sup> century Europeans would have assessed the geographical validity of the images or what means they would have had to do so. As such, traditional-style images of Lhasa made by local Asian artists were commissioned or collected and published as maps of Lhasa in European and North American geographical atlases and encyclopedia-like accounts of Tibet throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Commissioned Maps: The “Wise” Collection at the British Library**

The so-called “Wise Collection” at the British Library, which contains a Lhasa painting (British Library), is one of the maps of the “buffer” territories commissioned by a British patron from a local artist. The set contains over fifty folios of watercolor and ink images applied to paper, which were bound together with separate explanatory notes in English in a red leather volume stamped with the title “Wise” on the cover. This volume was a part of the India Office collection and later combined with the British Library’s Tibetan Collection. Little is known about its origin and the identity of the

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<sup>413</sup> As nearly happened to French explorer and missionary Abbé Huc in 1846 in Lhasa; MacGregor, *Tibet*, 243-244.

work's patron remains something of a mystery.<sup>414</sup> It is likely that he from Great Britain, possibly a state official or military officer stationed in or near Ladakh.<sup>415</sup> In fact, an image of a foreigner, most likely the patron himself, appears within the album (see folio Add.Or. 3033 from the "Wise Collection," British Library). The handwritten notes, in English, were almost certainly created by the patron and in them he refers to "my lama," who must have been the artist and creator of the album and who was very likely a Tibetan Buddhist from Ladakh. The collection, which can be dated to around 1853 to 1860,<sup>416</sup> includes two types of pictures: map-like images of the terrain, towns and buildings between Leh (Ladakh) and Lhasa, and "anthropological" images that display religious ceremonies (Figure 173), marriage festivities and other common Tibetan cultural activities.

That the images of Tibetan towns and countryside were intended to be maps is certain. The style of rendering makes these images particularly useful in traversing, possibly practically and certainly mentally, the Tibetan landscape. Visual emphasis is on roads, waterways and distinguishable landmarks that may help the traveller on his way. While architectural monuments are rendered with great clarity, they, along with towns and cities, are pared down to the most essential elements and everything else is left out so that the image remains clear and easy to follow. For example, the painting of Lhasa

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<sup>414</sup> A mystery that is being currently untangled through the efforts of Dr. Diana Lange of Humboldt University in Berlin, who has picked up where esteemed scholar Michael Aris had left off just prior to his death.

<sup>415</sup> Special thanks to Dr. Burkhard Quessel, curator for the Tibetan Collection at the British Library, who patiently discussed the collection with me on December 13, 2011 at the British Library; and particularly to Dr. Diana Lange who has been incredibly generous with her research and thoughts on this collection as well as on her research in general.

<sup>416</sup> See Appendix B "British Library" for an explanation of this date attribution.

shows the Potala, the Jokhang and Chakpori very clearly, but leaves out the town entirely and drastically de-emphasizes the local monasteries and other monuments that are typically included in Lhasa paintings (Figure 30 in Appendix B). Visual devices and written comments such as an image of a pointing hand used to indicate the direction “to Lhasa,” or the labeling of the River Kyichu, aid in “navigating” oneself through the map. In fact, many of the folios are intended to be laid side-by-side to create a continuous, flowing landscape, and scrolling depiction of a journey through Tibet. The sensation of travel is greatly enhanced by the composition of the images (Figure 174). The focus and center of each folio is the road, which generally runs parallel to the bottom of the page, and the picture opens out on either side to buildings and mountains much as the traveller might see the land on either side as he proceeds down the road. The image of Lhasa does not directly connect with the continuous landscape and thus has a more static and “stand-alone” feel. The images also contain numbers, assigned to each monument and sometimes to the human figures pictured. These correspond to English notes written in longhand on separate pieces of paper, which give the names of the locations and often a brief explanation, such as “Masho, residence of the brother of the Ladak Raja, who is a Lama.”<sup>417</sup> Unfortunately, not all of the notes remain, and those corresponding to the Lhasa image are missing. Though these images are in an indigenous style they certainly look and act like maps, even perhaps as navigational aids. They contain a great deal of

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<sup>417</sup> Collection Record pertaining to Wise Collection Add.Or.3014, British Library online catalog, [www.bl.uk/catalogues/indiaofficeslectepd/FullDisplay.aspx?RecordId015-000006826](http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/indiaofficeslectepd/FullDisplay.aspx?RecordId015-000006826), accessed on 12/10/11.

factual information that is probably very reliable.<sup>418</sup> However, this collection appears to have been buried and forgotten in the archives of the India Office and it is not clear that it was actually consulted or utilized for its map-like qualities and factual data, or even, surprisingly, in furtherance of their espionage activities in Tibet, either by explorers or government officials.

### **Publishing the Lhasa Paintings**

Rather than commissioning maps, it seems that more frequently geographers and cartographers simply purchased indigenous maps or monument paintings when they came across them. These were collected and published in geographical accounts and books on Tibet. The printed images were interpretations based on original Lhasa paintings or direct reproductions of a Lhasa painting itself. Only rarely was the printed image explained or even referred to, leaving the reader to decipher it as they saw fit. I have already discussed the printed images of Lhasa based on traditional Lhasa paintings that appeared in the 1828 Russian edition of the *Wei Ts'ang t'u chih* and the 1891 version of the same Chinese gazetteer by American William Woodville Rockhill. Here I present further examples of the Western publication of the Lhasa painting at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Separate images of the Potala, the Jokhang and Lhasa town, and also Tashilhunpo monastery appear in L.A. Waddell's 1895 book, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism, with its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism*

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<sup>418</sup> According to Dr. Lange, the maps may be very topographically accurate (though they are not necessarily proportionally precise). In-person discussion with Dr. Diana Lange, Humboldt University of Berlin, in Olomouc, Czech Republic on September 26, 2014.

(Figures 175-177).<sup>419</sup> All three images appear to be by the same artist and the captions note “from a native drawing.” The Tashilhunpo and Jokhang images bear the signature “AR”<sup>420</sup> (possibly “AK” for Kishen Singh) in Roman script in the lower left-hand corner and the Jokhang image also appears to have labeling in a Tibetan script, though the reproduction makes it too blurry to read. These images appear to have been created independently from the text and originally possibly in color, though they are reproduced in black and white. The style of the images is reminiscent of the British Library paintings, which similarly emphasize rivers and roads. The frontal appearance of the Potala with Chakpori minimized to the left and the partial aerial view of the Jokhang is typical of the traditional Lhasa painting. The rendering of the Jokhang is quite awkward. A naïve attempt at perspective causes the walls of the building to appear to fall inward as they rise. Waddell also included reproductions of older European etchings, including Grueber’s image of the Potala from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and photographs, though these were not taken within Tibet itself. The accompanying text of the book focuses on Tibet’s religion, but in doing so also explains Tibet’s religious buildings, pilgrimage, festivals and plays.

The image of Lhasa that appeared in 1901 in the *Geographical Journal* article by T.H. Holdich was discussed in the previous chapter (Figure 44 in Appendix B).<sup>421</sup> This view of the city from the west, in this study referred to as “Nepal 4,” is one of a set of

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<sup>419</sup> Tashilhunpo faces page 260, Jokhang faces page 287, the Potala on page 40 in Laurence Austine Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism: with its mystic cults, symbolism and mythology, and in its relation to Indian Buddhism*, (London: W.H. Allen & Co, 1895).

<sup>420</sup> Or could this be “AK,” the initials used for pundit Kishen Singh?

<sup>421</sup> Holdich, “Lhasa.”

four very similar and probably copied paintings. Holdich's article, though short, is remarkable for being an unusually well informed, critical and erudite discussion of the geographic realities of Lhasa, unsurprising as Holdich was the Superintendent of the Frontier Survey of India and president of the Royal Geographic Society. The presentation of "Nepal 4" is, however, problematic, for it also appears in Sarat Chandra Das' book, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*,<sup>422</sup> and it is unclear which publication came first. Das's book, published in 1902, was a second edition and there seems to be no record of the first edition's publication date and no way to know if this image was included in that edition.<sup>423</sup> Thus, it is not clear who originally published (or found) "Nepal 4."

Sarat Das's account of his travels to Lhasa is replete with many more images of local towns and monasteries beyond "Nepal 4" (Figures 178-181). It contains several tinted foldout reproductions of traditional-style images of the Potala, Lhasa, Tashilhunpo and its nearby town, Shigatse.<sup>424</sup> Interestingly, these break into two sets of very different quality and style. The Potala and Jokhang images are simple. The images focus nearly entirely on these monuments and do not include much of the town or surroundings. The styling and use of color are very similar in both. And interestingly, they are inscribed with English titles and labels. The Shigatse and Tashilhunpo images are far more detailed and precise. They contain English labels and numbers, which correspond to typewritten keys that are included within the illustration. The style of these works is a sort of

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<sup>422</sup> Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*, 151.

<sup>423</sup> William Woodville Rockhill wrote a foreword to Das's book which is dated 1899 and a note indicates that the publication of the volume was much delayed. It is impossible to know whether "Nepal 4" was original to Das's book or reproduced in Das's book after the Holdich article. Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*, x.

<sup>424</sup> See pages: Nepal 4, 151, Potala, 155, Lhasa, 161, Shigatse, 45, and Tashilhunpo, 51; Das, *A Journey*.



amalgam of the traditional Tibetan monument painting and something much, much closer to modern Western maps. They may also be related to a single Tashilhunpo and Shigatse *thangka* held at the American Museum of Natural History (Figure 182). The *thangka* may pre-date and even have been the model for the drawn images in Das's book.<sup>425</sup> Das visited Tashilhunpo in 1882, so it is possible he purchased an image, perhaps even the *thangka* itself, there.

Finally, the 1909 English edition of Ekai Kawaguchi's account of his travels, *Three Years in Tibet*, contains some beautiful images of the Potala, Lhasa town and Tashilhunpo, possibly modeled after traditional paintings or drawings (Figures 183-185). Kawaguchi, a devout Buddhist priest, travelled to Tibet and Lhasa between 1897 and 1903 and again in late 1904. His travel accounts appeared as daily articles in the *Jiji*, a Tokyo newspaper, and the *Maimichi*, an Osaka paper, and were later collected into a single volume.<sup>426</sup> The volume contains a number of evocative and dynamic illustrations depicting the events of his journey, but the images of Tashilhunpo and Lhasa appear more like Tibetan images. In particular, the Lhasa illustration could be a copy of one of the four "Nepal" images given the aerial viewpoint from the westerly direction and the overall feel of the image. Further, as one of the Nepal paintings ended up at the Ryukoku

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<sup>425</sup> The *thangka* appears to date between 1853 and 1882, based on the number of Panchen Lama tombs visible. Das's image also has 4 visible tombs, though it was probably not created so early. It is Schwartzberg's tentative theory that this work was indeed collected by Das and given to Rockhill who may have in turn brought it to the United States. Schwartzberg, "Maps of Greater Tibet," 670. (this is also the reference for the date); this is corroborated by its inclusion in Rockhill's book Rockhill, *Tibet*, frontispiece.

<sup>426</sup> The author himself translated the work into English, though he did not publish it straight away for he thought his account "would not be of any use" after the Younghusband expedition and Sven Hedin's forthcoming travel account. He was encouraged to publish his English version by Annie Besant of the Theosophical Society. Foreword to Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, (Benares and London: Theosophist publishing society, 1909), vi-vii.

University, it could be that Kawaguchi actually collected this image while in Lhasa and used it as a model for the illustration.

At this point a natural question arises: in these cases is the Lhasa image being published as a “map,” as I have asserted, or as an “illustration” to the text? Again, without much accompanying textual discussion, the reader is left to determine the value and significance of the image himself. However, the context in which the images are found is particularly persuasive in determining what these images are. The majority of these publications were intended as scholarly submissions aimed to increase general and specific knowledge about Tibet, its land, people and culture. Whether accurate or not, the textual material is presented as fact and the accompanying images become supporting evidence, further reinforced by the authors’ or publishers’ academic associations. Waddell’s book touts the author’s scholarly authority on the front page by proclaiming his affiliation with the Royal Asiatic Society and Anthropological Institute.<sup>427</sup> Virtually all the other publications were published by, or in association with, well-regarded geographical societies, and this is again made evident right on the front page.<sup>428</sup> Thus, by context and association, these images may come across as implied sources of factual knowledge and even as geographical objects or maps. It is only in Kawaguchi’s account that the images read more as illustrations, but, of course, Kawaguchi was not a scientist-explorer but a Buddhist monk and pilgrim to Lhasa, and his account, while containing plenty of information, is a tale of his journey rather than an academic parsing of facts. I would argue that for Western audiences, the traditional-style Lhasa image was

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<sup>427</sup> Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, title page.

<sup>428</sup> Including Holdich, “Lhasa;” Das, *A Journey*; Rockhill, *Tibet*.

understood, and thus included in academic writings, as a source of factual information and, indeed, as a map.<sup>429</sup> Or, at least, this was one function and the most visible and outward assertion of the above-mentioned works.

In fact, for 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europeans and North Americans, the value offered by the Lhasa painting may have surpassed that of simple purveyor of fact. As J.B. Harley points out, summarized here by Wenshing Chou, “mapmakers and their patrons alike, by generating their own images of social space under the myth that atlases were factual and objective representations of the landscape, conditioned the way their society came to view the power structure both consciously and subliminally.”<sup>430</sup> In other words, though they appear factual, in actuality, maps and atlases (and by extension, the sort of books described above), whether consciously or unconsciously, promote ideological agendas. It is certainly not coincidental that the publication of books and articles on Tibet, a great many of which included pictures or photographs of Lhasa, increased dramatically in the years just prior to Younghusband’s expedition into Tibet. To a certain degree, these publications may have served to elicit public interest in and thereby support for the imperial aspirations concerning Tibet.<sup>431</sup>

Could they also, to some degree, have been a method of laying claim to the region? When Tsybikoff and Norzunov, the Russian subjects and Mongolian pilgrims

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<sup>429</sup> That is, of course, until 1904, when Western academic accounts of Tibet began to use photographs and survey-style maps they created themselves rather than the traditional Lhasa images. The Lhasa painting as a purveyor of geographic fact then became obsolete. See, for instance, Landon, *Lhasa, An Account*.

<sup>430</sup> Chou, *The Visionary Landscape*, 65.

<sup>431</sup> Although it should be pointed out that Younghusband’s entry into Tibet was not wholly sanctioned by the government in London. In fact, his Tibet campaign could be seen as a controversial, potentially insubordinate, act. Nevertheless, the British did not withdraw from Tibet once they arrived. There was a British presence in Lhasa from 1904 until the late 1950’s.

who took those early photographs of Lhasa in 1901 (see Chapter Four), returned to Russia, their pictures were immediately reproduced and placed in albums which were then presented to geographical societies of the world's great colonial powers (Great Britain, Holland, the United States, France, Germany, and possibly others).<sup>432</sup> Though a seemingly innocent gift between geographers, in fact, the publication and dissemination of these images of the city demonstrated to the world that Russian citizens had entered Lhasa. It was less than two years later that Younghusband set out for Lhasa, prompted in part by the fear that the Russians had firmly established a presence in the Tibetan capital. In fact, the year prior, in 1902, Sarat Das published one of the British pundit's maps of Lhasa, "from a plan by A- K-, 1878-79 given in his report,"<sup>433</sup> in *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*, which could be seen as a kind of geographic rebuttal to the Russians, showing that British agents had been to Lhasa decades prior. Thus, not so subtly "scientific" investigation, maps and photography were tools in the furtherance of the "Great Game," the imperial agenda. It is not clear that the Lhasa painting served this function to the same degree as photographs and maps. Certainly the reproduction of the Lhasa painting in Western books (in Russian in 1828, in English in 1891, 1895 and 1902; and, interestingly, in Japanese not long after) demonstrate that their authors were in contact with "natives" of Tibet, as is indicated on their captions (eg. "Potala, the Palace of the Dalai Lama, from a native drawing"),<sup>434</sup> but they do not prove that their owners set foot in the capital, they do not as effectively claim territory. That maps and photographs

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<sup>432</sup> De Vries, "A Present from the Tzar."

<sup>433</sup> Das, *Journey to Lhasa*, facing page 149.

<sup>434</sup> Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 40.

*do* something significant in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century imperialist mind, and possibly this is distinct from what the Lhasa painting does, is corroborated by a member of Younghusband's expedition, who recounted, "tomorrow when we enter Lhasa, we will have unveiled the last mystery of the east. There are no more forbidden cities which men have not mapped and photographed."<sup>435</sup> Indeed, from 1904, British photographs, accounts and maps (in the older, traditional Western sense) poured forth, proclaiming that it was the British who had won the "Great Game"<sup>436</sup> and that Lhasa was no longer "unmapped" and unknown.

Interestingly, the popularity of the Lhasa painting among Westerners does not seem to have faded after 1904. Indeed, perhaps the paintings became more popular at this point. Or at least, probably, they were more available. Collection history of the Lhasa paintings remains rather sparse, but those for which information is available show that the paintings were largely collected after 1904, typically between 1910 and the 1940's, and most often in eastern China (usually Beijing or Tianjin, potentially Chengde, see Appendix B entry for "Prague" and "Stockholm," and less frequently elsewhere). This was after the fall of the Qing dynasty, a time when so much art, including Tibetan, came onto the Chinese market. Additionally, one cannot help but notice that certain European collectors of the Lhasa paintings (Sven Hedin, Jacques Bacot, W.W. Rockhill, and others) were also unsuccessful participants in the infamous "Race to Lhasa." Though they

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<sup>435</sup> From Edmund Chandler's book *The Unveiling of Lhasa, a military expedition to Tibet*, published in 1905, as quoted by Bishop, "The Potala & Western Place Making," *The Tibet Journal*, 19, 5-22 (Summer 1994), 13.

<sup>436</sup> The Great Game ran approximately from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1907 and the Anglo-Russian Alliance.

never attained their goal, they nevertheless “saw” Lhasa in the paintings they purchased. Perhaps this was not unlike pilgrims potentially using these images to perform mental pilgrimages to Lhasa. The paintings allowed the viewer to “visit” the city, even if only in their mind. And finally, the popularity of the paintings at this time may have had more to do with the increasing popularity of “Shangri-La” and western Tibet fantasies than any notion that the images were informative replacements for maps. The “Shangri-La” notion of a pure and enlightened paradise hidden away deep in the Himalayas, a refuge for Europeans hassled by the modern world and threatened by dark hints of war, was launched into popular consciousness by James Hilton’s 1933 novel (and then Frank Capra’s 1937 film), *Lost Horizon*.<sup>437</sup> The Lhasa paintings, which so eloquently show the city to be a happy and pious paradise, would have served admirably to shore up these fantasies and wistful notions. By this time, in the West, these works had lost their utility within the sphere of information and empire and had become, again, visions of Lhasa.

### **Are these maps?**

Despite the various ways they may have been understood, or used, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Lhasa paintings continuously occupy a shifting grey area somewhere between fact and fantasy, map and art. Indeed, in what manner can the Lhasa painting be considered a “map,” if at all?

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<sup>437</sup> There are a number of writers and cultural leaders dreaming up Tibetan paradise fantasies at this time (including members of the German Nazi party). For more see discussion in Brauen, *Dreamworld Tibet*.

Until quite recently in Europe and America, maps were held to be “unproblematic, scientific documents of spatial fact.”<sup>438</sup> This is the Empiricist paradigm, the traditional definition of “map” held from the 18<sup>th</sup> through the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>439</sup> In this model, maps were thought to be flat images of the world as it actually existed, created via astronomical observation, mathematical calculation and “a framework of measured lines.”<sup>440</sup> The successful map was a source of “historical, geographical and ethnic information,”<sup>441</sup> an accurate purveyor of geographical truth, and solely concerned with the physical world. This would have been the view held by those imperialists, explorers, diplomats and traders who collected the Lhasa paintings in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. To them, the Lhasa painting, as a “view” of the city, could hold information (similar to a photograph, or previously, to etchings), but they would not have been “maps” in the strict sense of the word. They were pictures.

Of course, what the difference may be between “map” and “picture,” is a continued and vociferous debate amongst modern scholars, and is moreover the essential problem presented by the Lhasa paintings. Today maps are a means of “communication about space,” “mediators” and “metaphors,”<sup>442</sup> “social constructions,”<sup>443</sup> and “fundamental tools helping the human mind make sense of its universe at various

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<sup>438</sup> Matthew Edney, “Putting ‘Cartography’ into the History of Cartography: Arthur H. Robinson, David Woodward, and the Creation of a Discipline,” *Cartographic Perspectives* 51, (2005), 713.

<sup>439</sup> Matthew Edney, “Putting ‘Cartography’ into the History of Cartography: Arthur H. Robinson, David Woodward, and the Creation of a Discipline,” *Cartographic Perspectives* 51, (2005), 713.

<sup>440</sup> Borne out of the Renaissance re-discovery of Ptolemy’s *Geography* (2<sup>nd</sup> century CE) and promulgated by cartographers during the Age of Exploration and Enlightenment; Alessandro Scafi, *Mapping Paradise, A History of Heaven on Earth*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2006), 86-87.

<sup>441</sup> This comment by William Cunning in 1974; in Edney, “Putting ‘Cartography,’” 713-714.

<sup>442</sup> Harley, *History of Cartography, Vol 1*, 1.

<sup>443</sup> Short, *The World*, 24.

scales.”<sup>444</sup> They may describe not only the physical world, but also “entities that can be experienced, ...abstract ideas[s of] reality, or even alternative realities,”<sup>445</sup> and also “the sacred and mythical space of cosmologies.”<sup>446</sup> For some understanding of the complexity of this issue, we may turn to the debate, outlined by Edward Casey, between Catherine Delano Smith and P.D.A. Harvey. Put simply, their positions on this matter hinge on the degree to which pictographic representation (or the use of recognizable pictorial elements) helps or hinders the functioning of a map. Smith argues, in reference to petroglyph representations of space from prehistoric Europe, that the best map is that which is depicted in plan rather than pictorially, that a “map is more essentially a *map*, more effectively cartographic, in the absence of pictographic elements,”<sup>447</sup> whereas Harvey sees those petroglyphs which include pictorial elements as being more advanced and thus more successful. He says, in reference to one of these, that the map ‘could hardly have been recognized for what [it is] were it not that later carvings in the same tradition...show houses and other features pictorially, in simple elevation.”<sup>448</sup> Essentially, according to Smith, it is this very recognizability of the pictorial image that holds us hostage to factual and concrete interpretations of the “map” image, not allowing for more valuable abstracted and cosmological significances.<sup>449</sup> Casey resolves this issue rather neatly, stating that in terms of pictorialism versus symbolism, one may be valued over the other depending on which modality one desires to see more, “topographic transparency or

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<sup>444</sup> Harley, “Chapter One,” *History of Cartography, Vol 1*, 1.

<sup>445</sup> Scafi, *Mapping Paradise*, 27.

<sup>446</sup> Harley, “Chapter One,” *History of Cartography, Vol 1*, 4.

<sup>447</sup> Edward Casey, *Representing Place, Landscape Painting & Maps*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 134.

<sup>448</sup> Casey, *Representing Place*, 134.

<sup>449</sup> Casey, *Representing Place*, 135.



symbolic numinosity.”<sup>450</sup> The Lhasa paintings are excellent embodiments of this dichotomy within a single image type. On the one hand, they are clearly heavily pictorial. In fact, recognizability is prioritized in these images, the hope being that the viewer could easily connect the pictorial elements to the factual and real-world monuments existing in Lhasa. On the other hand, as we have seen, they are also strongly numinous, displaying as their main message the spiritual and divine essence of the city, which lifted it, in the minds of Tibetans and others, into the ethereal realm of Buddhist paradises and perfected cosmological spaces. In an odd way, they defy the Smith-Harvey model. Their pictoriality might have sometimes fooled viewers into thinking they were seeing an accurate image of a place, but overall, they again and again (in Tibet *and* in the West) achieve a specific numinous vision of space. Though the Lhasa paintings “map” to the real world through their recognizable elements they nevertheless retain their cosmological significance.

Taking another tack, as with the question of portraits, we might wonder whether the Lhasa paintings would have been referred to as “maps” in Tibet. In Joseph Schwartzberg’s comprehensive overview of indigenous Tibetan cartography, and Toni Huber’s similar and very succinct outline of the same,<sup>451</sup> Lhasa paintings are considered a subset of a much larger and more complex tradition of Tibetan cartography. Schwartzberg outlines two main types of Tibetan map: cosmographic maps and

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<sup>450</sup> Casey, *Representing Place*, 136.

<sup>451</sup> Huber’s short discussion of Tibetan maps, sa khra (“saptra”), can be found in Huber, *Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

geographic maps.<sup>452</sup> Cosmographic maps include mandala, *bhavacakra*, lineage fields, Mount Meru world-system, depictions of heavens and hells, and “charts” (i.e. astrological, geomantic, etc.).<sup>453</sup> The much smaller category of “geographic maps,” includes one or two very unique regional and world maps, route maps (“saptra,” see below) and Lhasa paintings and other monument paintings. Huber keeps the Lhasa paintings and other monument paintings within the sphere of cosmology, seeing them as linked to the “paradisiacal landscapes of alternative realities” as “Buddhafields that Tibetans recognized on earth.”<sup>454</sup> Huber states clearly that while the monument paintings were subsets of the Tibetan concept of “zhing gi köpa” (*zhing gi bzod pa*, translated as “Buddhafield” or “arrangement of the (Buddha) field,” or a chart which explicates ideological notions of space, time and causation), the monument paintings were “not maps that Tibetans could use to negotiate their countryside.”<sup>455</sup> Instead, they encouraged “a certain way of relating to the landscape as Buddhafield, maṇḍala” and holy site.<sup>456</sup>

In fact, Tibetans did have maps that could be used for navigation, examples of which include, among others, a map of Lhokha from the British Library and a unique map of the route from Lhasa to Assam from the Schlangitweit Collection in the British Library.<sup>457</sup> Portions of the British Library “Wise” collection certainly fall into this category. These maps are inherently different from the Lhasa paintings. The works focus on the route of the traveller, the landmarks he would use to navigate, and the view that he

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<sup>452</sup> Schwartzberg, “Maps of Greater Tibet,” 607.

<sup>453</sup> Schwartzberg, “Maps of Greater Tibet,” 612.

<sup>454</sup> Huber, *Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

<sup>455</sup> Huber, *Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

<sup>456</sup> Huber, *Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

<sup>457</sup> See image in Schwartzberg, “Maps of Greater Tibet,” 659

would see as he proceeded. They have a dynamic and “experiential” feel and tend to be long, multi-folio affairs which are often unfolded or unrolled as one traces the route. The sense is that these are not static depictions to be hung on a wall, but images to be taken out and used practically. According to Huber, such images are “saptra” (*sa khra*),<sup>458</sup> which translates as “earth-eagle,” or in other words a “bird’s-eye-(view) of the earth,” or “saptra” (alternately spelled *sa bkra*), “earth- beautiful” (or “illuminated,” “variegated,” etc.), both used to mean “map.” Huber also states that “saptra” more readily “resemble the style of Western cartography” and “do not appear to have a particular ritual status.”<sup>459</sup> Again, this loops back to the Smith-Harvey dichotomy. The “saptra” appear to be more essentially topographic and Lhasa paintings seem to be more numinous. But here the dichotomy goes a little further, for one is a mundane object (potentially) used for navigation and the other is a (possible) ritual object that is gazed upon.

It is not clear whether Tibetans themselves would have categorized the Lhasa painting as a “map” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The navigational-type images (“saptra”) may have qualified as maps, but in my opinion it is unlikely that Tibetans would have classified the Lhasa paintings as mere maps, or “variegated” descriptions of earth. They were something much more elevated, images of a very special place on Earth. A place consecrated through the physical presence of the Buddha himself and the layers of sacred history witnessed there; the goal of pilgrims, monks, and visitors; an *axis mundi* that received the devotion, effort and prayers of so many. Though their appearance is highly

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<sup>458</sup> Toni Huber, “A Tibetan Map of IHo-kha in the South-Eastern Himalayan Borderlands of Tibet,” *Imago Mundi*, vol. 44 (1992), 9.

<sup>459</sup> Huber, *Pure Crystal Mountain*, 59.

varied and they cannot be easily categorized, the Lhasa paintings are nevertheless more akin to images of paradise than to anything else. Traditional paintings of Lhasa, though typically unconsecrated, by virtue of their holy subject matter and potential association with sacred pilgrimage, were elevated images, not just of the “real world,” but of the “better-than-real” world. A world to which one might aspire.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

Specialists in Tibetan studies will be familiar with indigenous painted images of Lhasa, having encountered them on the covers of books, in museum halls, and even, potentially, on wall calendars.<sup>460</sup> Probably, like me, when they have come across such an image they have stopped to examine the work delightedly, identifying the sites and figures displayed and chuckling over the amusing vignettes. Maybe they even thought back to their own journey to Lhasa, comparing their experience to the one presented in the painting, seeing both convergence and divergence. What is not possible in most settings, though it turns out to be critical, is the examination of these works not only singly and in-depth, but across the body of material. For once they are assembled together, put side-by-side and compared closely, these paintings begin to reveal far more than they ever did as a solitary image.

This study set out to bring together the Lhasa paintings for collective comparison and analysis as a specific and unique sub-genre of traditional Tibetan art. The dozens of works, currently housed in many different collections, were scrutinized for their material and visual appearance, their possible contextual settings and the modes in which they might be understood. Artistic analysis revealed intriguing similarities in the paintings'

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<sup>460</sup> The International Campaign for Tibet published a wall calendar featuring the ROM Lhasa painting in 2007 through Amber Lotus Publishing. Guimet 1 is featured on the cover of Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*.

visual programs. I have shown that the works display a somewhat standardized iconography composed of specific sites from Lhasa and beyond. Artists made an effort to achieve a particular view of the city, one in which each element was recognizable but which were also selective and abstracted, wherein scale, orientation, perspective and spatial relationships were purposefully manipulated and compositions often made to conform to traditional layouts. My exploration of context was an effort to uncover the purpose and significance of the Lhasa paintings. Art historical analysis revealed that although Lhasa paintings formed a new sub-genre in 18<sup>th</sup> century Tibetan art, they have precedents within Buddhist and Tibetan art and share a particularly close relationship with Tibetan portraiture. Finally, I demonstrated that the Lhasa paintings do not function in only one context but, in fact, offer many modes of operation across different audiences with differing desires and needs that go beyond their previously assumed roles within pilgrimage and basic cartography.

In the introduction, I posed a central question regarding what we might consider the Lhasa paintings to be. Now at the end, I find that the answer to this question remains elusive. Throughout this study I suggested a series of potential categories into which we might place these works, including, “catalog,” “document,” “portrait,” “pilgrimage object” and “map.” My evaluation presented here shows that while each concept *could* be used to describe these images, for one reason or another, none of these are entirely adequate in fully describing the entire group. The Lhasa paintings are truly multivalent, operating simultaneously within multiple frameworks allowing for many viewers with many agendas. And this is an area that provides ample room for further exploration.

It is my hope that this study will provide a foundation for further inquiry into the Lhasa painting. I view my work, not as an exhaustive assessment of the sub-genre, but as a starting point providing usable data and suggesting avenues of consideration useful for scholars, experts and collectors. I am confident that additional Lhasa paintings and related images will be discovered and added to this group, enlarging and enriching our understanding of them. It is also possible that additional finds will suggest entirely new paths of inquiry and debate that were not apparent in the images collected here.<sup>461</sup> These works should be valued, displayed and, most importantly, discussed. It is my hope that scholars and curators will recognize the significance of these paintings and will continue to present them to the public, though perhaps within new frameworks and accompanied by more extensive interpretation.

The Lhasa paintings are important for many reasons. Not only do they highlight the multiple ways in which Lhasa, the city, was perceived and promoted during a significant era in its history, they also serve as entry-points for exploring Tibetan (and non-Tibetan) notions of space, its ritualization, its perceived meanings and its representation. Indeed, on a broader level, the Lhasa paintings emphasize the complexity

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<sup>461</sup> In conversation, Gene Smith suggested that a great many Lhasa paintings remained in Tibet in private household collections (prior to the closing of the borders in the 1960s). He did not mention how he knew of this although his extensive contact with Tibetans in India and elsewhere as well as his considerable knowledge of Tibetan literary and artistic works lends this statement a high degree of authority. Discussion with Gene Smith, May 14, 2009 at his office in New York City.

It is plausible, though as yet there is no concrete evidence to uphold the idea, that perhaps the Lhasa paintings collected by Westerners and other “outsiders” (the paintings that form the basis of this study) are not, in fact, representative of the majority of Lhasa paintings that were created. Perhaps outsiders only collected unusually impressive versions of such paintings and perhaps the larger part of the group (if it exists) appears quite different from this sample. However, until such paintings come to light, we must rely on the works that are currently known and available.

that human beings encounter when they set out to visualize a place within a work of art. The result is so often a “slippery witness,”<sup>462</sup> shifting its message depending on the perspective of the viewer. Images of place are not easy to pin down, to fully explain or to neatly classify. And this remains true of the paintings examined here, these evocative images, these “envisionings” of Lhasa, Tibet’s sacred city.

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<sup>462</sup> J.B. Harley quoting from J.H. Parry, in Harley, “Chapter One,” *History of Cartography, Vol. 1*, 3.



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## **Appendix A: Lhasa Paintings, Comparative Tables**

This appendix provides summary analysis and data on each painting for quick comparison among the works. It is arranged approximately by date of creation. Please see Appendix B for a more thorough discussion and source for attribution of date for each painting. (Note: blank spaces indicate the fact is unknown or unverifiable.)

<b>Painting</b>	<b>Painting Abbreviation</b>	<b>Current Institution</b>	<b>Current Location</b>
Prague	PRAG	National Gallery of the Czech Republic	Prague, Czech Republic
V&A	VA	Victoria and Albert Museum	London, UK
RMA	RMA	Rubin Museum of Art	New York, USA
ROM	ROM	Royal Ontario Museum	Toronto, Canada
Brussels	BRU	Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire	Brussels, Belgium
Paris	PAR	Private Collection	Paris, France
Stockholm	STO	Etnografiska Museet	Stockholm, Sweden
Bod-kyi-thang-ka	BOD	unknown	
Guimet 2	GUI2	Musée Guimet	Paris, France
Guimet 1	GUI1	Musée Guimet	Paris, France
Oxford	OXF	Bodleian Library	Oxford, UK
Basel	BAS	Museum der Kulturen	Basel, Switzerland
Pal	PAL	Private Collection	unknown
British Library	BL	British Library	London, UK
Antwerp	Antwerp	Museum aan de Stroom	Antwerp, Belgium
Anonymous	ANON	unknown	
Wadell	WAD	unknown	
Nepal 4	NEP 4	unknown	
Nepal 2	NEP2	Omiya Library, Ryukoku Univ.	Kyoto, Japan
Nepal 1	NEP 1	Private Collection	Oslo, Norway
Nepal 3	NEP 3	Private Collection	London, UK
Mongolia	MON	Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art	Ulaan Batur, Mongolia
ArtStor	ART	unknown	
Vienna	VIE	unknown	
Olschak	OLS	Private Collection?	Zurich, Switzerland

Table 1. Lhasa Paintings: Name and Current Location

<b>Painting</b>	<b>Date of Creation (approx.)</b>	<b>Height/Width (cm)</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Inscriptions</b>
PRA	1694- 1757	84 x 57.5	vertical	single	Tibetan
VA	1727- 1800	108.4 x 74.5	vertical	other	Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese
RMA	1757- 1804	87.3 x 62.2	vertical	mandala	Tibetan
ROM	1800- 1900	135.4 x 184.6	horizontal	mandala	none
BRU	1800- 1900	88.5 x 120	horizontal	mandala	Tibetan
PAR	1800- 1900		horizontal	mandala	
STO	1800- 1900	182 x 285	horizontal	balanced	Tibetan
BOD	1800- 1900		vertical	other	Tibetan
GUI2	1800- 1910	61 x 45	vertical	mandala	none
GUI1	1815- 1910	98.5 x 72	vertical	mandala	Devanagari
OXF	1815- 1912		horizontal	mandala	Tibetan
BAS	1815- 1912	170 x 205	horizontal	balanced	Tibetan
PAL	1815- 1912	83.8 x 119.4	horizontal	balanced	Tibetan
BL	1856- 1862		horizontal	balanced	Tibetan, English
ANT	1853- 1882	94.5 x 148	horizontal	balanced	Devanagari?
ANON	1850- 1910		horizontal	balanced	
WAD	1882- 1895		horizontal	single	Tibetan
NEP4	Before 1901		horizontal	single	
NEP2	1900- 1916	134 x 168	horizontal	single	Tibetan, English
NEP1	1900- 1930	50 x 66	horizontal	single	none
NEP3	1900- 1936		horizontal	single	English
ART	1900-19333		horizontal	mandala	
MON	1920- 1933	180 x 120 (approx.)	vertical	mandala	Mongolian
VIE	1933- 1970	61 x 78	horizontal	balanced	
OLS	1933- 1973	50 x 70	horizontal	mandala	uncertain

Table 2. Lhasa Paintings: Date, Size and Appearance



<b>Painting</b>	<b>Original Collection Date</b>	<b>Original Collector Name</b>	<b>Collector Nationality</b>	<b>Original Collection Location</b>
PRA	1917-1920s	Vojtech Chytil	Czech	Beijing
VA				
RMA	1910-1940			
ROM	1921	George Crofts	British	Beijing or Tianjin
BRU	1907-1926	Léon Verbert	Belgian	Beijing, other Chinese city
PAR				
STO	1931	Sven Hedin	Swedish	Beijing, other Chinese city
BOD				
GUI2	1907-1910	Jacques Bacot	French	China (perhaps E. Tibet)
GUI1	1907-1910	Jacques Bacot	French	China (perhaps E. Tibet)
OXF	1936-1950?	H.E. Richardson	British	Lhasa?
BAS	unknown	Gerd-Wolfgang Essen	German	unknown
PAL				
BL	1860's?		British	Ladakh?
ANT				
ANON				
WAD	1882-1895	L.A. Waddell (or S.C. Das)	British/ Indian	Tibet, Nepal or India
NEP4			British/ Indian	
NEP2	1902-1916	Bunkokyi Aoki	Japanese	Tibet, China or Nepal
NEP1				
NEP3				
ART				
MON				
VIE				
OLS	circa 1960's	Blanche Olschak	Swiss	Nepal

Table 3. Lhasa Paintings: Collection History

Painting	Event	Dalai Lama	Amban (person or house)	Elephant
PRA				
VA				
RMA	Monlam Chenmo/ Losar			
ROM	Procession	maybe		
BRU	Procession	maybe		
PAR	Procession	maybe		
STO	Sertang	maybe	yes	yes?
BOD	uncertain			
GUI2				yes
GUI1				
OXF	Chipgyur Chenmo & Molam Chenmo	yes (x2)	yes	
BAS	Monlam Chenmo	yes	yes	
PAL	Monlam Chenmo	yes	yes	
BL			yes	
ANT	Procession of Dalai Lama	yes	yes	
ANON				
WAD			yes	
NEP4				
NEP2			yes	
NEP1			yes	
NEP3				
MON	Monlam Chenmo / Losar	13th Dalai Lama		yes
ART				
VIE				
OLS				

Table 4. Lhasa Paintings: Subject Matter Part 1

Painting	Potala	Jokhang	Ramoche	Lukhang	Drepung	Sera	Turx. Bridge	W. Gate	Chakpori
PRA	x								
VA		x	x						
RMA	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
ROM	x	x		x	x	x		x	x
BRU	x	x		x	x	x		x	x
PAR	x	x		x	x	x		x	x
STO	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
BOD	x	x				x			
GUI2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
GUI1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
OXF	x	x	x	x			x	x	
BAS	x	x	x				x		
PAL	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
BL	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
ANT	x	x	?	x	x	x	x	x	x
ANON	x	x				x	x	x	x
WAD		x	x				x		
NEP4		x							
NEP2		x					x		
NEP1		x							
NEP3		x					x		
MON	x	x		x	x	x		x	x
ART	x	x			x	x		x	
VIE	x	x							
OLS	x	x	x	?	x	x	x	x	x

Table 5. Lhasa Paintings: Subject Matter Part 2

Painting	Addl. Buildings (in Lhasa)	Outside Lhasa Valley			
		Ganden	Tashi- lhunpo	Samye	Other
PRA					
VA	Gyurmé Dratsang				
RMA	Tengyeling				Sangpu Neutog
ROM				maybe	
BRU				maybe	
PAR				maybe	
STO		x			
BOD					
GUI2		x	x	x	
GUI1		x		x	many others
OXF	Tengyeling, Meru Dratsang, Elephant House			x	
BAS	Tengyeling, Meru Dratsang, Jebumgang				
PAL	Tengyeling, Nechung				
BL	Nechung?				
ANT		x	x		
ANON	Tengyeling				
WAD					
NEP4	Jebumgang, Meru Dratsang				
NEP2	Tengyeling, Meru Dratsang, Jebumgang				
NEP1	Tengyeling, Meru Dratsang, Jebumgang				
NEP3	Tengyeling, Meru Dratsang, Jebumgang, Lho Rigsum Lhakhang				
MON	Meru Dratsang				
ART		x	x	x	unknown monastery
VIE					
OLS					

Table 6. Lhasa Paintings: Subject Matter Part 3

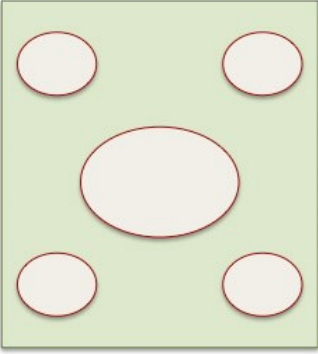
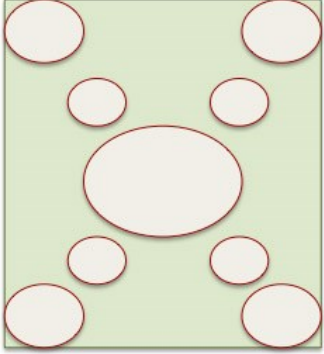
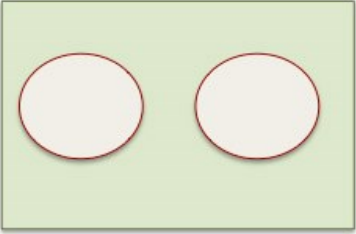
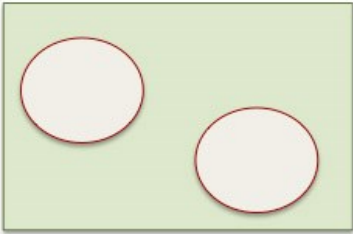
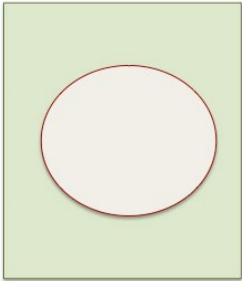
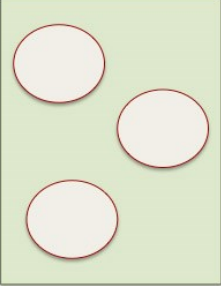
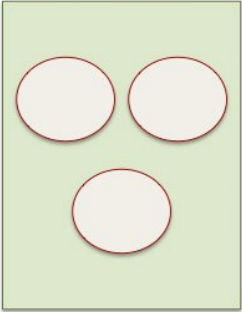
		<p><b>MANDALA</b>  RMA  ROM  Paris  Brussels  Guimet2  Guimet1  Oxford  ArtStor  Mongolia  Olschak</p>
		<p><b>BALANCED</b>  Stockholm  Basel  Pal  British Library  Antwerp  Anonymous  Vienna</p>
		<p><b>SINGLE</b>  Prague  Waddell  Nepal 4  Nepal 2  Nepal 1  Nepal 3</p>
		<p><b>OTHER</b>  V&amp;A (right)  Bod-kyi-thangka (left)</p>

Table 7. Lhasa Paintings: Composition Style

## **Appendix B: Lhasa Paintings, Individual Analysis**

This appendix contains all Lhasa paintings referenced in this study. It presents an analysis of subject matter (see also discussion of individual buildings in Chapter 2), date of creation, style, material condition and collecting history for each painting, where possible, and further discussion as appropriate. The paintings are arranged in approximate chronological order based on a probable date of creation. The names of paintings are abbreviations of their most recently known location, as noted in Chapter 1 and Appendix A. All translations of Tibetan inscriptions are by the author.

**PRG- (Prague)**



Figure 1. "Prague," 1694-1757, National Gallery of the Czech Republic (B. Arthur)

**Basic Facts:**

Current Location: Kinsky Palace, Národní Galerie v Praze, (National Gallery of the Czech Republic), Prague, Czech Republic  
Current I.D. #: Inv. No. Vm 5629  
Date (approx.): Late 17<sup>th</sup>- mid 18<sup>th</sup> c (1694-1757)  
Size and format: 84 x 57.5 cm, vertical format

Inscriptions: Tibetan (U-med, *dbu med*)

### Overview:

This is the oldest Lhasa painting I have found to date. As it is an image of only a single monument, the Potala, it is perhaps not truly a “Lhasa” painting. However, it is my belief that this may have come from a set or been cut from a larger painting that would have included the Jokhang and other monuments of the Lhasa valley (see below) and thus should be included in this study.<sup>463</sup>

### Subject Matter & Iconography:

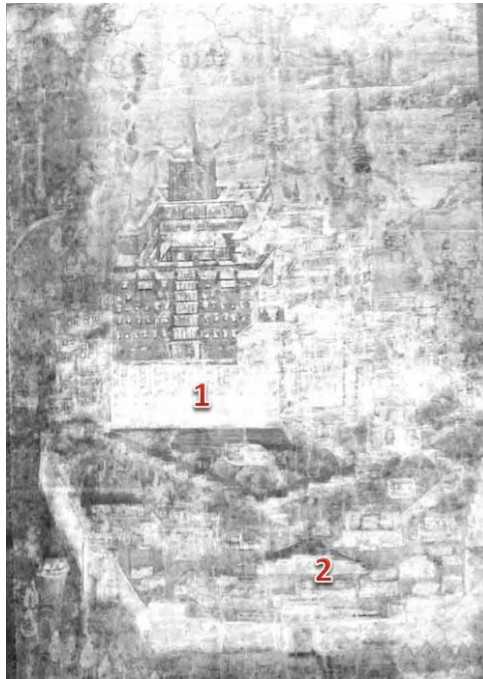


Figure 2. "Prague," 1694-1757, National Gallery of the Czech Republic (B. Arthur)

1. Potala
2. Zhöl village

Note: There are no events, people or animals to be found in this work. However, symbolic figures can be found in the top story and a rooftop temple of the Potala. These figures are in black ink on gold backgrounds and they may indicate works of art found in these locations, or may be representations of the Dalai Lamas whose tombs (or *chortens*) are found in these locations. Damage to this work makes it impossible to fully identify these figures. Possibly the figure on the top is Chenrezig in an attitude of ease with long

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<sup>463</sup> Special thanks to Lenka Gyaltso at the Kinsky Palace for bringing this work to my attention. I am deeply indebted for her foresight and assistance.



hair, simple garments, and one arm draped over a knee. The figures shown in the floor below may be various Dalai Lamas.

**Inscriptions:**

This image contains a single inscription in Tibetan U-med script. The inscription is located below Zhöl village, below and to the left of the main door of the wall. It is in black ink and the hand-writing is very clear and careful. This appears to have been inscribed by someone quite adept at Tibetan, most likely a Tibetan monk, artisan or scholar.

1. *po ta la* - Potala

**Composition:**

This work is considered to be a “single” –style composition containing only one monument (the Potala).

**Date of Creation:** 1694-1757

This date is based on the existence of two golden roofs on the Potala, one is probably the Phagspa chapel (based on the image of Avalokiteshavara or Phagspa) and one is the tomb of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (finished 1694). The next tomb-roof to appear would be the 7<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama’s in 1757. This dating seems consistent with the style of the painting.

**Condition & Material:**

The condition of this piece is not good. The surface of the painting has been very worn and damaged. Most of the pigment on the trees has been lost and overall the pigment has darkened, in particular on the left side of the painting. There are dark dots throughout that appear to be oily. The painting has a line of tiny holes, probably from stitching, along the left side and bottom edge. This may indicate an earlier frame.

Currently the piece is framed very simply in dark blue silk. According to the curator, Lenka Gyaltso, this frame was created by the museum to exactly reproduce the simple silk frame the work arrived in. The museum retained the original frame. Upon inspection it is clear that the darkening of the painting on the left side matches up with a darkening of the older silk frame. Clearly this work was in this older frame for some time and possibly an oil lamp or candle placed underneath on the left side created this damage.

The back of the work shows no markings of any kind. The museum has glued very thin paper to the back to stabilize the painting. This is translucent, allowing for the painting to show through. The painting is kept in storage.

## Collection History:

This piece was purchased by Vojtech Chytil (1896-1936), probably in Beijing in 1918.<sup>464</sup> Chytil was a Czech diplomat, art collector and painter, who lived and worked in Beijing in the 1920s. He founded and led the Beijing Academy's department of Western art where he taught western painting techniques, forming a close connection with many artists of the day, including Qi Baishi.<sup>465</sup> Chytil arrived in China in 1917<sup>466</sup> and, according to Lenka Gyaltsso, curator of the Chytil collection, began to collect Tibetan works at that time. Chytil later introduced Chinese and Asian art to the Czech Republic through several exhibitions. A catalog prepared by him for his 1931 exhibition titled "Art of Tibet, Mongolia and contemporary China," shows that he had an in-depth knowledge and understanding of Asian art.<sup>467</sup>

Unfortunately, there are no extant collecting notes or receipts. There are no details on the cost of this painting or exactly where or how it came into Chytil's collection. This work was purchased by the National Gallery of the Czech Republic from the Chytil collection in 1983.<sup>468</sup> The two pages of museum records for this work are available.

## Further Comments and Speculation:

### 1. *Is this work cut from a larger work?*

Various features of this work indicate that it may actually be a fragment of a larger and more complete original painting or painting set that may have included the Jokhang and the town of Lhasa. First, it is very rare to find a painting of the Potala alone. Second, the building is labeled, which suggests that more than one building was present in the original painting or set and thus labelling was necessary to distinguish each building. Thirdly, the composition cuts off the lower walls of Shol and the Potala along the right side (proper left) of the painting and the bottom of the composition appears to be cut off in the middle of the tree line. On the left side of the painting (proper right) there are a series of tiny holes, indicating an older line of stitching, probably for an earlier cloth frame. These lines are only found on the left side and top, but not on the right or bottom. Perhaps the original larger painting was framed and then removed from the frame, cut apart and crudely reframed.

If this piece was cut from a larger original painting, it seems that the original may have been similar to the one from Basel, that is, it may have been a horizontal composition that balanced the Potala on the left side with the Jokhkang and town of Lhasa on the right side. It seems unlikely that the three monastic seats or other buildings outside of Lhasa would have been included as there is not much room in the composition

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<sup>464</sup> Discussion with Lenka Gyaltsso, Sept. 23, 2014 in Prague, Czech Republic.

<sup>465</sup> Sullivan, Michael and Franklin D. Murphy. *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 43.

<sup>466</sup> Sullivan, *Art and Artists*, 43.

<sup>467</sup> Association of Fine Artists; Exhibition catalog: Exhibition Hall Manes (Prague Czech Republic); *Art of Tibet, Mongolia and contemporary China*. (Prague: Riegrovo Nábřezí, 1931).

<sup>468</sup> Discussion with Lenka Gyaltsso, Sept. 23, 2014 in Prague, Czech Republic.

for these to be placed behind or above the Potala. Potentially some or all of the monastic seats were included if the original painting was significantly larger on all four sides, though this seems like an unlikely possibility. If this painting was originally a part of a set, then it seems probable that such a set would include paintings of the Jokhang, the three monastic seats, and possibly other monuments such as Samye and Tashilhunpo. Presumably each painting would have displayed a single monument and been labelled with the monument's name.

## 2. *Did Vojtech Chytil own more Lhasa paintings?*

The collector, Vojtech Chytil, displayed this painting in 1931 in Prague in an exhibition and sale, “Umění Mongolska a Současné Číny” (“Art of Tibet, Mongolia and China Today”).<sup>469</sup> This exhibition included over several hundred works from his collections. The catalog contains no photographs or reproductions, but does list two paintings of Lhasa (#6 and #36). While museum records indicate that this work was item #36,<sup>470</sup> it seems more likely it was #6. The exhibition catalog lists the two works this way:

- “6. *Pholded na Lhasu (V červené části kláštera bydlí Dalai lama) (Tibet) Neprodejně*” Translation: “6. Potala of Lhasa (the Dalai Lama lives in the red part of the monastery) (Tibet) not for sale”
- “36. *Lhasa. Počátkem 18. Století převezeno do Jeholu. Neprodejně*”. Translation: “36. Lhasa. Early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Brought from Jehol. Not for sale”.<sup>471</sup>

Though this painting may have once included the Jokhang and town of Lhasa, it is clear from the damage that it existed as a painting of only the Potala for some time. Thus it seems, Chytil would most likely have referred to this painting as the “Potala” rather than “Lhasa.” It is, however, very interesting that he notes the other painting of Lhasa as coming from Jehol, indicating perhaps that paintings of Lhasa were extant and available for purchase in that location as has been discussed in Chapter 5. The collection at the National Gallery currently contains another monument painting (Inv. No. Vm 5622; of an unidentified, possibly Bhutanese, monument), however it seems likely that painting #36 is a work that is no longer a part of the collection. According to the curator, Lenka Gyaltsso, Chytil's wife continued to sell or barter works from Chytil's collection until her death in 1982.<sup>472</sup>

### **Exhibited/Published:**

- Association of Fine Artists; Exhibition Hall Manes (Prague Czech Republic); *Art of Tibet, Mongolia and contemporary China*. Prague: Riegrovo Nábřezí, 1931
- Exhibited “Ptirusky” 1983

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<sup>469</sup> Association of Fine Artists, *Art of Tibet, Mongolia and contemporary China*.

<sup>470</sup> Museum record for Vm 5629, Národní Galerie v Praze (National Gallery of the Czech Republic), Prague.

<sup>471</sup> Association of Fine Artists, *Art of Tibet, Mongolia and contemporary China*: 17, 19

<sup>472</sup> Discussion with Lenka Gyaltsso, Sept. 23, 2014 in Prague, Czech Republic.

- Exhibited “Vojtech Chytil,” Brno. 1989
- Exhibited “Orient umění,” Pardubice. 1991

**V&A (Victoria & Albert)**



Figure 3. "V & A", 1727-1800, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (V&A website)

**Basic Painting Facts:**

Current Location: South and Southeast Asia Collection (SSEA), Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

ID #: IS.1-1972

Date (approx.): 1727-1800

Size and format: 108.4 x 74.5 cm; vertical format

Inscriptions: Tibetan (U-med, *dbu med*), Mongolian, Chinese

**Overview:**

This work is a particularly old painting and may have originally been part of a set of thangkas (see below).

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**

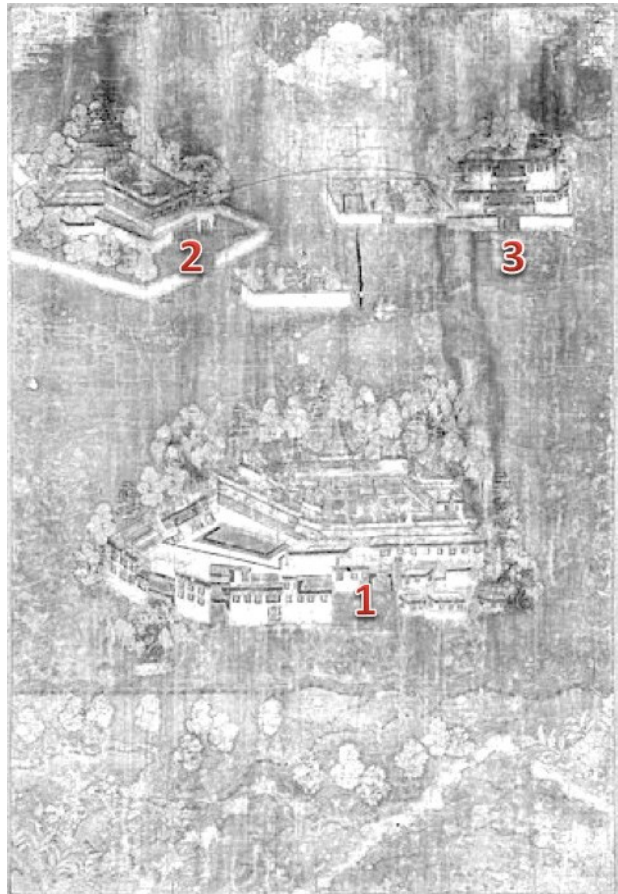


Figure 4. "V & A", 1727-1800, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (adapted from V&A website)

1. Jokhang
2. Ramoche
3. Gyumé Dratang (*rgyud smang grwa khang*)

Note: The Gyumé Dratang, or the "lower Tantric College" is one of two Tantric Colleges in Lhasa. The Gyumé Dratang is the older of the two colleges. It was founded in 1433 by Jé Sherab Sengé and established at its current location at some time between 1721 and 1727, during the tenure of Khangchenedey Chingbadur Sonam Gyalpo (*khang chen nas de'i ching sba dur bsod nams rgyal po*) as college head. The college was an

institute of higher learning for approximately 500 monks who had already completed their monastic education at Sera, Ganden, Drepung or other monasteries. According to André Alexander, “becoming the abbot of either [tantric college] was an established link on the path to become the Ganden throne holder (dGa’-ldan-khri-pa), the formal head of the Gelugpa school.”<sup>473</sup> According to Victor Chan the school ranked just below Sera, Ganden and Drepung. Here it is identified by inscription, but typically it can be recognized in paintings mostly by its location in the composition: it will be found on the northern side of the major east-west road, the Dekyi Shar Lam, abutted on one side by a small green park and on the other by the tall and broad three-story square building known as Meru Dratsang.

As for the Ramoche, from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the temple was used as a monastery to house the Upper Tantric College (Gyurtö Dratsang) of Lhasa. The Upper and Lower Tantric Colleges (Gyürme Dratsang) were institutes of higher learning for advanced Gelugpa monks from the three monastic seats.<sup>474</sup> This work highlights this relationship showing the Jokhang flanked by the Ramoche and the Lower Tantric college in an otherwise empty field.

### **Inscriptions:**

Each building is labeled in three languages: Tibetan (in U-med script), Mongolian and Chinese. The Tibetan is written in black ink and in a very clean and careful hand. The Mongolian and Chinese characters are written in thin gold ink, which is difficult to see. Tibetan inscriptions:

1. *lha sa*- Lhasa (the Jokhang)
2. *rgyu smad grwa khang*- Gyürmé Dratsang
3. *ra mo che*- Ramoche

### **Composition:**

This painting is classified as an “other”-style of composition. It is basically symmetrically balanced, the Jokhang forms the central element and a triangle formation is created with the Ramoche and the Tantric College above it.

### **Date of Creation:** 1721- 1800

The Victoria and Albert Museum website dates this work to the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>475</sup> The 17<sup>th</sup> century is probably far too early for this painting, particularly as it appears that the Gyürme Dratsang is the newer form of the institute built sometime between 1721 and 1727. The end-date cannot be established with certainty, though the style of this work appears earlier, and thus an 18<sup>th</sup> century date seems reasonable.

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<sup>473</sup> Alexander, *Temples of Lhasa*, 157.

<sup>474</sup> Chan, *Tibet Handbook*, 171.

<sup>475</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum website, accessed May, 10, 2012, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O455998/tangka-painting-tangka/>

**Condition & Material:**

From photographs available it is clear that there is some staining and some loss of paint. Stains, perhaps caused by water damage, can be seen mostly at the top of the composition, extending partway, or in a single place nearly entirely, down the painting. The chipping of the paint surface makes it particularly difficult to read some of the labels. However, overall the painting remains in fairly good condition.

**Collection History:**

The collection history of this work is currently unknown.

**Further Comments and Speculation:***1. Part of a set?*

It is possible that this image was part of a set that would have included other images of Lhasa monuments (or other monuments from elsewhere). As yet, these other images have not been found. Based on eyewitness accounts (see Chapter 5), Tibetan monuments were sometimes painted in individual images which were then grouped as a set. As this painting has an unusual and seemingly incomplete iconography, it is easy to imagine it as a part of a set that would include images of the Potala and perhaps the three Monastic Seats.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- V&A website: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O455998/tangka-painting-tangka/>



**RMA- (Rubin)**



Figure 5. “RMA”, 1757-1804, Rubin Museum of Art, New York (Himalayan Art Resources website, #65848)

**Basic Facts:**

Current Location: Rubin Museum of Art, New York, USA  
ID #: C2009.4  
Date (approx.): 1757-1804  
Size and format: 87.3 x 62.2 cm; vertical format

Inscriptions: Tibetan (*dbu can*)

**Overview:**

This image is particularly precise and very detailed. It also includes an unusual monument from just outside the Lhasa valley, the Sangpu Neutog temple dedicated to Prajñāparamita.<sup>476</sup>

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**

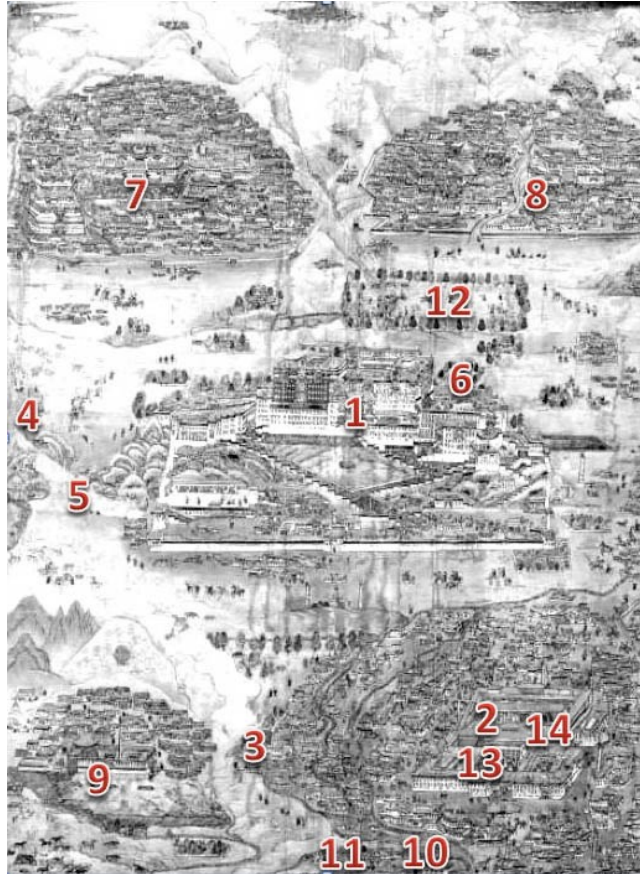


Figure 6. “RMA”, 1757-1804, Rubin Museum of Art, New York (adapted from HAR website)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Ramoche
4. Chakpori and Medicine College
5. Western Gate

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<sup>476</sup> Special thanks to Ariana Maki for helping me access and document this painting and to Dr. Gareth Sparham for his discussion of Sangpu Neutog and the inscriptions found on this painting.

6. Lukhang
7. Drepung
8. Sera
9. Sangpu Neutog Monastery (see below)
10. Turquoise Bridge
11. Tengyeling (see below)
12. Horseback archery contest
13. Lama teaching at the Jokhang
14. Monks standing in front of the Jowo and other Jokhang statues

Event: Monlam Chenmo (?)

This painting shows activities such as the archery contest and teaching at the Jokhang that may be referencing activities typical of Monlam Chenmo or Losar (New Year). See chapter 3 for more.

Notes: This painting has a particularly high level of human activity being shown. It is particularly rich with pilgrimage activity such as: pilgrims on the Lingkhor and at the Potala, pilgrims in the Barkhor, and watching debates and receiving teachings at the monasteries. It includes people of various ethnicities (Muslim and Mongolian), though notably there do not appear to be any Chinese people included. There are also many animals, including sheep, horses, yak, dogs and camels.

The inclusion of Sangpu Neutog monastery (*gsang phu ne'u thog*) is very unusual. This is a significant temple dedicated to Prajnaparamita, the “Perfection of Wisdom” concept typically personified as a female deity,<sup>477</sup> and founded in 1073 by a close disciple of Atisa.<sup>478</sup> Its older name, Neutog, or “Source of Learning,” references its role as an important institute of Buddhist doctrinal study. Over the years the monastery passed between the Kadampa (the monastic branch that was eventually “reformed” into the Gelugpa) and Sakyapa sects. According to Victor Chan, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was little more than a summer retreat complex for Gelug and Sakya monks.<sup>479</sup> The monastery is located about a day’s walk south of Lhasa. In the Rubin painting, the monastery is given a place of prominence in the lower left corner. Compositionally it is equated to the elements in the other corners: Lhasa town, Drepung and Sera. The reason for the inclusion of this temple is unknown. It seems likely to have been commissioned by someone with a personal connection to this monastery, perhaps a monk who had studied there.

Tengyeling monastery (*bstan-rgyas-gling*) was the most important of the Four Royal Monasteries and its abbots were often chosen to serve as regent to the Dalai Lama.<sup>480</sup> It lies to the west of the Jokhang in a tree-lined park setting near the western entrance to the city and just to the northeast of the turquoise bridge. Its location is its

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<sup>477</sup> Thanks to Dr. Gareth Sparham for explaining the significance of this site to me.

<sup>478</sup> Berzin, “A Survey of Tibetan History.”

<sup>479</sup> Chan, *Tibet Handbook*, 490.

<sup>480</sup> Chan, *Tibet Handbook*, 169.

most recognizable feature, but the monastery itself often appears quite large with a broad square courtyard on its southern side and a main structure three stories high with a smaller fourth story. Significantly, the monastery was partially destroyed in 1912 and its lands were used for new buildings. Tengyeling is thus a useful building to use in dating paintings, as demonstrated by Knud Larsen.<sup>481</sup>

### Inscriptions:

Inscriptions are in Tibetan (Ü-can script) in gold letters. Not all of the inscriptions are still legible, in some places the paint has flaked off. The inscriptions also drop syllables, making them difficult to translate.

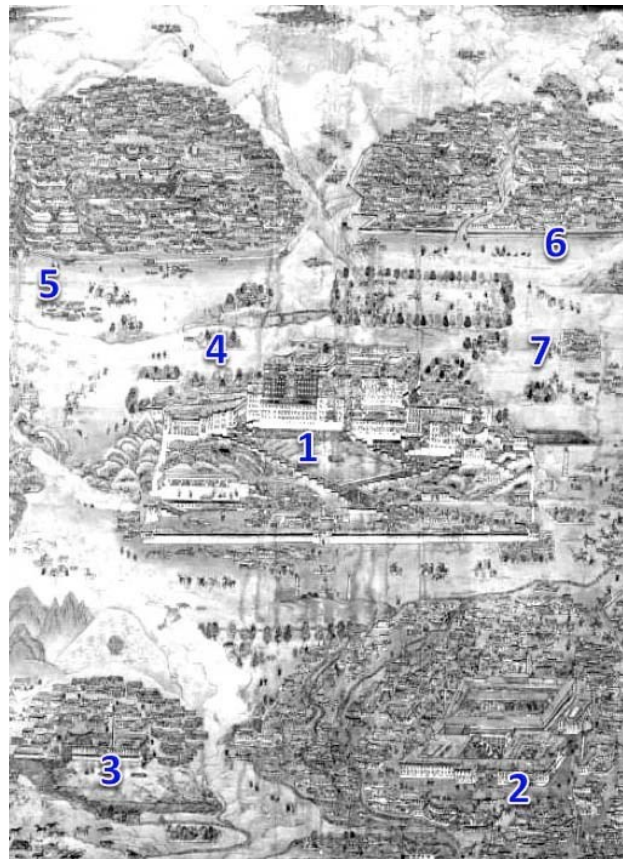


Figure 7. “RMA”, 1757-1804, Rubin Museum of Art, New York (adapted from HAR website)

1. *gtan skyabs bla ma'i gdan sa gnas chen ri po...* (unreadable letters) ...*dan/* possibly meant to be: *gtan skyabs bla ma'i gdan sa gans chen rin po che'i gdan;*

<sup>481</sup> Knud Larsen and Theresia Hofer, “Pillars of Tibetan Medicine: The Chagpori and the Mentsikhang Institutes in Lhasa,” in *Bodies in Balance* ed. Theresia Hofer, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), 262-264.

- the Rinpoche's (earthly) seat, the holy site, the home of the great lama, the everlasting refuge; (Potala)
2. *chos 'khor lha sa/* the dharma-wheel of Lhasa; (Jokhang-Tsuglakhang)
  3. *gsang ne'u thog/* (Sangpu Neutog monastery)
  4. (unreadable letters)...*la tshogs khang/* ... assembly hall; (unknown location)
  5. *ya ldan 'bras spungs/* Drepung one of the pair;<sup>482</sup> (Drepung)
  6. *se ra theg chen gling/* Sera Buddhist monastery;<sup>483</sup> (Sera)
  7. *grwa phye thang/* probably meant to be *grwa bzhi phyi thang* (Trapshi Tshiher, the military field)

### **Composition & Style:**

This is a “mandala”-style composition. The Potala is the main subject surrounded by the Jokhang and town of Lhasa, Drepung and Sera monastery and Sangpu Neutog monastery in each corner. The work appears to be in a Tibetan style. This is a particularly careful and accurate painting. Though the details are small, it may be possible to identify even individual homes or buildings in Lhasa town. Toward the edges of the town, the buildings become more generic.

### **Date of Creation:** 1757-1804

This painting can be dated with some degree of certainty, though it appears to be surprisingly early given the style. There are only two golden roofs on the Potala, one the tomb of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and the other the Phagspa chapel or the tomb of the 7<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (d. 1757). As the 8<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama died in 1804 and his tomb is not seen here, this must pre-date 1804 and thus indicates a particularly early date for this painting. Because the image overall is so detailed and so accurate, it would be strange to imagine that the number of tomb-roofs was a mistake or a deliberate anachronism. Nevertheless, the precise and map-like style of this painting is surprising for something that may be that old. This may be why it was dated simply as 18<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> century in *Bodies in Balance*. I am persuaded by the level of detail and refinement to go with the more precise tomb-roof-based dates: 1757-1804. However, if the second roof is actually the Phagspa chapel then this work could be as old as 1694 (which seems impossibly early).

### **Condition & Material:**

Material is cloth with colored pigment and gold.

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<sup>482</sup> This is very unusual in referring to Drepung, here the “pair” probably means Drepung and Sera.

<sup>483</sup> *Theg chen* refers to Mahayana Buddhism.

The condition of this work is very good. There are signs of damage, particularly in vertical lines that can be found toward the center of the work. This appears to perhaps be water damage. I also viewed the back of the painting and found no marks of any kind.

**Collection History:**

This work was acquired between 1910 and 1940 by a French collector, who has remained anonymous. It was sold by Sotheby's in New York to the Rubin Museum on March 18, 2009 (Sotheby's sale # N08525, Lot # 53) for USD \$ 34,375 (estimated price prior to sale was \$15,000-20,000).<sup>484</sup>

**Exhibited/Published:**

- *Bodies in Balance*, 259
- Himalayan Art Resource (HAR# 65848)

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<sup>484</sup> Sotheby's Website, Accessed February 24, 2009, [www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetails.jsp?lot\\_id=159522010](http://www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetails.jsp?lot_id=159522010); and Accessed November 2, 2014, <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2009/indian-southeast-asian-art-n08525/lot.53.html>.

## ROM- (Royal Ontario Museum)

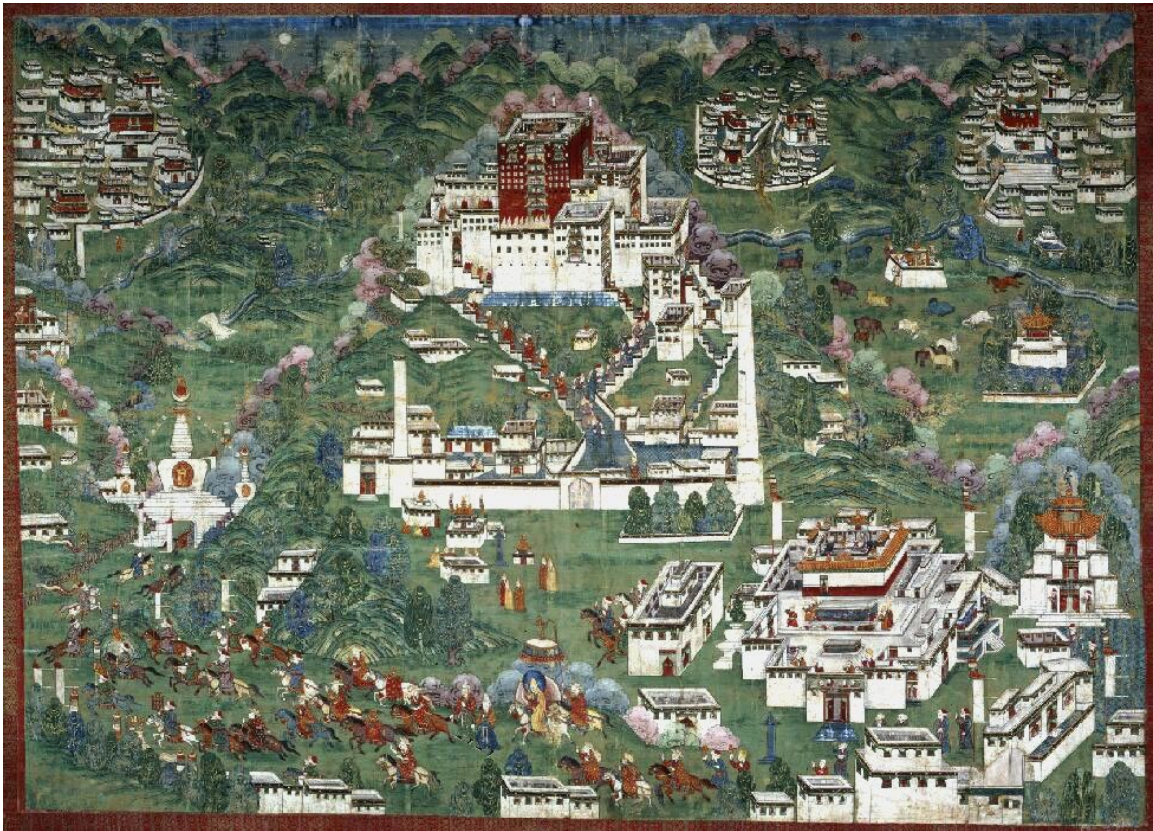


Figure 8. "ROM", 1800-1900, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (Himalayan Art Resources website)

### Basic Painting Facts:

Current Location:	The George Crofts Collection, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada
ID #:	921.1.82
Date (approx.):	1800-1900 <sup>485</sup>
Size and format:	184.6 x 135.4 cm; horizontal format
Inscriptions:	none

### Overview:

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<sup>485</sup> Marilyn Rhie dates this painting to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 374-375.

This is one of three works that appear to be copies (see Brussels and Paris). They may be copies of one another or derive from another unknown source perhaps a mural or another painting. Of the three, this painting from the ROM is the finest and largest example (see Brussels and Paris entries for more discussion). This painting also has the most complete collection records I have yet come across.<sup>486</sup>

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**

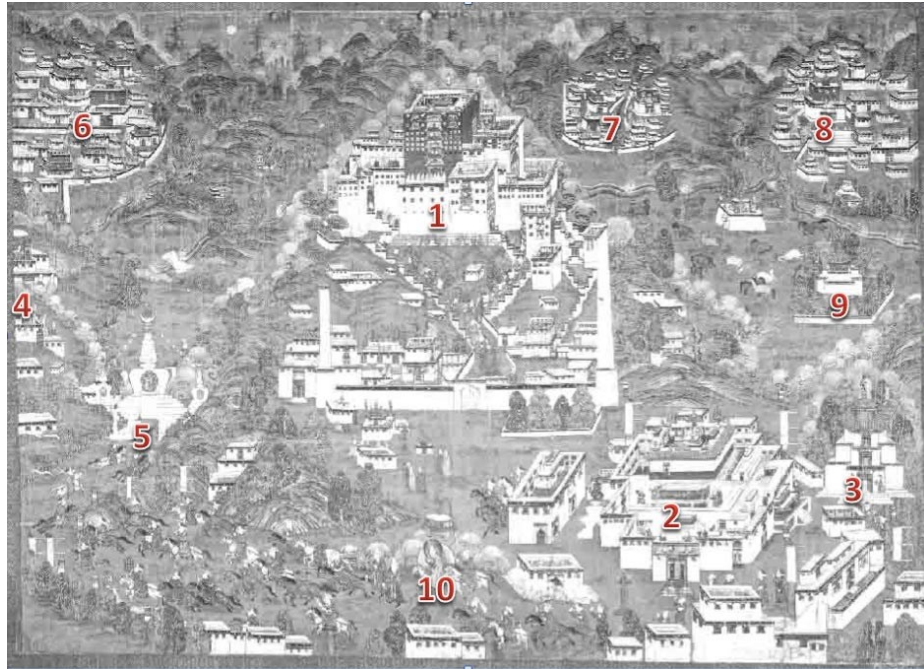


Figure 9. "ROM", 1800-1850, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (adapted from HAR website)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Samye? (or Ramoche)
4. Chakpori and Mentsikhang (Medicine college)
5. Western Gate
6. Drepung monastery
7. Sera Monastery
8. Ganden Monastery
9. Lukhang
10. High Lama on procession

Event: Unidentified Procession of a High Lama

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<sup>486</sup> Special thanks to Deepali Dewan, Beth Knox and Sarah Richardson for their help in viewing and documenting the painting and helping me access the museum's extensive archives of record books, notes and letters.



The procession appears to be moving away from the town, through the Western gate and potentially out of Lhasa. The entourage is comprised of Tibetan nobles, warriors and monks. The lama is not fully identifiable. He is on horseback, wearing a gold robe and yellow cap. He is framed within a blue halo and pink aura and is followed closely by an attendant holding a decorative umbrella over his head. Compositionally, the lama is located directly beneath the Potala on its central vertical axis. This suggests that this may be the Dalai Lama.

### **Composition & Style:**

This is considered a “mandala”- style of composition. The central element is the Potala and in the four corners may be found the Jokhang, Drepung, Sera and the lama procession.

Based on its style, this work may have been made in Eastern Tibet, Mongolia or China.<sup>487</sup> The town of Lhasa is indicated by a handful of generic buildings. There is no inclusion of hermitages, houses or estates, government buildings, or the turquoise bridge. The buildings are recognizable but very simplified. This image makes extensive use of under drawings, which are visible particularly where the paint has flaked off the trees and in and around the left side of the Potala palace.

### **Date of Creation:** 1800- 1900

There is no way to date this image with certainty. On the Potala roof we see the 7<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama’s tomb, which means it must date after his death in 1757. However, this image is likely a copy and could have been created long after its model. If this image does indeed contain Samye (see below), then it may pre-date the 1850’s when the Samye roof was changed (compare to British Library Add.Or. ), though again this could be a later copy of an earlier model. It clearly has a firm end-date in 1921 when it was purchased by George Crofts. In general, a date of 1800-1900 seems reasonable.

### **Condition & Material:**

The material is cloth with colored pigment, ink and some gold. The work was framed in cloth by George Croft’s staff after purchase. This was removed and the piece was placed into a glass box-frame by the staff of the ROM in the 1990s.<sup>488</sup>

The condition of this piece is very good. There is some vertical cracking on the surface of the painting, probably due to rolling and unrolling the work. There are some minor markings, possibly due to water damage, on the lower right corner and top center edge. It was not possible to examine the back of the painting, however curatorial notes show that the back was unmarked.

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<sup>487</sup> Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 374-375; Jeff Watt says that the style may be Chinese, in-person discussion in November 19, 2014, in New York.

<sup>488</sup> Discussion with the curator and ROM staff including, Deepali Dewan, Beth Knox and Sarah Richardson. June, 23, 2011.

## Collection History:

Previous ID #: J141, Crofts 2193, ROMA 3675a, 2187

This work was purchased by George Crofts in June 1921 in Beijing or Tianjin for 25 Mexican dollars.<sup>489</sup>

George Patrick Joseph Crofts (1871-1925) was a wealthy fur trader from Great Britain. He travelled frequently between China and North America, having a trade office based in Tientsin by 1902. He was a collector of Chinese art and antiquities and also purchased a number of Tibetan or Tibetan-style artworks. He had a particularly close relationship with the director of the Royal Ontario Museum, Charles Trick Currelly. They met in 1918 and Crofts offered pieces from his collection to the fledgling museum at very low prices. Crofts and Currelly corresponded regularly after that and Crofts began to specifically look for items to purchase for the museum to help enlarge and round out their collection.<sup>490</sup> Fortunately, most of these letters, along with item lists, shipping reports, insurance reports, Crofts' own collection notebooks and other documents, are preserved today in museum archives.

There are several references to the Lhasa painting that Crofts purchased in his notes and other records (found in ROM archives, June 2011):

1. Letter from G. Crofts (Tientsin, China) to G. Currelly (Toronto) dated May 5, 1921 (this general reference shows that Tibetan paintings were becoming easier to purchase in Beijing):

My friend has returned the small catalogue and on looking through same, I notice that Nos. 1001/5 are Thibetan pictures, and as these are seemingly of interest to the Museum, I intend to purchase a few here and send them forward in the next shipment. Since the [advent of the] Republic very many of these Buddhist and Lama pictures from temples have reached Peking, and to-day have very little value unless of extra fine quality with antique silk borders and in fair condition. If you will write me in regard to these paintings and state whether of interest to the Collection, I will do my best to obtain a few good specimens and forward them in due course. In the meantime I will make a special effort to find a few of these paintings which I consider of interest, and will send them forward, probably during June or July when the next shipment is ready.

2. Letter from G. Crofts (Tientsin, China) to G. Currelly (Toronto) dated Jul. 13, 1921:

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<sup>489</sup> According to museum records.

<sup>490</sup> Charles Trick Currelly, *I Brought the Ages Home*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 251-268.

“...I have some Thibetan pictures which I am sure will delight you as they please me and will enhance the value of the collection on the whole, if not, make it quite distinct in pictures of this kind.”

3. From original G. Crofts record books, VI (June 1-July, 1921), 519, 523:

“2193, (J141), 921.1.82; Palace of Lhasa [sic], c. 1600 (K. Tanaka), Thibetan Picture- 5/10 x 4/2- Thibet home of the Lama showing the Living Buddha out riding. Unusual and fine. Mounted by us.”<sup>491</sup>

“We consider [the Lhasa painting and another Tibetan painting] very valuable from an artistic point of view and also in a monetary sense, because [they are] unusual and uncommon. All in brilliant colors and of the Ming dynasty. Painted on Lama cloth so [they are] very strong and enduring.”

“We consider the Thibetan pictures generally under those numbers [2187/2193] of great interest and may not be repeated. All Ming dynasty.”

4. Letter from G. Crofts (Tientsin, China) to G. Currelly (Toronto) dated Aug. 13, 1921- states that the shipment of objects (which included this Lhasa painting) would be sent from Tientsin to Toronto via the Suez Canal on S.S. Atreus, Blue Line Steamer.

5. Letter from G. Crofts (Tientsin, China) to G. Currelly (Toronto) dated Sept. 1, 1921:

“Have made a shipment of 49 Cases and do not think it necessary to comment in detail, as the specification is fairly complete. There are certain items, however, of special interest and it might be advisable to mention these apart from the specification...”

“...2187 & up Thibetan Pictures: rather proud of the collection in this shipment.”

6. ROM collection log book from the 1950s, “J-book:”

“J.141; ROMA 3675a; 921.1.82 Temple painting on cloth, view of Lhasa; Potala in upper center, Dalai Lama and attendants below. Tibet; 17-18<sup>th</sup> ltr; (picture 48”, W 68.5”. Total ht. 73”, W. 53; Crofts Coll. 2193, 1921, \$M. 25.00”

### **Further Comments & Speculation:**

1. *Is this a copy?*

See “Brussels” entry for discussion.

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<sup>491</sup> The George Crofts Collection, original Crofts record books, VI (June 1-July, 1921), 519.

## 2. *Is that building Samye or the Ramoche?*

The building currently labeled as Samye was one I believed to be the Ramoche for some time. But the image had always baffled me as the Ramoche is famously red, with a square hip-and-gable-roof and is nearly always to be found to the north (and thus above or above-left) of the Jokhang. Here the building is white, with at least three stories each smaller than the one below, a hexagonal or round golden roof with a second roof above and it is located to the right of the Jokhang. When I compared this to the famous Samye painting at the Newark Museum (18<sup>th</sup> century), I saw that this compared very favorably, or at least it was a better match than the Ramoche. Incidentally, this golden roof of Samye seen here predates an updated roof that was built in the 1850s, which is why the painting does not match current photographs of Samye (or Samye in the Wise folio at the British Library Add.Or 3017.3). It is odd to find Samye without its iconic four multi-colored stupas or round enclosure. In my opinion, this is an area that could be very fruitful for future research.

### **Exhibited/ Published:**

- Himalayan Art Resources (HAR #77600)
- Royal Ontario Museum website: ROM2005\_1603\_13
- Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 374-375
- Proser, *Pilgrimage and Buddhist Art*, 84-85
- Exhibition: Asia Society Museum, "Pilgrimage and Buddhist Art," 2010

**BRU- (Brussels)**



Figure 10. "Brussels", 1800-1900, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (Lambrecht, *Art du Tibet*)

**Basic Facts:**

Current Location: Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, Belgium  
ID #: Ver. 349  
Date (approx.): 1800-1899<sup>492</sup>  
Size and format: 88.5 x 120 cm cm; horizontal format  
Inscriptions: Tibetan (U-med)

**Overview:**

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<sup>492</sup> Miriam Lambrecht, *Art du Tibet*, (Brussels: Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, 2005), 100-101.

This painting is very similar in appearance to ROM and Paris. It may be a copy of one of those images or perhaps of another image. (Please see ROM and Paris entries for more discussion).<sup>493</sup>

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**



Figure 11. "Brussels", 1800-1900, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (adapted from Lambrecht)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Samye? (or Ramoche)- see "ROM" discussion
4. Western Gate
5. Chakpori and Medicine College
6. Drepung
7. Sera
8. Ganden
9. Lukhang
10. High Lama on procession

The buildings included in this image are drastically pared down, and generic buildings are used to indicate the town surrounding the Jokhang. The image includes two monuments from outside the valley: Samye and Ganden monastery.

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<sup>493</sup> Special thanks to Miriam Lambrecht for allowing me to view this painting and for taking the time to discuss it with me at length.

Unlike the ROM painting, this picture contains human figures in the sky. The group of three on the left appear to be the three bodhisattvas often grouped together, though damage makes it difficult to identify them with certainty. They may be Sadakshari Avalokiteshvara, Manjusri and possibly a wrathful form of Vajrapani. The three figures on the right may be Tsongkhapa with his two students or, more likely, a Dalai Lama with two attendants.

Event: Unidentified Procession of a High Lama

The lama is on horseback with a guard and troop of riders. This may be found at the bottom center (the high lama) and proceeding to the left corner (the horseback attendants) of the composition. The group appears to be leaving town as they are headed out of the Western gate. Possibly this is the Dalai Lama's removal to Norbulingka, but there is not enough included to identify with certainty either the lama or the event.

**Inscriptions:** Tibetan (*dbu can*)



Figure 12. "Brussels", 1800-1900, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (adapted from Lambrecht)

1. *Po-ta-la* (Potala)
2. *Lha-sa* (Lhasa Jokhang)
3. *Ksbar-sra* (?)
4. *Bra bong* (Drepung)
5. *Se ra* (Sera)
6. *Ga ldan* (Ganden)

Note: These are written in ink with a thin and clear hand-writing. The spelling is very approximate and sometimes simply wrong. It appears that this piece was labelled by a

literate Tibetan who was somewhat unfamiliar with the monument names. Only the major buildings are labelled.

**Composition & Style: (accuracy, underdrawing)**

This painting has a “mandala”-style composition. The Potala is at the center and it is balanced by Drepung, Ganden, Lhasa and the Lama procession.

This painting is smaller and its color is less rich compared to the ROM painting. However, it has been executed with care and precision. It is relatively accurate although frequently it makes use of generic buildings rather than architecturally specific ones.

**Date of Creation:** 1800-1900

This work cannot be dated with certainty. The Potala roof contains only two tomb-roofs, which means that the artist was not aware of the tombs of the 8<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (d. 1804) and on. This work may be a copy, which means that it may be based off an older visual source that does date prior to 1804. It is not possible to know when this work might have been copied, or whether it pre-dates or post-dates the other similar paintings. Curator Miriam Lambrecht assigns this work a date of 1800-1900, which seems reasonable to me.<sup>494</sup> I would tend to believe that this work was created in the earlier half of that span.

**Condition & Material:**

Material is cloth with colored pigment, including gold and silver.

The condition of this piece is not good. The surface of the painting has large patches where the paint has flaked off. This is concentrated especially along equidistant vertical strips, indicating that perhaps the damage occurred while the piece was rolled. The trees in the composition are often without paint, as though the work was not finished, although it is possible that the paint has simply flaked off these places more completely.

**Collection History:**

Léon Verbert (1879-1941) was a Belgian diplomat and economist with a passionate interest in East Asia. He made a trip to Beijing in 1907-08, during which he reported on the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama’s visit to the city. Between 1910 and 1935 he lived and worked in Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin and travelled around the country extensively. During his tenure in China, Verbert collected art. The majority of his Tibetan collection came from Eastern Tibet.<sup>495</sup> Verbert gave his collection to the museum during the years 1922-1926. The museum has no specific records from Verbert referencing this work or the circumstances of its purchase.

**Further Comments and Speculation:**

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<sup>494</sup> Lambrecht- in discussion ; Miriam Lambrecht, *Art du Tibet*, (Brussels: Musées royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, 2005), 100-101.

<sup>495</sup> Discussion with Miriam Lambrecht November 30, 2011 in Brussels, Belgium.



1. *Is this a copy?*

This work is extraordinarily similar in style and composition to the Lhasa paintings from the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) and from Chayet's book *Les Tempels du Jehol* from a private collection in Paris (Paris). The three works are, in fact, so similar to one another that they must have been copied, either one from the other or from another, unknown, source, perhaps from another painting, drawing or mural. Not only is the overall composition the same, but odd details that could be called "inaccuracies" are common to all three. For instance, the wall on the right side (proper left) of the Potala extends awkwardly from a tower on top of a hill above to the wall below with no attempt at spatial or dimensional rendering and this is true in all three pieces. Differences between the three exist as well, showing that these were not an exact replica. The Brussels piece contains teachers and deities in the sky, whereas the ROM piece does not. The Potala in the Brussels piece is smaller and located further down in the composition, allowing room for Sera monastery to be placed above rather than to the side, as it is in the ROM piece. Colors are not as bright in the Brussels piece and the overall quality and condition are not as good. Further, the Brussels work is much smaller. The Paris painting is only reproduced in a very small, black-and-white image, which is unfortunately not enough information for a good comparison (though by looking at the Western Gate and a small bridge behind it, it is clear that this is not an exact copy of Brussels or ROM).

Although it is unknown when Verbert purchased the Brussels painting, it is possible that it was around the same time that Crofts purchased the ROM piece (1921). Further, both collectors spent time in the same cities, Beijing and Tianjin. Ironically, Crofts remarked on his piece being quite unique and unparalleled, indicating that he, at least, was unaware of other Lhasa paintings for purchase in China.<sup>496</sup> Unfortunately, currently the collection history of the Paris painting is unknown.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Miriam Lambrecht, *Art du Tibet*, (Brussels: Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, 2005), 100-101.
- Exhibition: "Art du Tibet," touring 2008-2009
- On-display in Brussels museum in 2006
- Exhibition: "Art sacré du Tibét" 2005
- Musées Nationaux, *Dieux et démons de l'Himalaya, Art du Bouddhisme lamaïque*, Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), 240.
- Exhibition: "Dieux et démons de l'Himalaya, Art du Bouddhisme lamaïque," Paris, 1977

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<sup>496</sup> East Asian Archives of the Royal Ontario Musuem, Toronto, *Crofts Record book*, VI, June 1-July, 1921, 519.

**PAR- (Paris)**

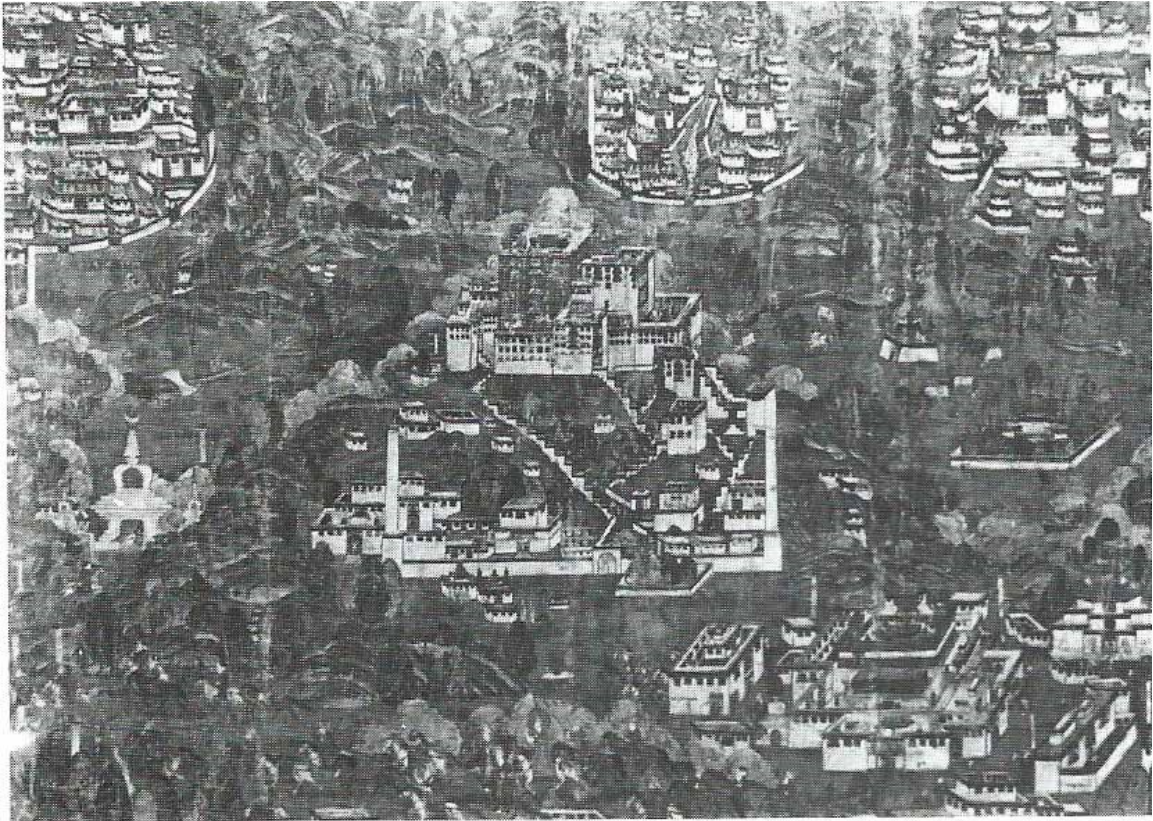


Figure 13. "Paris", 1800-1900, Private Collection, (Chayet, *Les Temples*)

**Basic Facts:**

Current Location: "Special" (Private?) Collection, Paris, France<sup>497</sup>  
ID #: n/a  
Date (approx.): 1800-1900  
Size and format: unknown; horizontal format  
Inscriptions: unknown

**Overview:**

This painting is very similar in appearance to ROM and Brussels. It may be a copy of one of those images or perhaps of another image. Collection history for this work is unknown at present. (Please see ROM and Brussels entries for more discussion).

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<sup>497</sup> "Current" when published by Chayet in 1985; Chayet, *Les Temples de Jehol*, figure 42.

## Subject Matter & Iconography:

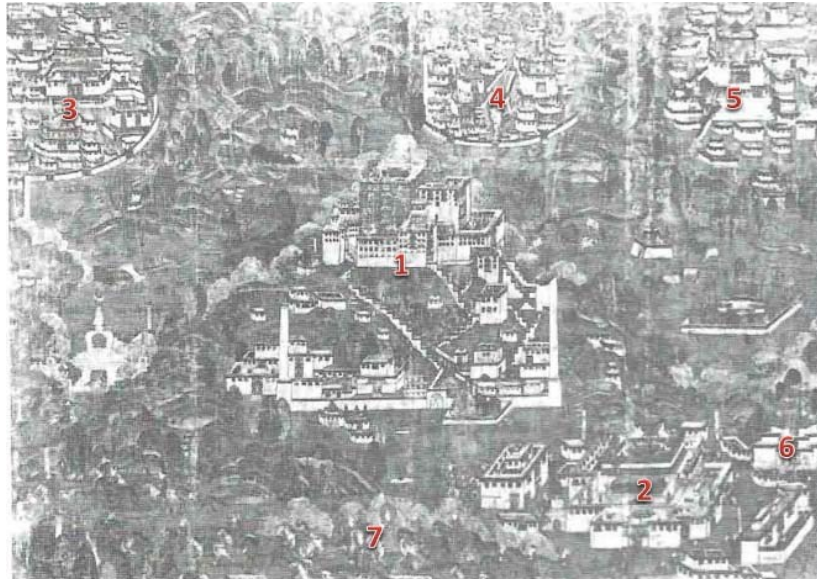


Figure 14. "Paris", 1800-1900, Private Collection, (adapted from Chayet)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Drepung
4. Sera
5. Ganden
6. Samye? (or Ramoche)- see "ROM" discussion
7. High Lama on Procession

Event: Unidentified Procession of a High Lama

The lama is on horseback with a guard and troop of riders. This may be found in the bottom left corner of the composition (the lama brings up the rear of the procession toward the center of the painting). The group appears to be leaving town as they are headed out of the Western gate. Possibly this is the Dalai Lama's removal to Norbulingka, but there is not enough included to identify either the lama or the event with certainty.

### **Composition & Style: (accuracy, underdrawing)**

This painting has a "mandala"-style composition. The Potala is at the center balanced by Drepung, Ganden, Lhasa and the Lama procession. The buildings included in this image are drastically pared down and uses generic buildings to indicate the town surrounding the Jokhang. The image includes two monument from outside the valley: Ganden and Samye monastery.

**Date of Creation:** 1800-1900

This work cannot be dated with certainty. Because it is similar in style to ROM and Brussels, tentatively it can be assigned a similar date. Closer inspection may reveal more clues regarding its date of creation.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Chayet, *Les Temples de Jehol et Leurs Modeles Tibetains*, figure 42.

## STO- (Stockholm)

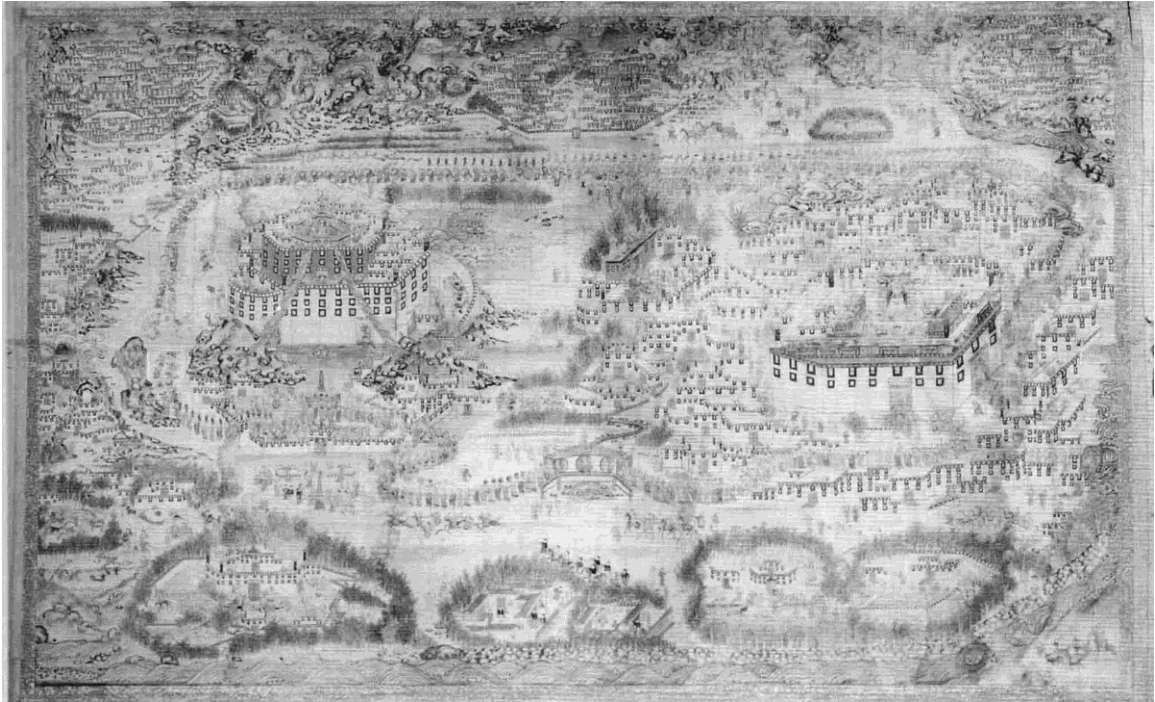


Figure 15. "Stockholm", 1800-1900, Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm (Schwartzberg, Maps of Greater Tibet)

### Basic Facts:

Current Location: Sven Hedin Archives and Collections, Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm, Sweden  
ID #: 1935.50.2882  
Date (approx.): 1800-1900  
Size and format: 182 x 285 cm; horizontal format  
Inscriptions: Tibetan

### Overview:

This is a very unusual painting of Lhasa in a style that appears to be almost certainly Chinese. It is also odd in its depiction of the Potala, which appears to be rather inaccurate. This is a particularly large work that would have required a very large space to be perused or displayed, and which would have proved difficult to transport.

## Subject Matter & Iconography:

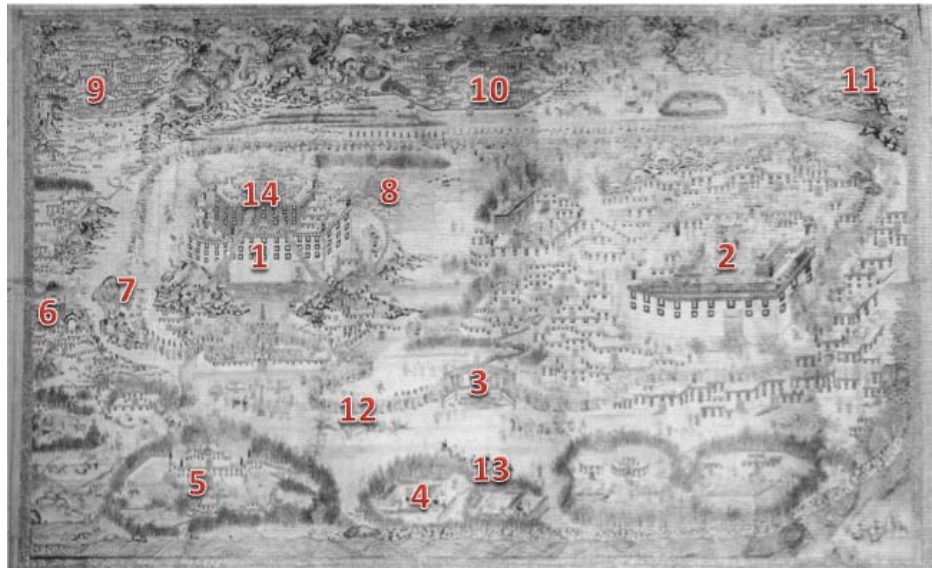


Figure 16. "Stockholm", 1800-1900, Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm (adapted from Schwartzberg)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Turquoise Bridge
4. Amban House
5. Norbulingkha
6. Chakpori and Medicine College
7. Western Gate
8. Lukhang
9. Drepung
10. Sera
11. Ganden
12. Procession (around Potala, city and through the Turquoise Bridge)
13. Chinese Amban and attendants on horses
14. Avalokiteshvara in the Potala

Event: Sertreng, the Golden Procession

The event being shown is the Golden Procession or Sertreng, also known as the "Lesser Prayer Festival." This was held in the second month of the year annually since its institution under the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's Regent, Sangye Gyatso, in 1694 in commemoration of the Great 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. This event consisted of a great procession from the Jokhang through the Turquoise Bridge to the Potala and then from the Potala, around the back of Marpori hill, to the Ramoche and then the Jokhang. It also included the display of two giant thangkas on the façade of the Potala. This painting shows the procession in a continuous loop and includes monks, apsaras, pilgrims, noblemen and various ethnic

groups, including Chinese, Newaris, and Muslims. The two giant thangkas are not displayed. For more see chapter 3.

**Inscriptions:**

Inscriptions include only faint Tibetan numerals under various buildings. There is no extant accompanying key.

**Composition & Style: (accuracy, underdrawing)**

This is a “balanced”-style composition. The Potala and Jokhang are at the center. Along the upper and lower parts of the paint are various compounds- the three monastic seats (Drepung, Sera and Ganden) at the top and various estates along the bottom, including the Amban house, Norbulingka and others. The style is overwhelmingly “Chinese,” especially in the portrayal of the figures.

**Dating:** 1800-1900

It is not possible to date this painting with certainty. This is because the main method of dating a painting using the tomb-roofs of the Potala is problematic. The Potala image, as rendered here, is particularly odd, thus it does not seem prudent to use the single visible golden roof on the Potala as a certain means of dating the painting- a historical anachronism in any case as the only time there was a single golden roof was prior to the erection of the Red Palace. There is also a possibility that this painting is older than 1800, although there is no substantive proof for or against. Moreover, we only have a definitive end-date, the date of collection (1931). Conservatively, and until more evidence becomes clear, the painting could be assigned a date of 1750-1930.

**Condition & Material:**

Material is cloth with ink and light pigment wash.

The condition of this piece is fairly good. The piece has darkened significantly over time. The cloth base is quite thin, colored pigments from the painting surface have bled through to the back. The entire edge of the work has a line of small holes. It is likely that the work was once stitched into a cloth frame. Museum records indicate that this work was kept in a store-house in 1994 where it received some insect damage. There is also a fair amount of water damage that may have occurred at that time.

**Collection History:**

Previous ID#: H.2882; E.332

This work was purchased by or for Sven Hedin in May 1931 for 80 Mexican Dollars in China- possibly Beijing, Chengde or another Eastern Chinese city. Hedin was a well-known Swedish explorer and scholar of Tibet and Central Asia. He travelled extensively throughout Central Asia, Tibet and China, returning multiple times in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. During his travels he made extensive notes and sketches of terrain, culture, scientific data, etc. He also amassed a large collection of artistic, literary and

cultural objects, including four to five hundred Tibetan *thangkas*. Hedin's assistant, Ferdinand Lessing, accompanied Hedin on his travels and frequently purchased artwork on Hedin's behalf. The Hedin archives in Stockholm have many letters and notes (mainly in Swedish) but these have not been examined and they are not currently available for review.

### **Further Comments and Speculation:**

#### *1. Could this have been made in Chengde?*

At the time that Hedin acquired this work, he was in China in pursuit of a temple to bring to the Chicago exhibition, the project that became the "Golden Pavilion." As Hedin ultimately ended up in Chengde, painstakingly replicating the Wangfagui temple atop Putuozongchengmiao, he may have actually acquired this work while there. Certain elements in the painting do lend some support to this idea, for instance: the arrangement of the buildings and the details of the buildings are very oddly "off" as though the artist has never seen Lhasa's buildings or even an accurate portrayal of them. Moreover, as stated above, the combination of the Red Palace and the single golden roof (the Phagspa chapel) is a historical anachronism as once the Red Palace was made it held two golden roofs (the chapel and the tomb roof of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama). However, Putuozongchengmiao has a single golden-roofed pavilion at its center with a roof that looks very much like this one. Could this painting actually be based on the Putuozongchengmiao Potala facsimile at Chengde rather than the one in Lhasa? This may be a fruitful subject for further study.

### **Exhibited/Published:**

- Schwartzberg, "Maps of Greater Tibet," in *History of Cartography, Vol. 2, Book 2*, Figure 15.49.
- Etnografiska Museet website, accessed June 10, 2012, <http://collections.smvk.se:8080/carlotta-em/web/>



**BOD- (Bod-kyi-thang-ka)**



Figure 17. "Bod-kyi-thang-ka", 1800-1900 (Bod-kyi-thang-ka)

**Basic Facts:**

Current Location: Probably the collection of the Potala, Lhasa, China  
ID #: unknown  
Date (approx.): 1800-1900  
Size and format: unknown; vertical format

Inscriptions: Tibetan (U-can)

**Overview:**

This painting seems to be part of a set that features significant moments in Tibetan and Lhasan history. It may be that this image is displaying a specific moment, maybe concerning the life (or possibly the death) of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**



Figure 18. “Bod-kyi-thang-ka”, 1800-1900 (Bod-kyi-thang-ka)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Sera
4. Shadakshari Avalokiteshvara
5. Scarf offering to a lama

Event: uncertain (probably a specific moment in history)

There seems to be some sort of miraculous appearance of Avalokiteshvara over the Potala. Pilgrims on the steps below seem to be reacting to this vision. On the rooftop one can also find a lama figure, maybe the Regent. There is also specific activity at and outside the Jokhang. Within the Jokhang there are lamas both in the inner sanctum and in the main courtyard on raised platforms. In the courtyard the lama is receiving ceremonial scarves. A deity or holy figure, perhaps Padmasambhava, is shown on a cloud/lotus above the Jokhang. Outside the Tsuglakhang a horse with a ceremonial emblem on its back is being brought toward the Jokhang. There are also numerous people within the Barkhor. There is also a teaching underway in the main courtyard at Sera monastery. In the upper corner above the Jokhang there appears to be military men and camels.

**Inscriptions:**

There are lengthy inscriptions in Tibetan (*dbu can*) in red ink at Sera, at the Jokhang and at the Potala. These are too small to read in printed reproduction.

**Composition & Style:**

This is an “other”-style of composition. This work has a very unique composition. Here the Potala is at the bottom of the piece, the Jokhang in the middle-right, and Sera monastery in the top left. The monasteries are rather squeezed together and there is not much room for other estates, houses or fields to be shown. Many monuments typically included have been left out, such as the turquoise bridge, the Western Gate, Chakpori and Drepung monastery.

This comes from the book, *Bodkyithangka*, a catalog of Tibetan historical paintings that may be from a single set or single collection, potentially from the Potala collection itself. It may be possible in time to ascertain with certainty the provenance, date and even artist or artists of these works. At this time, records are insufficient or inaccessible. However, it seems likely that these works were produced in Lhasa, perhaps by Potala-based artisans for that collection. Certainly these appear to be of the highest quality and are in prodigious number, indicating a wealthy and elevated patron. Furthermore, the style is very similar to that found on the Potala wall murals. It is, of course, possible that this set was a gift to the Potala collection. However, without further collection history, it seems most probable that these works were produced in Central Tibet, very likely in Lhasa itself.

**Date of Creation:** 1800-1900

It is not possible to date this painting with certainty. There are no immediate clues within the iconography of the painting itself and there is no background information currently available.

**Condition & Material:**

Material is cloth with ink and colored pigment, probably some gold.

The painting looks to be in good condition.

**Collection History:**

This work is published in the *Bod kyi thang ka*, a Tibetan-language book of paintings, which are purported to be from the Potala collection. It is possible that this painting was created for the Potala art collection and has been retained within that collection since.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Himalayan Art Resource (HAR #99022)
- Wang, Lu. *Bod kyi thang ka, Xizang tang ka*. Beijing: Wen wu chu ban she, 1985.

## GUI2- (Guimet2)



Figure 19. "Guimet 2", 1800-1910, Musée Guimet (B. Arthur)

### Basic Facts:

Current Location: Nepal /Tibet Section, Musée Guimet, Paris, France  
ID #: MG 1043  
Date (approx.): 1800-1910  
Size and format: 45 x 61 cm; vertical format  
Inscriptions: none

**Overview:**

This is one of two paintings collected by Jacques Bacot and given to the Musée Guimet. It is notable particularly for the two elephants featured below the Potala.<sup>498</sup>

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**

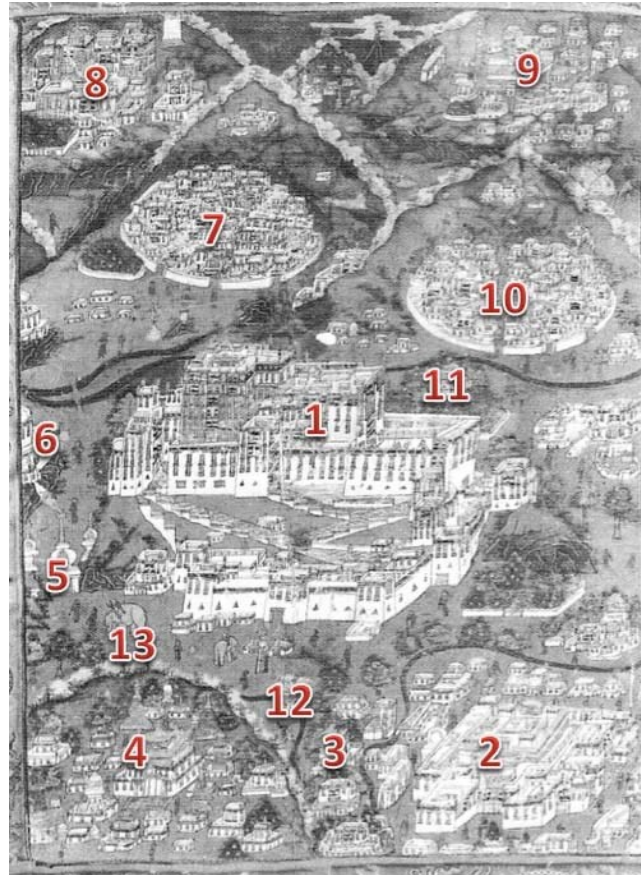


Figure 20. "Guimet 2", 1800-1910, Musée Guimet (B. Arthur)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Ramoche
4. Samye
5. Western Gate
6. Chakpori and Medicine College
7. Drepung
8. Tashilhunpo
9. Ganden

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<sup>498</sup> Special thanks to Nathalie Bazin for allowing me to examine and document this painting at great length.

10. Sera
11. Lukhang
12. Turquoise Bridge
13. Elephants with mahout

Note: two elephants and their mahouts (elephant handlers) can be found in the field below the Potala (see chapter 3).

**Composition & Style:**

This is a “mandala”-style composition with the Potala at the center.

**Dating:** 1800-1910

This image is particularly difficult to date with certainty. Béguin finds this to be a more modern image, however the tomb-roofs on the Potala and Panchen Lama tombs at Tashilhunpo may indicate an earlier date, perhaps 1757 or 1780. Certainly it was created prior to its collection in or before 1910, when Bacot ended his travels in Tibet and eastern China.

Giles Béguin dates this painting to around 1901 based on the presence of the two elephants.<sup>499</sup> He states that a pair of elephants was given to the Dalai Lama by the king of Bhutan, Tongsa Penlop Ugyen Wangchuk, in August 1901. One subsequently died, but the other survived at least until 1905.<sup>500</sup> The elephants do provide a possible date, however there is no reason an artist might not insert both elephants into the composition even after the death of the first elephant. Also, it cannot be ruled out that these may represent elephants from a prior gift or indeed elephants that the artist simply heard were sometimes housed in Lhasa (see chapter 3).

The presence of Tashilhunpo monastery may assist in dating- Béguin indicates that the image of Tashilhunpo does not include the Maitreya temple which was finished in 1916. The monastery appears to have two, or maybe three, Panchen Lama tomb buildings, which would date it to post-1737 or 1780. However, the image isn't very clear and it is possible that it is partly cut off on the left where there may perhaps have been another tomb building (dating this to post- 1853).

The Potala roofs appear to include the tombs of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lamas, but not the 8<sup>th</sup>. Thus we may assume that this image was at least modeled after an image created between the death of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's: 1757-1804.

**Condition & Material:**

Material is cloth with colored pigment, including gold.

This painting has received some damage. The cloth base of the painting has darkened throughout and there is both vertical and horizontal cracking of the painted

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<sup>499</sup> Béguin, “The Great Monuments,” 62.

<sup>500</sup> Béguin, “The Great Monuments,” 62.

surface, indicating, perhaps, that this painting was rolled for storage. The painting is currently stored within a modern glass and fabric frame from the 1980s.<sup>501</sup> It was not possible to view the back of the painting. Museum records show no evidence of markings or writing on the back of the piece.

**Collection History:**

It is not clear how or when Jacques Bacot (1877- 1965) acquired this painting. Bacot, a French explorer, travelled throughout Yunnan and Eastern Tibet in 1907 and 1909-10 and it is very possible that he purchased this work during that time. Bacot gave this piece to the Musée Guimet in 1951, leaving no communications about how he had acquired the work.<sup>502</sup> Bacot collected a second Lhasa painting (Guimet 1) during his travels. Jacques Bacot was a well-known Tibetan scholar specializing in translation, ethnography and religious history.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Gilles Béguin, “The Great Monuments of Lhasa,” in Pommaret, *Lhasa in the 17<sup>th</sup> century*, 53-63, Figure 3.
- Gilles Béguin, *Les Peintures du Bouddhisme Tibétain*, Figure 385.

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<sup>501</sup> Discussion with curator Natalie Bazin, October 13, 2011.

<sup>502</sup> Discussion with curator Natalie Bazin, October 13, 2011.



**GUI1- (Guimet 1)**



Figure 21. "Guimet 1", 1815-1910, Musée Guimet (Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*)

**Basic Facts:**

Current Location: Nepal/ Tibet Section, Musée Guimet, Paris, France  
ID #: MG 21248  
Date (approx.): 1815- 1910  
Size and format: 98.5 x 72 cm; vertical format

Inscriptions: Devanagari

**Overview:**

This is one of the richest Lhasa paintings, both in terms of style and in terms of sheer number of monuments included (over 60). It is also one of the most well known. It is one of two Lhasa paintings purchased by Jacques Bacot and given to the Musée Guimet.<sup>503</sup>

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**

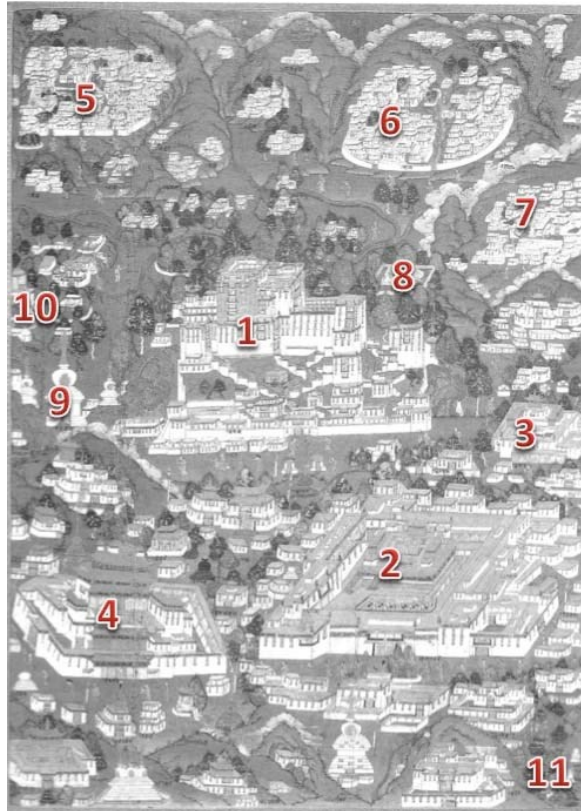


Figure 22. "Guimet 1", 1815-1910, Musée Guimet (adapted from Larsen)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Ramoche
4. Samye
5. Drepung
6. Sera

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<sup>503</sup> Special thanks to Nathalie Bazin for allowing me to document this painting in detail after museum hours.

7. Ganden
8. Lukhang
9. Western Gate
10. Chakpori and Medicine College
11. Turquoise Bridge

Note: this image includes over 60 sacred sites and, particularly along the bottom of the composition, may be showing extended pilgrimage routes connected to but outside of Lhasa valley. There are also many people, particularly monks and pilgrims, depicted.

### **Inscriptions:**

Inscriptions are in Devanagari. The inscriptions are approximations of the sounds of the Tibetan names of certain buildings. There are sixty-two inscriptions on this piece. All major buildings and many minor buildings are labeled.

### **Composition & Style:**

This is a “mandala”- style composition. The Potala is the central element and is balanced by the Jokkhang, Samye, Drepung and Sera monasteries in the four corners. This is a particularly crowded composition with many minor sites placed wherever there is space and with less regard to their actual geo-spatial relationships and orientation (eg. the Turquoise Bridge is found in the lower right corner, nowhere near its “actual” location in relation to the Jokkhang). Buildings that indicate the town of Lhasa and parts of the monastic compounds, or outlying hermitages and other buildings, are rendered generically.

### **Date of Creation:** 1815-1910

The date of this painting is discussed extensively by Giles Béguin in his article on the two Lhasa paintings at the Musée Guimet. He puts the date after 1815 because the Potala is shown with the tomb of the 9<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (1805-1815) and prior to 1910 as this is the latest point that the painting could have been purchased by Jacques Bacot.<sup>504</sup> It is probable the date could be refined still further. It seems likely that this work was created in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and no later than approximately 1905.

### **Condition & Material:**

Material is cloth with colored pigment, including gold.

The condition of this piece is excellent. There is little to no evidence of damage to this painting. The work is not in a traditional cloth frame. It was not possible to examine the back of the painting, but museum records indicate no evidence of writing or markings present on the back.

### **Collection History:**

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<sup>504</sup> Béguin, “The Great Monuments,” 61.

Jacques Bacot (1877- 1965) acquired this painting on one of his travels in Yunnan and Eastern Tibet which occurred in 1907 and 1909 to 1910. Bacot gave the work to the Musée Guimet in 1912. When questioned about this work in the 1950s, Bacot could not recall the details of the purchase.<sup>505</sup>

Jacques Bacot was a French explorer and scholar of Tibetan studies. In 1907 he made an expedition into Tibet from Tonkin, following a pilgrimage route. He later studied Tibetan language extensively and worked to translate the Old Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts. Bacot was a member of the Geographic Society of Paris and author of numerous books on Tibetan language, religion and culture.<sup>506</sup> Significantly, he is one of the few Lhasa painting collectors who did not purchase the paintings in Beijing but rather in or near Tibet proper, although his travels did not take him to the Lhasa valley. This fact demonstrates that paintings of Lhasa were available within Tibet outside of Lhasa itself. Moreover, Bacot was able to purchase more than one Lhasa painting on his travels (see Guimet2).

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Gilles Béguin, “The Great Monuments of Lhasa,” in Pommaret, *Lhasa in the 17<sup>th</sup> century*, 53-63, Figure 1
- Gilles Béguin, *Les Peintures du Bouddhisme Tibétain*, Figure 384.
- Nathalie Bazin, *Rituels tibétains, Visions secrètes du Ve Dalai Lama*
- Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, cover and frontispiece
- Françoise Pommaret, *Tibet, an enduring civilization*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 50
- Musées Nationaux, *Dieux et démons de l’Himalaya, Art du Bouddhisme lamaïque*, Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1977), 241.
- Exhibition: “Dieux et démons de l’Himalaya, Art du Bouddhisme lamaïque,” Paris, 1977

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<sup>505</sup> Discussion with curator Natalie Bazin, 10/13/2011

<sup>506</sup> Bibliothèque nationale de France online database, Accessed April 8, 2014, [http://data.bnf.fr/11889814/jacques\\_bacot/](http://data.bnf.fr/11889814/jacques_bacot/) .

## OXF- (Oxford)



Figure 23. "Oxford", 1815-1912, Bodleian Library, Oxford University (Diana Lange)

### Basic Facts:

Current Location:	South & Inner Asian Manuscripts (Tibet), Bodleian Library, Oxford University, UK*
ID #:	unknown
Date (approx.):	1815-1912
Size and format:	unknown; horizontal format
Inscriptions:	Tibetan (U-med)

### Overview:

\*This work is a facsimile on paper. It is not clear where the original work is held or if it is still extant. It is presumed that the facsimile is a faithful reproduction in terms of color and approximate size.<sup>507</sup>

It is immediately apparent that this work differs markedly from the rest of the group in that it places the Jokhang and Lhasa in the central position, in what would

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<sup>507</sup> Special thanks to Dr. Diana Lange for alerting me to this painting and for sending along what information she could find about it.

otherwise be a traditional-style monument thangka. This work is also interesting in that it presents two simultaneous processions of the Dalai Lama within a single image.

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**

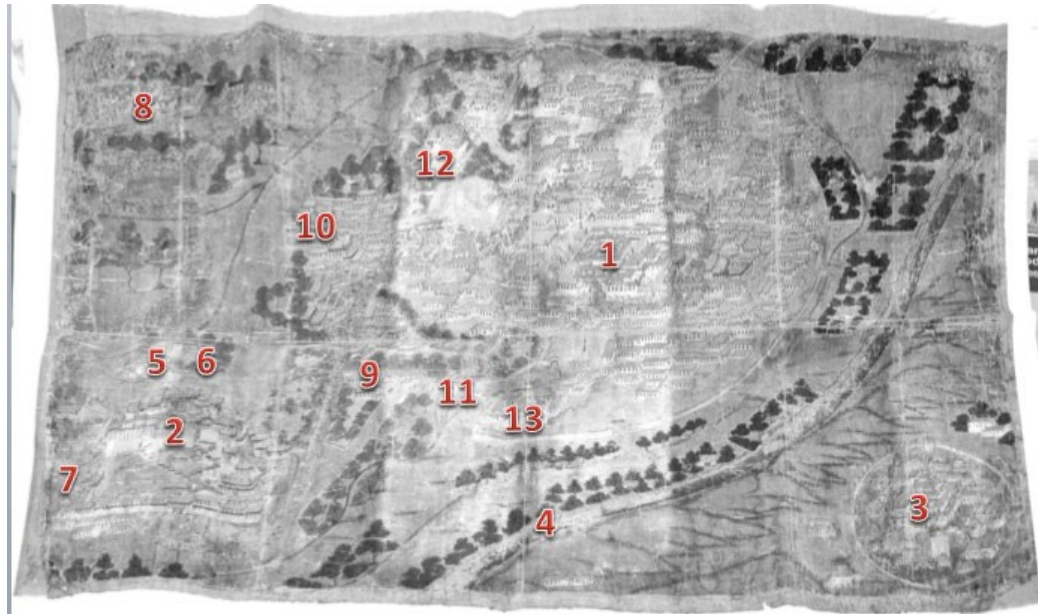


Figure 24. "Oxford", 1815-1912, Bodleian Library, Oxford University (adapted from Lange)

1. Jokhang
2. Potala
3. Samye
4. Kyichu River and stone wall
5. Elephant House
6. Lukhang
7. Western Gate
8. Norbulingka (see below)
9. Tengyeling (see RMA entry)
10. Ramoche
11. Turquoise Bridge
12. Meru Dratsang
13. Amban House

Note: Meru Dratsang was a tantric college and built in its current form (the form seen in Nepal 1-4) under the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.<sup>508</sup> Its height and location along the northeastern edge of town tends to make it quite visible in the paintings. It is a broad 3-story building found directly next to Gyurmé Dratsang (see V&A).

<sup>508</sup> Chan, *Tibet Handbook*, 173-174.

Norbulingka, the summer residence of the Dalai Lama, appears with certainty in this painting. The estate is a large, wooded area with beautiful gardens and ornate little temples and residences located west of the city, beyond Chakpori hill. Founded by the seventh Dalai Lama (1708-1757), the grounds and buildings have been modified and enhanced by subsequent Dalai Lamas.<sup>509</sup> The significance of this element to the painting lies in the fact that the Dalai Lama's seasonal departure for Norbulingka, accompanied by much fanfare, was an annual noteworthy event for the townspeople of Lhasa and is the potential subject of several of the Lhasa paintings (see chapter three).

The Kyichu River is presented in a very unique fashion in this work. Whereas typically the river, if depicted at all, lines the bottom of the work, here it flows from the top right corner to the bottom middle and is a true feature of the iconography and composition. Also, the banks closest to Lhasa are piled with what looks like stones. Shoring up the dykes and dams on the Tsangpo was an important activity conducted during the time of the Monlam Chenmo.

Events: two processions; possibly the Chipgyur Chenmo and the Monlam Chenmo

The Monlam Chenmo procession extends from the Potala to the town and around the Barkhor (possibly Monlam Chenmo), the Chipgyur Chenmo proceeds from some location off the left edge of the painting, maybe meant to be from the Potala, to the Amban estate in the upper left corner. It is important to note that a golden palanquin is present in both processions, indicating the likely presence of the Dalai Lama twice. These were the two best annual occasions for seeing the Dalai Lama in person. For more see chapter 3.

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<sup>509</sup> Chan, *Tibet Handbook*, 181.

### Inscriptions:

This work is labeled with Tibetan *dbu med* script in black ink. Some of the inscriptions are damaged and unreadable.

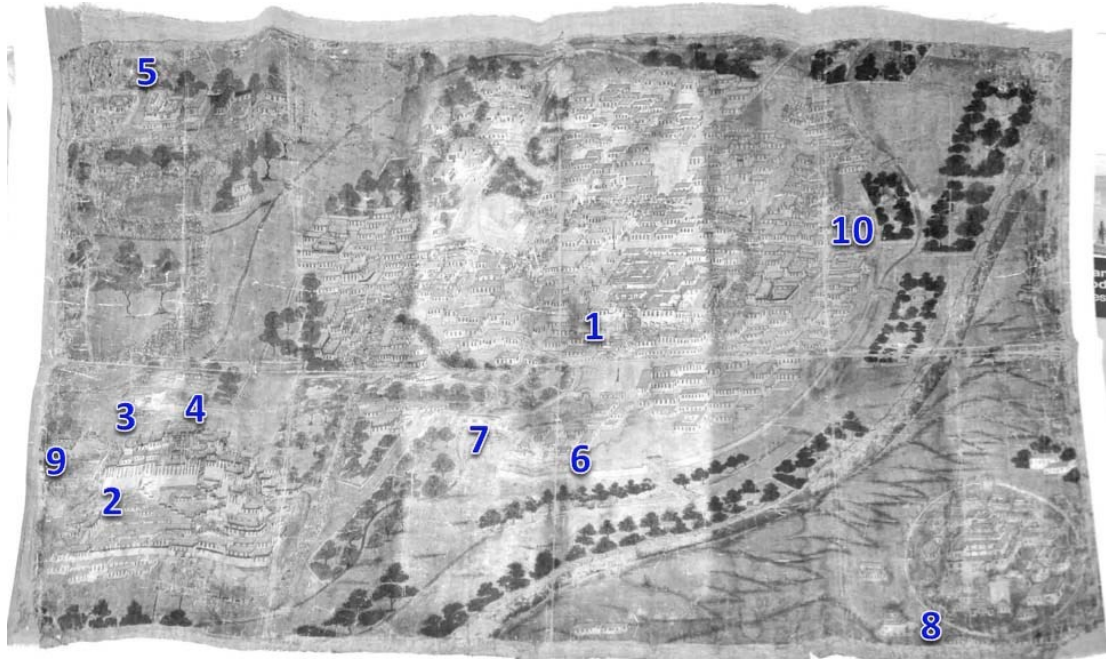


Figure 25. "Oxford", 1815-1912, Bodleian Library, Oxford University (adapted from Lange)

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>jo khang gtsug lag khang</i>       | (Jokhang Tsuglhakhang)                |
| 2. <i>po ta la</i>                       | (Potala)                              |
| 3. <i>glang po che a' khang pa</i>       | (Langpocheya Khangpa; Elephant House) |
| 4. <i>glu khang</i>                      | (Lukhang)                             |
| 5. <i>nor bug ling pa</i>                | (Norbulingka)                         |
| 6. <i>am ban yal mol?</i> <sup>510</sup> | (Amban House)                         |
| 7. <i>gyu thog zam pa</i>                | (Yuthok Tsampa, Turquoise Bridge)     |
| 8. <i>bsam yas</i>                       | (Samye)                               |
| 9. (unreadable)                          | (?)                                   |
| 10. (unreadable)                         | (?)                                   |

<sup>510</sup> Possibly misspelled on painting, my transliteration here has been corrected. The inscription is damaged and difficult to read.



**Composition & Style: (accuracy, underdrawing)**

This is a “mandala”-style composition. Unusually, it features the Jokhang as the center with the Potala, Norbulingka and Samye in three of the four corners. Also unusual, one of the corners (the upper right) is left empty. It is interesting to note that the Potala is turned in this composition, not the Jokhang. The orientation of the painting is to the East, however the southern face of the Potala is seen oriented toward the bottom of the painting which represents West.

The monuments in this work are depicted with very high accuracy. Buildings are extremely recognizable and architectural elements are faithfully reproduced. Spatial orientation is fairly accurate.

**Date of Creation:** 1815- 1912

This work may be tentatively dated based on iconography. The Potala is missing the golden roof over the tomb of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, indicating that this may pre-date the death of the Dalai Lama in 1933. It also contains Tenyegling monastery, which was destroyed in 1912. This work has a high level of architectural and spatial accuracy, it seems reasonable to assume that the artist, if they were working in Lhasa, would be aware of any changes to the major monuments and would have included these in his work. The start-date is more tenuous, but as the Potala includes the tomb-roof of the 9<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, it can be assumed that this painting was completed after 1815.

**Condition & Material:**

Material of original appears to be cloth with colored pigment and probably gold.

Condition appears to be fair, judging from this facsimile. The work has clear fold marks- it was folded either into eighths or sixteenths. In certain areas, particularly on the sides and corners, some of the paint has flaked away. The painting can be divided into three vertically. The center third appears to be the best preserved, but both the left and right thirds have darkened somewhat. The edges of the cloth have some slight unraveling and they appear to have been left unfinished.

**Collection History:**

This facsimile is a part of the Hugh E. Richardson collection at the Bodleian. It is not clear if the original work from which the facsimile was taken was or still is part of Richardson’s personal collection. Indeed, it is not clear if Richardson was the original collector of the work, or how, when or where it was acquired. To date, no notes have been found mentioning this work.

Hugh Richardson (1905-2000) was an English diplomat and very well-regarded Tibetologist. He served as the British representative in Lhasa from 1936 to 1940 and again from 1945 to 1950. He spoke fluent Tibetan and wrote numerous papers and books on Tibetan culture, politics and history. Richardson was also an avid photographer and

took many photographs of Lhasa during his time there. Many of these photographs are now housed in the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford. Richardson's personal papers, notes, memoranda and mementos were given to the Bodleian library at Oxford University shortly after his death in 2000. These are part of the Tibetan Collection in the South and Inner Asian Manuscripts and Rare Books department of the Bodleian.

**Exhibited/Published:**

To my knowledge this work has not been exhibited or published.

## BAS- (Basel)

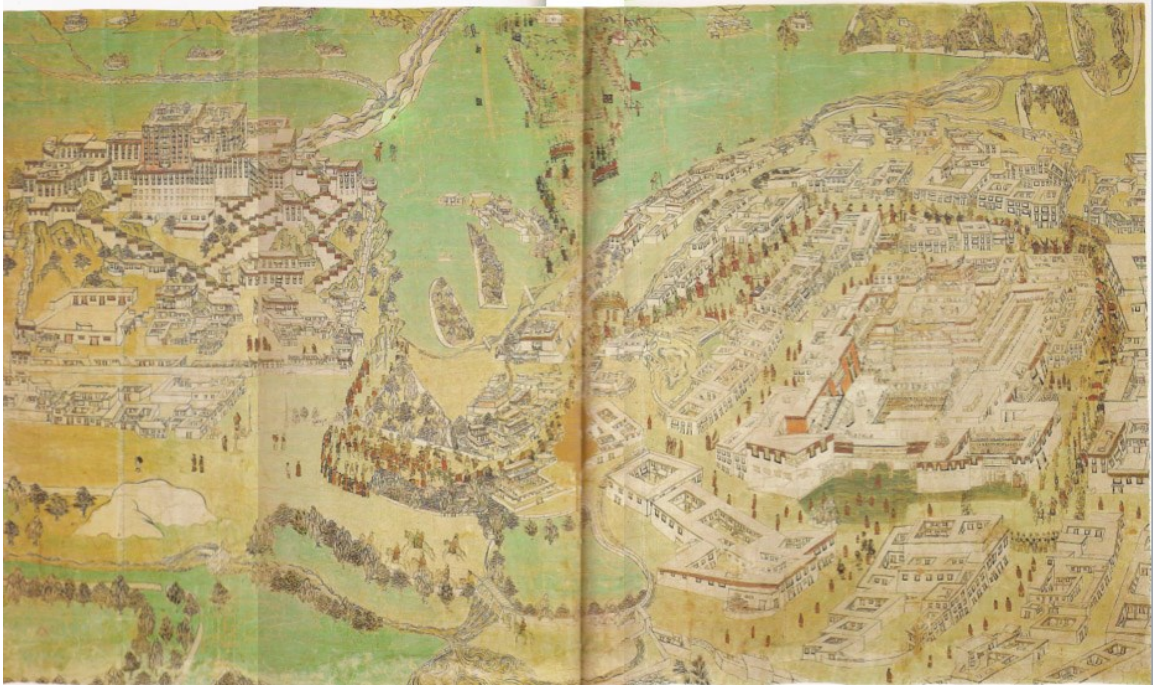


Figure 26. "Basel", 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen, Basel (Essen, *Götter des Himalaya*)

### Basic Facts:

Current Location:	Gerd-Wolfgang Essen collection, Museum der Kulturen, Basel, Switzerland
ID #:	Nr.IId 13863
Date (approx.):	1815- 1912
Size and format:	170 x 205 cm; horizontal format
Inscriptions:	Tibetan

### Overview:

This is one of the most significant Lhasa paintings as it is one of the most realistic, accurate and most heavily detailed. It contains many numerous, and often humorous, vignettes of human activity and is valuable for what it may reveal about festival- and daily-life in Lhasa. It is particularly important for its depiction of the Monlam Chenmo procession.

## Subject Matter & Iconography:

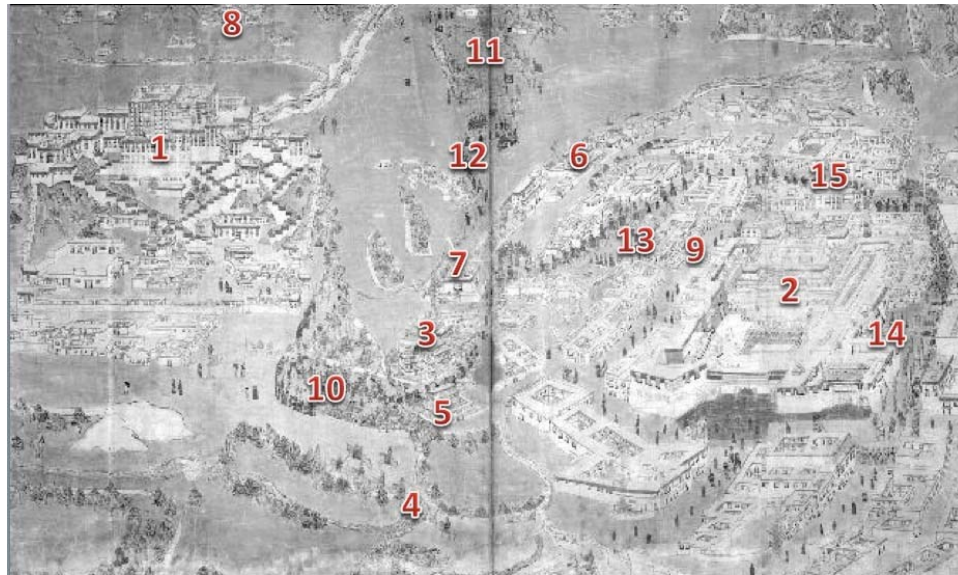


Figure 27. "Basel", 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen, Basel (adapted from Essen)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Ramoche
4. Turquoise Bridge
5. Tengyeling monastery
6. Meru Dratsang
7. Jebumgang
8. Sera
9. Jail and stockades
10. Golden palanquin
11. Military practice
12. Chinese Amban with Chinese troops? Also carrying a palanquin (green)
13. Nechung oracle (or Pelden Lhamo, see discussion chapter 3)
14. Lecture on South Porch of the Tsuglakhang
15. "Crowd control" monk with stick

Note: this painting depicts people of many different ethnicities including Chinese, Mongolian, Nepalese, Muslims and also Tibetans from Khams and other parts of the Tibetan world.

Jebumgang, a 17<sup>th</sup> century chapel dedicated to the Gelugpa founder Tsongkhapa and named for the one hundred thousand images of that great teacher which it once held,<sup>511</sup> can be found if one traces along the Dekyi Shar Lam road (moving to the West from the two Dratsangs, Meru and Gyurmé) on the northeast corner of the intersection

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<sup>511</sup> Chan, *Tibet Handbook*, 200; Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 72 and 144.

between this road and the Ramoche road. Once the location has been ascertained, this building is best recognized by its pitched, golden roof set atop a stepped two-story square building and its garden-like walled-compound. It is sometimes confused with the Ramoche temple because of the similarity in roofline.

Event: Monlam Chenmo

This is a very detailed depiction of Lhasa's most important annual celebration, the Great Prayer Festival, Monlam Chenmo. See in-depth discussion in chapter 3.

**Inscriptions:**

This image contains a single inscription in Tibetan near the left side of the Jokhang- *chos khre go khang pheb* – the meaning of which is unclear.

**Composition & Style:**

This is a “balanced”-style composition. Unlike most Lhasa paintings, it is focused only on the Potala and Lhasa and does not contain images of the monasteries in the hills beyond. It is also incredibly accurate and spatially correct. It is interesting to note that the Jokhang is still turned to face the viewer, but other typical “inaccuracies” are absent, such as the placing of the Lukhang where it can be seen.

The style of this work is also rather different. It makes use of light washes of color rather than a thick and deeply saturated application of color. The thin lines of the drawing are careful and meticulous.

**Date of Creation:** 1815-1912

This painting can be dated with some certainty. It is definitely pre-1912 because it still contains Tengyeling monastery, which was destroyed that year. The start-date may be as early as 1815, the date of the death of the 9<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, whose tomb roof seems to appear on the top of the Potala.

**Condition & Material:**

Material is cloth with colored pigment (gouache according to museum).

The work is in fairly good condition. There is some flaking of the paint, particularly in the center of the composition. There is also vertical cracking in the surface of the paint, suggesting that the painting was rolled many times or kept rolled. The cloth base shows two raised vertical seams: one in the middle of the composition and one toward the left edge of the painting. Possibly three pieces of cloth were sewn together to achieve the large dimensions of this piece. The painting is continuous across these seams. The work is currently framed with a cloth frame of green and yellow, with pleated fabric decoration across the top. This does not seem to match the original painting and may have been created by the collector or the museum.

### **Collection History:**

This work was part of the extensive collection of Gerd-Wolfgang Essen. Essen was a German theological scholar and gallery owner from Hamburg. His collection was amassed over a thirty-year period and includes statues, musical instruments, ritual implements, textiles and two hundred thangkas. Essen wrote numerous books on Tibetan art and religion. His collection was purchased by Catherin Oeri in 1998 and donated to the Museum der Kulturen Basel the same year.<sup>512</sup> Museum records have no further notes on this piece.

### **Exhibited/Published:**

- Exhibition “Space,” Museum der Kulturen, Basel, 2011
- *EigenSinn Band 1*, Museum der Kulturen, Basel, 2011 (reproduces details only)
- Blanche Christine Olschak, Augusto Gansser, and Andreas Gurschke, *Himalayas, growing mountains, living myths, migrating peoples*, (New York: Facts on File, 1987), 58-59
- Essen and Thingo, *Die Götter des Himalaya*, 245
- Himalayan Art Resource (HAR # 3314506)
- André Alexander, *Temples of Lhasa*, (details reproduced throughout)

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<sup>512</sup> Museum website: [www.mkb.ch/sonderausstellungen/tibet/e/index.html](http://www.mkb.ch/sonderausstellungen/tibet/e/index.html) 9/30/14 and website for the International Dunhuang project [http://idp.afc.ryukoku.ac.jp/archives/news17/idpnews\\_17.a4d](http://idp.afc.ryukoku.ac.jp/archives/news17/idpnews_17.a4d) 10/22/14.

## PAL- (Pal)



Figure 28. "Pal", 1815-1912, Private Collection (Pal, *Himalayas*)

### Basic Facts:

Current Location:	Private Collection <sup>513</sup>
ID #:	unknown
Date (approx.):	1815-1912
Size and format:	83.8 x 119.4 cm; horizontal format
Inscriptions:	Tibetan

### Overview:

This work is one of the most careful and map-like images of Lhasa in this group. It is a particularly detailed and accurate image and moreover, includes very detailed labels that clearly indicate the various buildings and festival activities to be found.<sup>514</sup>

<sup>513</sup> Published in Pal, *Himalayas*, 276-277, 296-297.

## Subject Matter & Iconography:

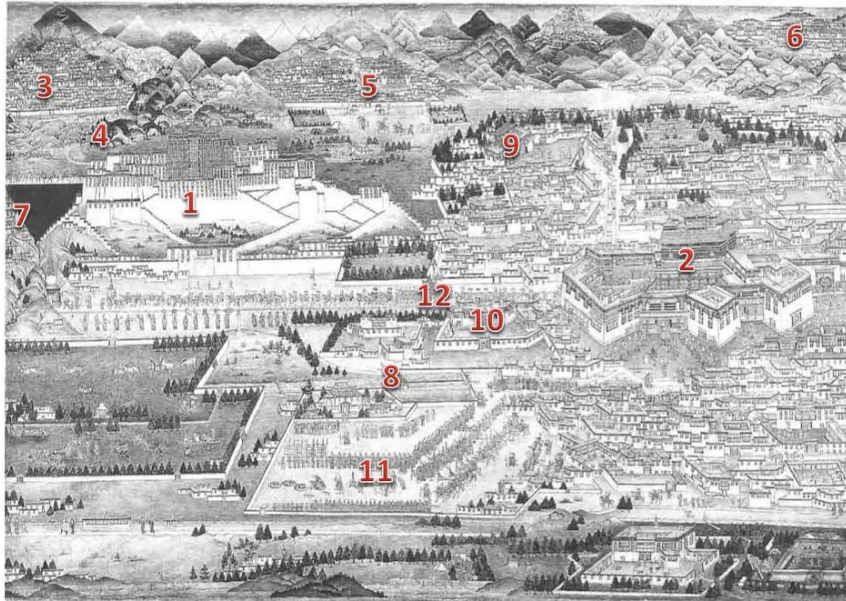


Figure 29. "Pal", 1815-1912, Private Collection (adapted from Pal)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang/Tsuglakhang
3. Drepung
4. Nechung
5. Sera
6. Ganden
7. Chakpori
8. Turquoise Bridge
9. Ramoche
10. Tengyeling (see RMA entry)
11. Monlam festivities
12. Procession with golden palanquin

Note: this painting contains very detailed inscriptions that have been read and translated by Amy Heller in Pal's book.<sup>515</sup> I also performed my own identification of the included monuments using iconography. However, as no discrepancies were found, here I rely on Heller's inscription translations for the identification of the most important monuments and events found in this painting. For the full list please refer to Pal, *Himalayas*, 296-297. This painting provides a critically useful guide for identifying Lhasa monuments.

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<sup>514</sup> Natasha Kimmet, currently at the Rubin Museum of Art, was kind enough to alert me to the existence of this painting. Unfortunately, I learned of it only after I had completed what was nearly a final draft of this dissertation. Sadly, I was not able to track down its current whereabouts.

<sup>515</sup> Pal, *Himalayas*, 296-297.



Event: Monlam Chenmo and a procession

This painting contains details from the Monlam Chenmo, seen below the Amban house. It also includes a procession, not identified by inscription, that includes a golden palanquin, which is proceeding to (and possibly out) the Western Gate. Perhaps this is the Dalai Lama leaving the city. Could this depiction be simultaneously showing Monlam Chenmo and the Chipyr Chenmo as the Oxford painting seems to?

**Inscriptions:**

This image contains many very descriptive Tibetan inscriptions. These are transliterated and translated by Amy Heller in Pal, *Himalayas*, 296-297.

**Composition & Style:**

This is a “balanced”-style composition. It is also surprisingly complete and fairly exact. The buildings appear to have been rendered with very careful straight lines and a fairly realistic three-dimensional perspective has been used. Nevertheless, the Jokhang has been again turned to face the viewer, space has been very much compressed, particularly between the Potala and the town, and Ganden monastery, from outside the valley, is included.

**Date of Creation:** 1815-1912

This painting can be dated with some certainty prior to 1912, when Tengyeling monastery was destroyed, and after 1815 when the 9<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama died (as his tomb is visible on the roof of the Potala).

**Condition & Material:**

Material is cloth with colored pigment (according to Pal).

The work appears to be in very good condition.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Pal, *Himalayas, an aesthetic adventure*, 276-277, 296-297

**BL- (British Library)**



Figure 30. "Brit. Lib", 1856-1862, British Library, London (Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*)

**Basic Facts:**

Current Location: Wise Collection (Tibetan Collection, Asian and African Room),  
British Library, London, UK  
ID #: Add.Or 3013a, Add.Or 3013b  
Date (approx.): 1856-1862  
Size and format: 80 x 70cm (3013a);  
60 x 55 cm (3013b); horizontal format  
Inscriptions: English, Tibetan

**Overview:**

This is a unique Lhasa painting. It is part of a larger set which forms a "map" of the route from Leh in Ladakh to Lhasa and which also contains "anthropological" paintings of Tibetan rituals, ceremonies and customs. It was likely commissioned by a British (perhaps Scottish) patron living in Ladakh and it may have been made by a Ladaki Buddhist.

Note: The two pages, 3013a (Potala) and 3013b (Jokhang), were originally mounted within the album facing each other so as to form a continuous single image of the Lhasa valley. Thus the two paintings can be taken as a single visual image.

## Subject Matter & Iconography:

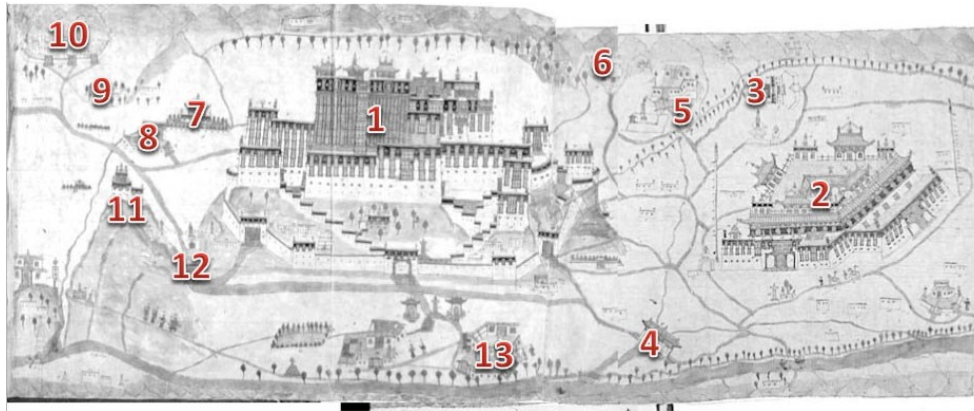


Figure 31. "Brit. Lib", 1856-1862, British Library, London (adapted from Larsen)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Ramoche
4. Turquoise Bridge
5. Trapshi Tsisher (military parade grounds)
6. Sera
7. Lukhang
8. Elephant house?
9. Nechung?
10. Drepung
11. Chakpori and Medicine College
12. Western Gate
13. Residence(s) for Chinese Amban and troops?

Note: while no explicit event is shown, there are many interesting figures present in this painting including various types of pilgrims, boatmen, military men and the Chinese amban.

## Inscriptions:

The works are inscribed with Arabic numerals and in some cases English. The key corresponding to the numbers are on separate pages and in English (in informal script handwriting). Some of the keys are missing, including the key for this painting of Lhasa (Add.or 3013). The cultural scenes are inscribed in Tibetan U-can script, which is very clear and precise. These Tibetan inscriptions are a part of the composition and probably added at the time of completion rather than at some point later or by some other person or collector.

## Composition & Style: (accuracy, underdrawing)

This is a "balanced"-style composition. The painting is dominated by the Potala and Jokhang, other buildings are reduced only to those that would provide obvious road

markers or topographic features such as Chakpori hill, the Western Gate and the Turquoise Bridge.

**Date of Creation:** 1856-1862

This painting can be dated with some certainty. The English keys are on paper with watermarks that contain dates of production, the latest of which appears to be 1856.<sup>516</sup> So, assuming the keys were created not long after the paintings, we can say that the set post-dates 1856. This is further corroborated by iconographic elements: the depiction of Tashilhunpo contains four Panchen Lama tombs which places it between 1853 and 1882. According to Burkhard Quessel, curator of Tibetan Collections at the British Library, this set also shows the “new” roof on Samye that was built in the 1850’s. The British Library website dates the set to 1844-1862.<sup>517</sup> The reason for this specific end-date is not explained.

**Condition & Material:**

The condition of these works is extremely good. Creases indicate that the pieces were folded at one time. They were later bound in a red leather volume, roughly in order, together with the caption pages. At the time of inspection (December 2011), the works were being systematically removed from the bound volume and mounted individually on museum board.

**Collection History:**

The history of this piece is not documented and is very unclear. Scholars, including Michael Aris, have made attempts to trace the work’s history and origin. Currently, this work is being exhaustively examined and researched by Dr. Diana Lange of Humboldt University of Berlin.

According to Lange, the pieces were likely commissioned by an English or Scottish man living in Ladakh or the Western Himalayas in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, probably before the arrival of the “pundits” in Tibet in the 1860’s. The patron may have worked directly with the artist or used a middleman. The artist appears to have been a Tibetan-speaking, educated person, likely a local scholar or lama from Ladakh, Kashmir or Western Tibet.<sup>518</sup> The English captions refer to “my lama,” indicating the artist or informant, and indicate that the writer of the captions, who may have been the original commissioner or collector, was in direct contact with this artist or informant (see chapter 5 for more).

How the works ended up in the collection of the British Library is also unclear. It seems that they were most likely kept at the British government office known as the India Office in London from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until they were transferred to the British Library

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<sup>516</sup> According to my direct observations.

<sup>517</sup> <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/indiaofficeselectpd/FullDisplay.aspx?RecordId=015-000006825>

<sup>518</sup> Discussion with curator Burkhard Quessel December 2011.

at some point in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is certain that further research by Dr. Lange will reveal more facts of this collection's history and provenance.

**Further Comments:**

1. *Maps?*

Of this group, this set is the most “map”-like. Many of these works could be called “saptra” or maps in the traditional Tibetan sense. However, the image of Lhasa stands out as different from the other images in this set. It appears more static and more like a “view” than as a “route”-picture (see chapter 5 for more discussion).

2. *Multiple artists?*

It is possible that more than one artist is responsible for the different folio-sets in this collection. The collection breaks into two sets: the maps and the anthropological works. These are difficult to compare as the subject matter, and thus the visual presentation, is so different. Further research may reveal whether multiple artists may have been involved.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- British Library website, India Office search (no images)
- Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 20-21
- Claudius Müller and Walter Raunig, *Der Weg zum dach der Welt*, (Innsbruck: Pinguin-Verlag, 1982), 263

## ANT- (Antwerp)



Figure 32. "Antwerp", 1853-1882, Museum aan de Stroom, Antwerp (B. Arthur)

### Basic Facts:

Current Location: Museum aan de Stroom, Antwerp, Belgium  
ID #: A.E. 73.25  
Date (approx.): 1853-1882  
Size and format: 94.5 x 148 cm; horizontal format  
Inscriptions: Devanagari?

### Overview:

This is a particularly entertaining painting because it has a high level of detail but also a lively and casual feel. It shows a strong sense of artistic individuality.<sup>519</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> Special thanks to Chris DeLauwer for assisting me in viewing and documenting this painting.

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**

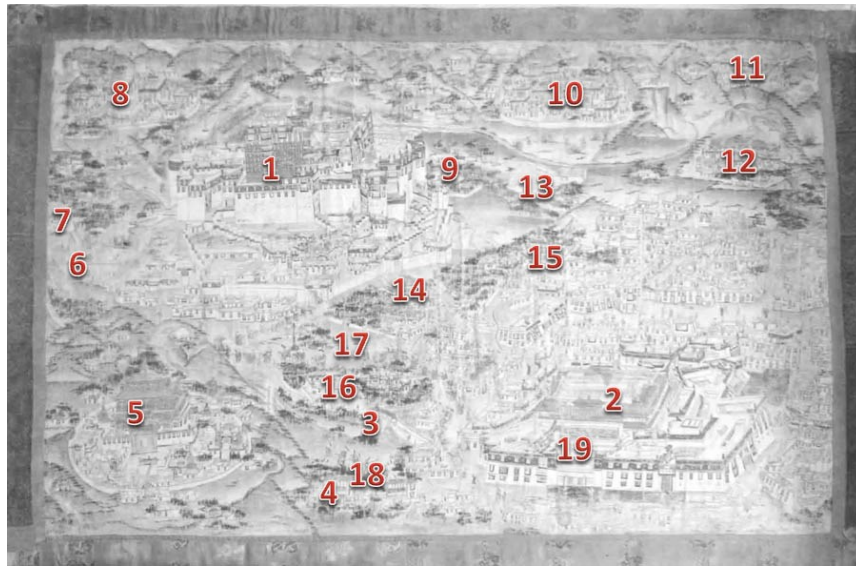


Figure 33. "Antwerp", 1853-1882, Museum aan de Stroom, Antwerp (B. Arthur)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Turquoise Bridge
4. Amban House
5. Samye
6. Western Gate
7. Chakpori
8. Drepung
9. Lukhang
10. Sera
11. Ganden
12. Tashilhunpo
13. Trapshi Tsisher (military parade grounds)
14. Ramoche?
15. Meru Dratsang? (see Oxford entry)
16. Tengyeling? (See RMA entry)
17. Golden Palanquin in procession
18. Chinese amban
19. Teaching in the Jokhang

Note: The odd element located in the fields to the right (proper left) of the Potala and above Lhasa which looks like a football pitch, is actually very likely to be the military parade grounds (Trapshi Tsisher).

Event: Procession- unidentified.

A procession may be found moving away from Lhasa toward the Potala. It contains a golden palanquin, likely with the Dalai Lama inside. This could be the Dalai Lama returning to the Potala after an event at the Jokhang (such as the Monlam Chenmo).

**Inscriptions:**

Inscriptions are in a Nepalese script, probably Devanagari. There are in black ink, in a very untidy hand and are exceedingly difficult to read.

**Composition & Style:**

This is a “balanced”-style composition in which the Potala and the Jokhang are roughly balanced in terms of size and compositional emphasis, although they are not on the same horizontal axis. While the style of this work is not as refined as Basel or Pal, it has a looseness and whimsical feel that gives it a delightful freshness. The image is created with fine detailed lines which have been colored in, probably by a different artist, with less care. The buildings included are very specific- one senses the artist knows Lhasa well, but the degree of spatial accuracy is fairly low.

**Date of Creation:** 1853-1882

This painting can be dated with certainty. The depiction of Tashilhunpo contains four Panchen Lama tombs, which places the painting between the death of the 4<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama (1853) and the death of the 5<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama (1882).

**Condition & Material:**

The material is cloth with colored pigment. The piece is in a brocade frame of green and yellow, which may be original.

The painting has received very little damage. At the top and bottom a very small amount of paint has been rubbed off and there are a few tiny holes. There is also some slight vertical cracking on the paint surface, indicating that the item was very likely rolled and stored.

**Collection History:**

Museum records indicate that this piece was received from a private collector, F. Janssen, on August 18, 1973, by the Antwerp Ethnographic Museum. There are no further records concerning this work. Chris De Lauwer, curator at the Museum aan de Stroom, indicated that Janssen was likely a local art dealer or collector. The Ethnographic Museum was closed in 2010 and its collection moved to the Museum aan de Stroom, also in Antwerp, where it was combined with the collections of the former Maritime museum, folklore museum and part of the Vleeshuis Museum.



**Exhibited/Published:**

- Lauf, Detlef Ingo. *Lhasa, De Heilige Stad van Tibet, En Haar Omgeving*. (Antwerp: Verhandelingen van het Etnografisch Museum van de Stad Antwerpen, 1974)

**ANON- (Anonymous)**

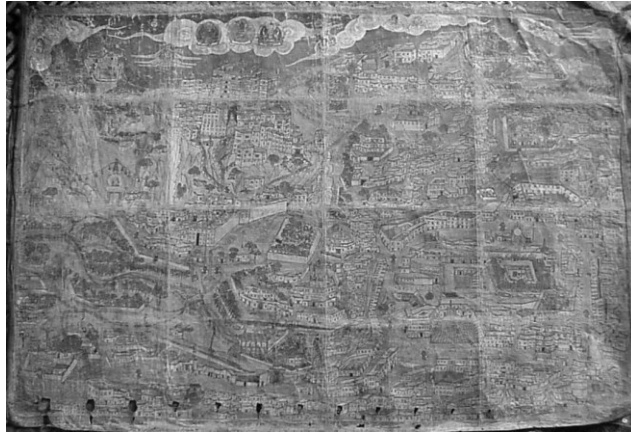


Figure 34. "Anonymous", 1850-1910, Private European Collection (Jeff Watt)

**Basic Facts:**

Current Location: Private European Collection<sup>520</sup>  
ID #: Unknown  
Date (approx.): 1850-1910  
Size and format: unknown; horizontal format  
Inscriptions: none?

**Overview:**

This work may have been a true “pilgrimage souvenir.” It appears to be of lower quality than many of the other paintings and has markings that show it was folded for long periods of time (see chapter 5 for more discussion).

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<sup>520</sup> Special thanks to Jeff Watt for sharing this piece with me. Unfortunately, the current location of this painting or the source of the photograph (in Watt’s possession) is unknown.

### Subject Matter & Iconography:

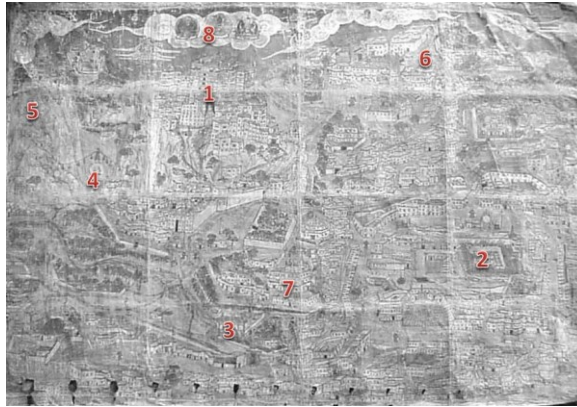


Figure 35. "Anonymous", 1850-1910, Private European Collection (adapted from Watt)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Turquoise Bridge
4. Western Gate
5. Chakpori and Medicine College
6. Sera
7. Tengyeling
8. 3 (or more) personages in sky- possibly includes Avalokiteshvara and others

### Composition & Style:

This is considered a “balanced”-style composition, although the image is rather chaotic. Equal emphasis is placed on the Jokhang and the Potala and neither is placed at the center of the composition.

The style of this work is very rough, possibly this could be considered “folk art.” Nevertheless, it is a very full composition with many buildings, and their placement and iconography are fairly easy to read. Space is not well understood and the monuments all appear to be located next to one another.

### Date of Creation: 1850-1910

This painting can be tentatively dated based on the (likely) presence of the 9<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama’s tomb-roof on the Potala to after 1815, and prior to 1912 because it appears that Tengyeling monastery is included (destroyed in 1912).

**Condition & Material:**

The material is not known with certainty, but it is likely to be cloth with colored pigment.

The damage to this work is extensive. It has a series of large holes along the bottom edge, possibly insect damage. There are clear, regular horizontal and vertical lines showing the picture was probably folded.

**Exhibited/Published:**

To my knowledge this work has not been exhibited or published.

## WAD- (Waddell)

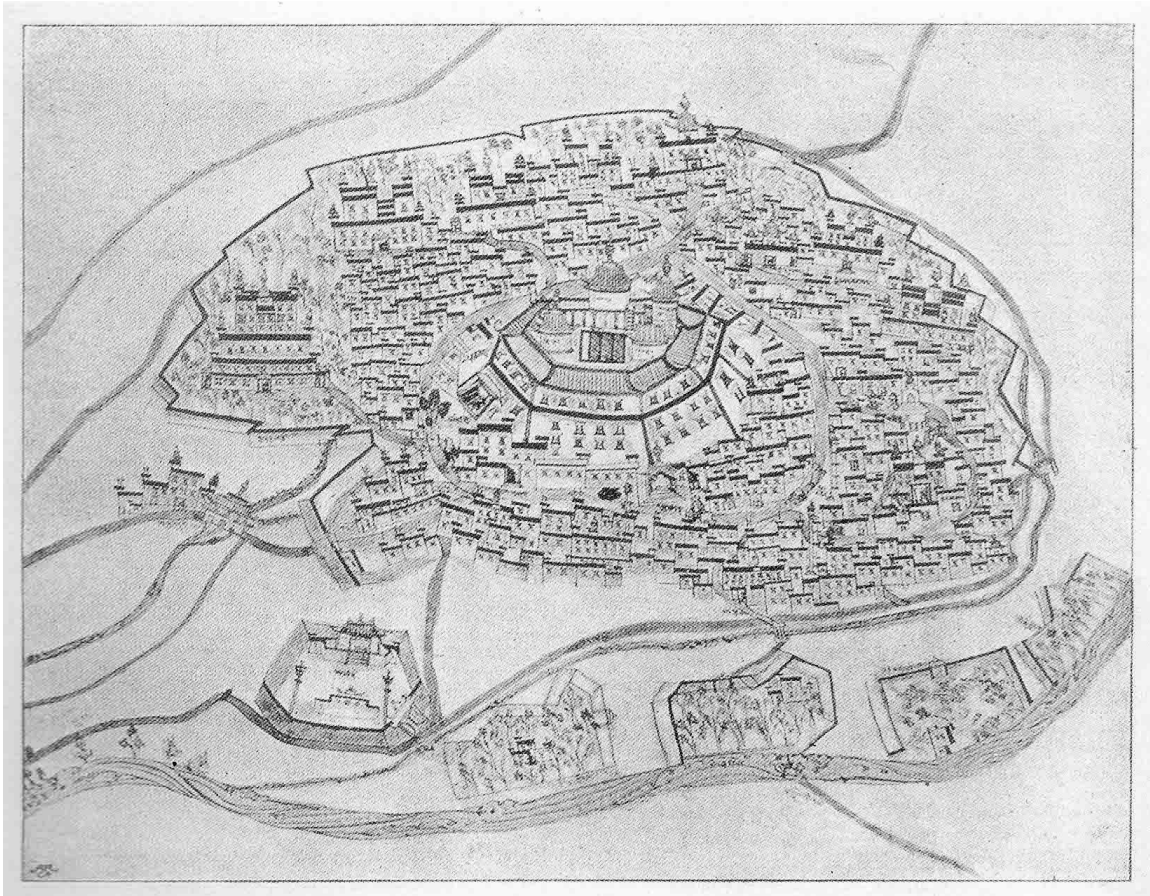


Figure 36. "Waddell", 1882-1895, location unknown (Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*)

### Basic Facts:

Current Location:	unknown
ID #:	n/a
Date (approx.):	1882-1895
Size and format:	unknown; horizontal format
Inscriptions:	Tibetan

### Overview:

This work was published by L.A. Waddell in his 1895 book, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 66. My discussion of this work appears in the section of chapter 5 that covers Western publications of the indigenous Lhasa image as maps. Nevertheless, I believe this work

belongs in the set of “true” Lhasa paintings because it seems to contain Tibetan inscriptions, thus it is most likely by a Tibetan and not in imitation of a Tibetan work.

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**

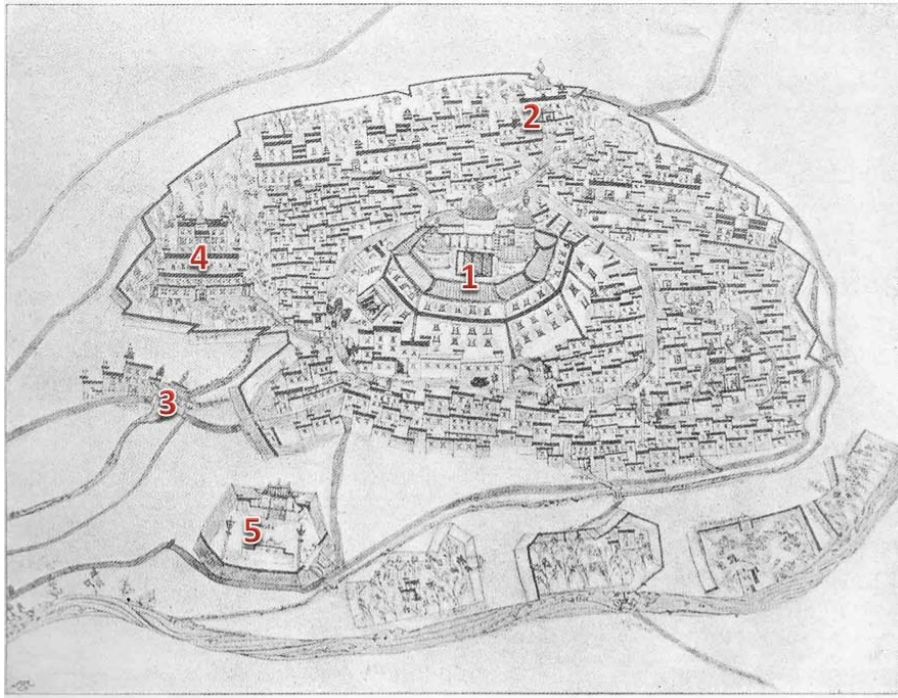


Figure 37. "Wadell", 1882-1895, Location Unknown (adapted from Waddell)

1. Jokhang
2. Ramoche
3. Turquoise Bridge
4. Tengyeling? (see RMA entry)
5. Amban House

**Composition & Style:**

This is considered a “single”-style composition as it features only one major element: Lhasa town with the Jokhang-Tsuglakhang at its center.

The style of this work is naïve and could be termed “folk art.” Perspective and view point are particularly odd, the walls of the Jokhang (and we can see more than three sides) appear to fall inward as they rise. The town is filled mostly with generic buildings, although there are some more specific landmarks that are readily apparent (Ramoche, etc.).

**Date of Creation:** 1882-1895

This work obviously pre-dates its publication in 1895. The start-date is less certain. The other images in Waddell's book appear to post-date 1882 (the Tashilhunpo image has the tomb of the 5<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama who died in 1882). As the many of these images appear to have been created by the same artist, it may be possible to say that they all date between 1882 and 1895.

**Condition & Material:**

The material is not known with certainty, but it is likely to be ink on paper.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- L.A. Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 66.

## NEP1- (Nepal 1)

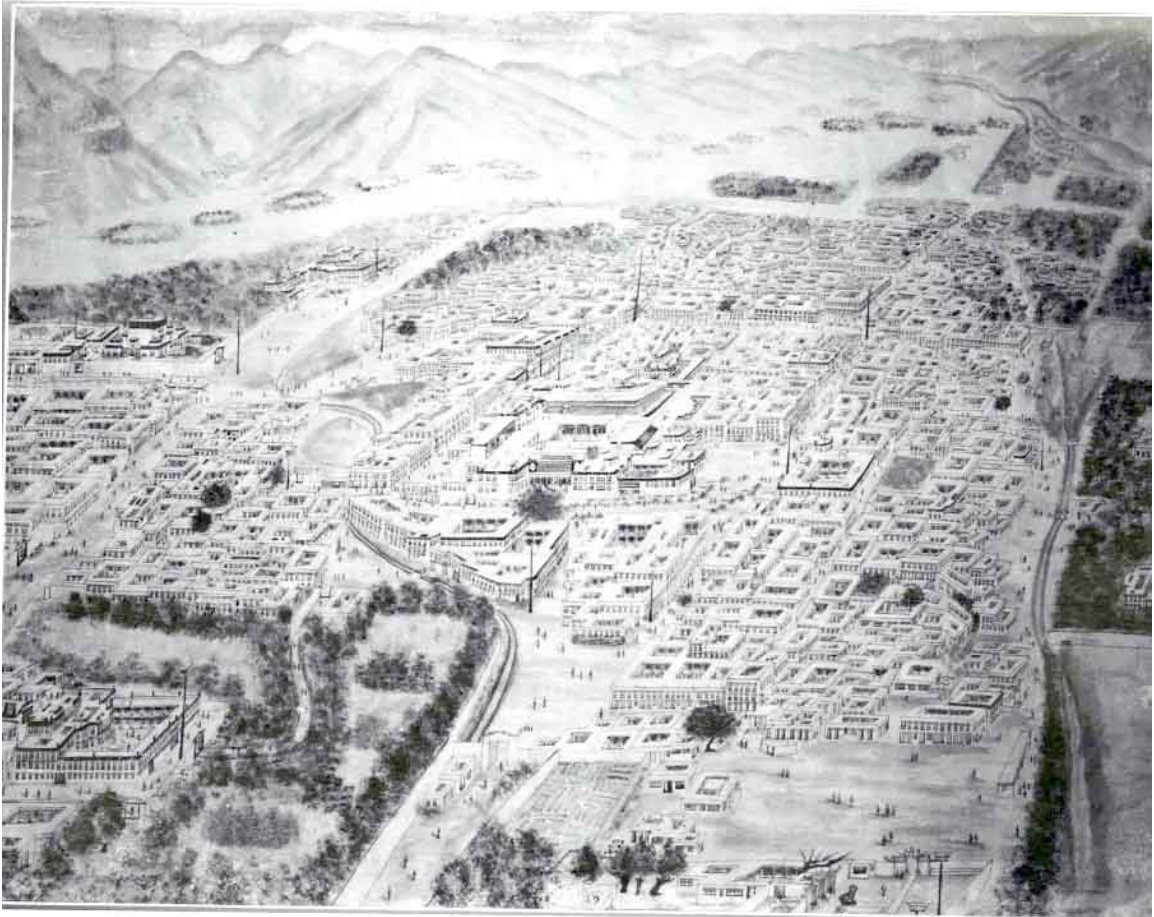


Figure 38. "Nepal 1", 1900-1930, Private Collection of Knud Larsen, Oslo (Larsen, "A Newly Discovered")

### Basic Facts:

Current Location:	Private Collection of Knud Larsen, Oslo, Norway
ID #:	n/a
Date (approx.):	1900-1930
Size and format:	50 x 66 cm; horizontal format
Inscriptions:	none

### Overview:

This painting is one of four that appear to be direct copies of one another or based on another common source. It is possible that all four were created by the same



artist, potentially the “Nepalese photographer” credited with creating “Nepal 2.” Thus I have chosen to call all four “Nepal.”

Dating these paintings is particularly problematic. These works feature only the town of Lhasa and are among the most “map”-like and “Western” of the group. They are also very accurate and precise and may provide clues as to what the town and architecture of Lhasa looked like at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Subject Matter & Iconography:



Figure 39. "Nepal 1", 1900-1930, Private Collection of Knud Larsen, Oslo (adapted from Larsen)

1. Jokhang
2. Tengyeling (see RMA entry)
3. Jebumgang (see Basel entry)
4. Meru Dratsang (see Oxford entry)
5. Amban house

Note: Knud Larsen has identified many more of the buildings shown.<sup>521</sup> In theory, this work is accurate enough that it may be possible to identify virtually all of the buildings shown.

This painting is filled with tiny figures throughout, however no specific event is shown.

### Composition & Style:

<sup>521</sup> Larsen, “A Newly Discovered,” 226-227

This is a “single”-style of composition, which features only the town of Lhasa. It should be noted that the orientation of this painting is very different from the majority of the group- the view is from the west looking east.

Accuracy and precision are particularly high in this work. Not only are buildings individualized and specific, there is no intentional distortion, moving or re-orienting of buildings. Further, the artist is using a form of perspective and three-dimensionality that is more akin to “Western”-style single-point perspective. Here the town recedes into the distance, although there is still some “tipping-up” of the ground plane. The buildings in the distance and the hills behind are rendered with less distinct lines achieving a sort of atmospheric distance.

**Date of Creation:** before 1900-1936

All four “Nepal” works are very difficult to date with certainty. Larsen dates “Nepal 1” to before 1912, based on the presence of Tengyeling monastery, which, he notes, was partially destroyed that year.<sup>522</sup> As the painting is highly accurate, even to the point where it seems the original artist must have drawn from direct observation, it would seem logical to use the presence of Tengyeling as an end-date. However, this work is (possibly) a copy and could have been created after 1912 outside of Lhasa based on a pre-1912 model. Moreover, it exists within a group of similar paintings, all of which should be considered together, and each has a slightly different consideration when it comes to dates of creation.

First, Nepal 4 was published in 1901 (Holdich, “Lhasa”) and thus must have been created that year or prior. Second, Nepal 3 has an inscription in the corner that reads “1936 Lhasa” (or “1930 Lhasa”<sup>523</sup>), this could be the date of creation or it could be the date of collection. Effectively Nepal 3 and 4 give us a start date (prior to 1901) and end-date (during 1936) that can be assigned as a highly conservative general date for the entire group. It is, however, possible to narrow further in some instances. Nepal 2, has the inscription: “the bird’s eye sketch of “Lhasa” by a Nepalese Photographer of Lhasa in 1905-1911,” and it is part of the collection amassed by the Japanese monk, Bunkyou Aoki, in Tibet, Nepal and China between 1902 and 1916.

I would propose that the original image (whatever or whichever it was) was created prior to 1901 and that copies of this image were made for maybe a decade after or even up to 1936. As it cannot be determined which of these images might be the “original,” if indeed any of them are, it seems most prudent to give the entire group the rough date of before 1900-1936 and to further refine the dates for the two works that have a better-known date of collection: Nepal 4 published in 1901, is demonstrably one of the oldest copies; and Nepal 2, collected at the latest by 1916.

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<sup>522</sup> Larsen, “A Newly Discovered,” 228

<sup>523</sup> This was noted as “1936” in the exhibition at the Rubin Museum, “Bodies in Balance,” 2014, on the accompanying wall marker and in the catalog (*Bodies in Balance*). However, it looks like it reads 1930 rather than 1936.

It should also be noted that copies were disbursed widely; one ended up in British publications in 1901, one made it to Japan by 1916 (see “Nepal 2” entry below), one in Kathmandu (date unknown), and the other, possibly, to Sikkim (see “Nepal 3” entry below). There are several scenarios to consider here. One is that an original image was created (possibly based on direct observation) and this was kept by the artist, maybe in Kathmandu, and used to create more images over the following years (maybe even as late as the 1930s) and disbursed around the world.<sup>524</sup> A second possibility is that there was a single original that spawned copies and the copies themselves spawned further copies (possibly by other artists) and thus the image was replicated over time. While the first scenario seems the most realistic, the second scenario could explain the slight discrepancies in details and style between the works (particularly apparent in the treatment of trees and outlying estates and mountains). Either way, the original image must have been created before 1901 and seems to have been replicated through 1916 and even long after the 1912 destruction of Tengyeling, perhaps as late as 1936.

**Condition & Material:**<sup>525</sup>

Material is rice paper with ink, watercolor pigment and gold.

The work had received some damage, particularly from insects, but was restored by the Danish National Museum.

**Collection History:**

This work was found by Knud Larsen, the Tibetologist and architect, in Kathmandu in 2002. He brought it back to Scandinavia for restoration. It is now in his private collection in Oslo.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Knud Larsen, “A Newly Discovered,” 225-233. Figure 123.
- Hofer, *Bodies in Balance*, 262 (detail image only)

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<sup>524</sup> See Larsen’s speculations on this; Larsen, “A Newly Discovered,” 230-233.

<sup>525</sup> Larsen, “A Newly Discovered,” 225-226.

## NEP2- (Nepal 2)



Figure 40. "Nepal 2", 1900-1916, Omiya Library, Ryukoku University, Kyoto (Larsen, "A Newly Discovered")

### Basic Facts:

Current Location:	Omiya Library, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan
ID #:	unknown
Date (approx.):	1900-1916
Size and format:	134 x 168 cm; horizontal format
Inscriptions:	Tibetan (U-can) and English

### Overview:

This is one of four paintings that may have been copied from one another or from a separate, unknown, original image. See "Nepal 1" for more discussion.

## Subject Matter & Iconography:



Figure 41. "Nepal 2", 1900-1916, Omiya Library, Ryukoku University, Kyoto (adapted from Larsen)

1. Jokhang
2. Turquoise Bridge
3. Tengyeling (see RMA entry)
4. Jebumgang (see Basel entry)
5. Meru Dratsang (see Oxford entry)

Note: No specific event is being shown, however there are many human figures throughout.

### Inscriptions:

The photograph taken by Michael Aris and included in Larsen's article, shows a Tibetan inscription in *dbu can* script along the top of the painting. It is not clear if this is original to the image or not. It is also rather difficult to translate because it cannot be seen in its entirety in the photo.

1. *bod rgyal khab dbus su gyur pa dpal gyi chos 'khor lha ldan zhing gi...* (unreadable)/ ...the Lhaden (Lhasa) region, the dharma wheel of the glorious arisen center of the country of Tibet

According to Larsen there is also an English inscription in the lower right corner that reads "The Bird's eye sketch of 'Lhasa' by a Nepalese Photographer of Lhasa in 1905-1915."<sup>526</sup>

<sup>526</sup> Larsen, "A Newly Discovered," 230.

**Composition & Style:**

This is a “single”-style of composition, featuring only the town of Lhasa. It is oriented from west to east. And is created in a far more accurate and “Western” –style than the typical Lhasa paintings.

**Date of Creation:** 1900-1916

See “Nepal 1” for a full discussion of the problems associated with ascribing dates to all four of the “Nepal” paintings. “Nepal 2” was collected by Bunkyou Aoki, a Japanese Zen monk who made expeditions to China, Nepal and Tibet between 1902 and 1916.<sup>527</sup> Aoki brought back many thousands of artifacts from his travels and these are collected at Ryokoku University, a Buddhist university in Kyoto. Thus the definitive end-date for this work is 1916. The start date is uncertain but could be as early as 1900 or, although unlikely, even earlier.

**Condition & Material:**

Material is paper, six sheets pasted together.<sup>528</sup> Current condition has not been assessed.

**Collection History:**

This work was collected by the Japanese Zen Buddhist monk, Bunkokyi Aoki, in Nepal, China or Tibet sometime between 1902 and 1916. It was given to the Ryukoku university by his nephew, Shoshin Aoki, at some later point.<sup>529</sup> For more discussion on the origin of this work, the so-called “Nepalese photographer,” please see chapter 4.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Knud Larsen, “A Newly Discovered,” 225-233. Figure 127.
- Catalog for exhibition in Japan, 2002, “Art and Culture of Tibetan Peoples.”

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<sup>527</sup> Larsen, “A Newly Discovered,” 229- 230.

<sup>528</sup> According to Larsen, “A Newly Discovered,” 229.

<sup>529</sup> Larsen, “A Newly Discovered,” 230.

## NEP3- (Nepal 3)



Figure 42. "Nepal 3", 1900-1936, Collection of Mrs. Deki Laden La Rhodes, London (*Bodies in Balance*)

### Basic Facts:

Current Location: Collection of Mrs. Deki Laden La Rhodes, London, UK  
ID #: n/a  
Date (approx.): 1900-1936 (potentially 1936)  
Size and format: unknown; horizontal format  
Inscriptions: none

### Overview:

This is perhaps the most recent of the four “Nepal” paintings, which seem to be copies. See “Nepal 1” for more discussion.

## Subject Matter & Iconography:

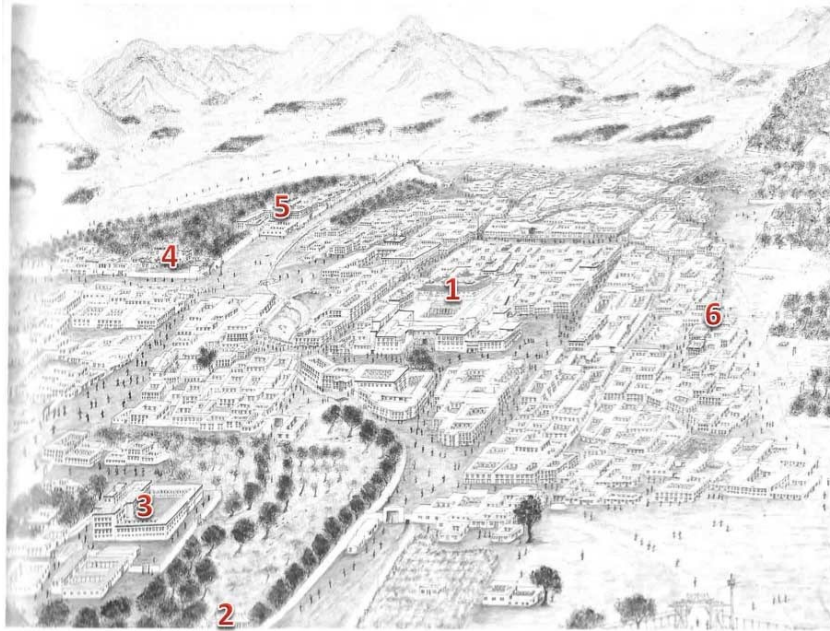


Figure 43. "Nepal 3", 1900-1936, Collection of Mrs. Deki Laden La Rhodes, London (adapted from *Bodies in Balance*)

1. Jokhang
2. Turquoise Bridge
3. Tengyeling
4. Jebumgang
5. Meru Dratsang
6. Lho Rigsum Lhakang

Note: This image contains many small figures throughout. No specific event is shown.

The Lho Rigsum Lhakang is the southern shrine from the Rigsum Gonpo shrines of the eight directions. Because they are so small and they may not have all been extant in the last few centuries, they are much more difficult to locate in the paintings. Nevertheless, they can be identified in a few of the paintings (particularly in the Nepal set). Potentially dating to Lhasa's imperial period, the eight directional shrines form a mandala with the Jokhang at the center. The fact that these shrines are rarely emphasized in the paintings may indicate that this mandalic conception of Lhasa was not a strong tradition in later centuries.

### Inscriptions:

The painting contains a single inscription in the upper left corner. This appears to be initials, possibly "SW" or "SWL," and "1930 Lhasa" (by my reading) or "1936 Lhasa" (according to the exhibition plaque and catalog, *Bodies in Balance*).



“SWL” could possibly refer to Sonam Wangfel Laden La, possible collector of this painting (see below), although as he died in 1936, this makes the date on the painting even more odd.

**Composition & Style:**

This is a “single”-style composition showing only the town of Lhasa and oriented from West to East. It is a particularly detailed and accurate painting. It makes use of three-dimensional perspective, in possible imitation of Western art.

**Date of Creation:** 1900-1936; probably earlier

See “Nepal 1” for a full discussion of the problems associated with ascribing dates to all four of the “Nepal” paintings. “Nepal 3” has an inscribed date of 1936 in the upper left corner, according to its exhibition wall plaque and the exhibition catalog. To me this appears to say “1930,” however I was unable to see the work in person and cannot be certain of this reading. According to Hofer and Larsen, the fact that this work contains Tengyeling monastery, destroyed in 1912, indicates that perhaps this should be given an earlier date, although in my opinion it is possible that later copies made of a pre-1912 original could have been made after the destruction of Tengyeling. It is possible that the inscribed date does not refer to a date of creation but to the date the work entered a certain collection. In my opinion a conservative dating would be 1900-1936, although it is possible the image was created much earlier than 1936.

**Condition & Material:**

Material is paper with ink and watercolor pigment, possibly also gold.

Condition appears to be very good, with some damage, including small holes, on the right side of the painting.

**Collection History:**

This work is currently in the collection of Mrs. Deki Lhaden La Rhodes. She is the granddaughter of Sonam Wangfel Laden La (1876-1936). Lhaden La was from an ethnically Tibetan family living in Sikkim. He was a devout lay Buddhist, he worked closely with the British government in India and was an important figure in British-Tibetan relations. He was fluent in Tibetan, English and other languages and was, according to Toni Huber, “one of the first generation of modern Buddhist revivalists and transmitters of Tibetan Buddhism to Western and Indian audiences.”<sup>530</sup> Lhaden La also appears to have travelled to Lhasa, perhaps multiple times, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>531</sup> It is possible that it was he who bought or received this painting of Lhasa, which is now in the possession of his granddaughter.

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<sup>530</sup> Toni Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn, Pilgrimage & the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 296-297.

<sup>531</sup> Alex McKay, “Introduction,” *The Tibet Journal*, v 28, no. 4 (Winter 2003).

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Exhibition: “Bodies in Balance,” Rubin Museum of Art, New York, Spring 2014.
- Catalog: *Bodies in Balance*, 263.

## NEP4- (Nepal 4)



Figure 44. "Nepal 4", before 1901, location unknown (Holdich, "Lhasa")

### Basic Facts:

Current Location:	unknown
ID #:	n/a
Date (approx.):	Before 1901
Size and format:	unknown; horizontal format
Inscriptions:	unknown

### Overview:

This is may be one of the earliest "Nepal" paintings, from the set of four painting which appear to be copies. Its origin and current whereabouts are unknown. See "Nepal 1" for more discussion.

### Subject Matter & Iconography:

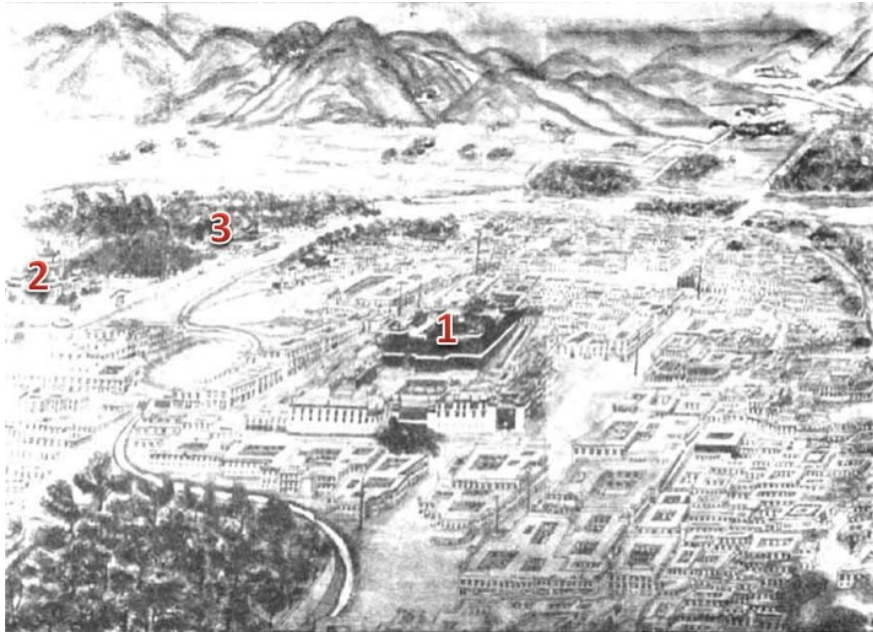


Figure 45. "Nepal 4", before 1901, Location Unknown (adapted from Holdich)

1. Jokhang
2. Jebumgang (see Basel entry)
3. Meru Dratsang (see Oxford entry)

Note: Unlike the other Nepal paintings, this one appears to contain no human figures.

### Composition & Style:

This is a “single”-style composition showing Lhasa town, oriented from east to west. It is one of the more successful attempts at a three-dimensional single-point perspective. It seems to be quite accurate and detailed.

**Date of Creation:** before 1901

See “Nepal 1” for a full discussion of the problems associated with ascribing dates to all four of the “Nepal” paintings. “Nepal 4” was published in 1901 by Holdich. Thus we know that the painting must pre-date 1901. It is not possible to ascertain just how long before 1901 this may have been made. Judging by its more “Western” style, it seems safe to say that it was probably created closer to 1900 than otherwise.

### Condition & Material:

Material and condition cannot be ascertained.

**Collection History:**

The current location of this piece is unknown. Its collection history also remains a mystery. It was published in 1901 by Holdich and 1902 by Sarat Das, in both cases with the same caption. It thus seems likely that one of these men obtained the image from the other, whether legitimately or not. It is also likely that one of these men, both of whom were involved in British government mapping projects along and beyond Indian borders, could have come across this painting in the course of their work. As they were influential leaders in academic circles, both in Tibetan studies and in geographic circles, it is possible that one of these men obtained the image from a third, unknown, scholar. See chapter 4 for more on Holdich and chapter 5 for more on both Holdich and Das.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Holdich, "Lhasa," 604
- Das, *Journey to Lhasa*, facing page 151

## MON- (Mongolia)



Figure 46. "Mongolia", 1920-1933, Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art, Ulaan Batur (B. Arthur)

### Basic Facts:

Artist:	Baldur Sharav (1869-1939)
Current Location:	Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art, Ulaan Batur, Mongolia
ID #:	unknown
Date (approx.):	Circa 1921; 1920-1933
Size and format:	Approx. 180 x 120 cm; vertical format

Inscriptions: Mongolian

**Overview:**

This is one of the few Lhasa paintings where the artist is known. It was created by a Mongolian artist, Balduv Sharav, in Mongolia. It is possible that the artist used photographs as models for the various buildings. The style, composition and rendering of monuments is very different from other Lhasa paintings. It also uniquely includes a “portrait” of a specific person, the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**

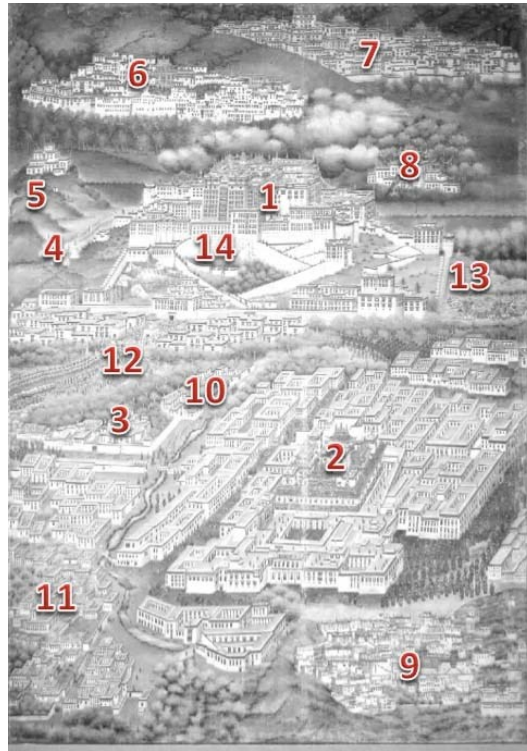


Figure 47. "Mongolia", 1920-1933, Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art, Ulaan Batur (B. Arthur)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang-Tsuglakhang
3. Jebumgang (see Basel entry)
4. Western Gate
5. Chakpori and Medicine College
6. Drepung
7. Sera
8. Lukhang
9. Ganden

10. Meru Dratsang (see Oxford entry)
11. Possibly the new Mentsikhang (1916)
12. 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (and elephant and procession)
13. elephant
14. Man on rope

Event: Monlam Chenmo, Losar

This painting features several events associate with Monlam Chenmo and Losar (New Year), both held in the same month. There is a procession, with the Dalai Lama being carried on a platform and surrounded by monks, musicians and others (townspeople, pilgrims, people of various ethnicities). The procession may be headed to the Jokhang where there is another procession (or part of the same procession) going around the building, with monks, noblemen, members of different “foreign” contingencies, many on-lookers and large smoking censers. There are crowds of monks seated in rows in the Jokhang courtyard. There is a group of tents below the Potala, within the Zhöl enclosure. In the center of this are troops of musicians, a circle of dancers (with axes) and many on-lookers.

There is a man sliding on his stomach down a rope that is affixed high on a turret of the Potala and at the other end to a building in Zhöl. This is the “Sky-Dancing-Rope-Game” (*ggnam-bro-thang-rtsed*) or “Sliding down a rope like a bird” (*bya-mkhan-thag-shur*), a Losar ritual held on the day before Monlam Chenmo. In this ritual, a man from Tsang is chosen to attempt this death-defying feat. This event is also shown in the British Library works (Add.Or 3029) and can be found in early photographs. See chapter 3 for more.

Note: Other than specific events, there are many people and animals throughout. This includes many traders in the Barkhor, seated beside their wares, and people of many ethnicities. There are people leading pack trains, as well as pilgrims and monks. There are also two elephants, one is behind the Dalai Lama as a part of the procession, the other appears to wander to the right side of the Potala.

The new Mentsikhang (Institute of Medicine and Astrology) was built on or close to the location of the old Tengyeling monastery after 1912. It was a low and long building.<sup>532</sup>

**Inscriptions:**

Inscriptions are in gold ink in Mongolian script. There are fourteen inscriptions. Many are found on and around the Potala. Others label the major monuments and monasteries, including the Jokhang, Sera, Drepung, Ganden, Ramoche and the Lukhang.

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<sup>532</sup> *Bodies in Balance*, 263-266



### **Composition & Style:**

This is considered a “mandala”-style composition, although it isn’t particularly symmetrical. The Potala is emphasized at the center, the Jokhang and town spread out below it, mainly on the right. Above are the two monasteries, Drepung and Sera.

The style of this painting is markedly different from the others. Space is understood in a very different way. It is as if the various monuments are discreet units that have been rendered as a single unit and then layered against each other to create depth. Architectural accuracy and detail is very high.

### **Date of Creation:** 1920 - 1933

This work can be dated with some certainty. Discussion in chapter 4 shows how the image of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama may be based on a 1921 photograph. If this is the case, then the painting must date after that. This was also the year of the People’s Revolution in Mongolia. It is unlikely that Sharav could have created this painting after 1936 when the “Great Terror” brought Buddhist institutions in Mongolia to a violent end. If the 1921 photograph is not the source for the portrait, then this painting could potentially be earlier, though not prior to about 1901 or 1904, when the first photographs of Lhasa and of Ganden monastery were taken.

### **Condition & Material:**

Material is cloth with colored pigment and gold.

Condition appears to be very good, with a small amount of fading or damage to the paint in a vertical strip in about the center of the painting.

### **Comments & Speculation:**

#### *1. Based on photographs?*

Jeff Watt proposed, in discussion with me and later in his article in *Tricycle*, that the artist may have used photographs as models for this painting. I have been able to find potential photographic models for the image of Ganden and for the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. It is very likely that this is indeed how the artist created this image. See Watt (below) and Chapter 4 for further discussion.

#### *2. The artist*

This work looks very different to me from other paintings by Sharav. It would be interesting to do a more careful study of his work. He was trained in Buddhist art but self-trained in “realistic” portraiture and modern artistic styles. There was a small but strong tradition of “place-paintings” in indigenous Mongolian art in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Certainly this topic warrants more research. Please also see Chapter 4 for more discussion of this artist and this painting.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Exhibited at the Zanazabar Museum in Ulaan Batur<sup>533</sup>
- Himalayan Art Resources (HAR# 50151)
- Watt, Jeff. "Himalayan Buddhist Art 101: Cityscapes." *Tricycle*. Accessed on October 4, 2012, [www.tricycle.com/blog/himalayan-buddhist-art-101-cityscapes](http://www.tricycle.com/blog/himalayan-buddhist-art-101-cityscapes)

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<sup>533</sup> Special thanks to the museum staff for allowing me to photograph and take copious notes of this painting.

ART- (ArtStor)



Figure 48. "ArtStor", 1900-1933 (Huntington Archive)

**Basic Facts:**

Current Location: Potala Collection, Lhasa, China?  
ID #: unknown  
Date (approx.): 1900-1933  
Size and format: unknown; horizontal format  
Inscriptions: unknown

**Overview:**

This is a particularly fine and complete vision of Lhasa and the valley's monuments as a pureland-mandala. This work seems to be part of the Potala collection and may have belonged to the Dalai Lama at one point.

## Subject Matter & Iconography:

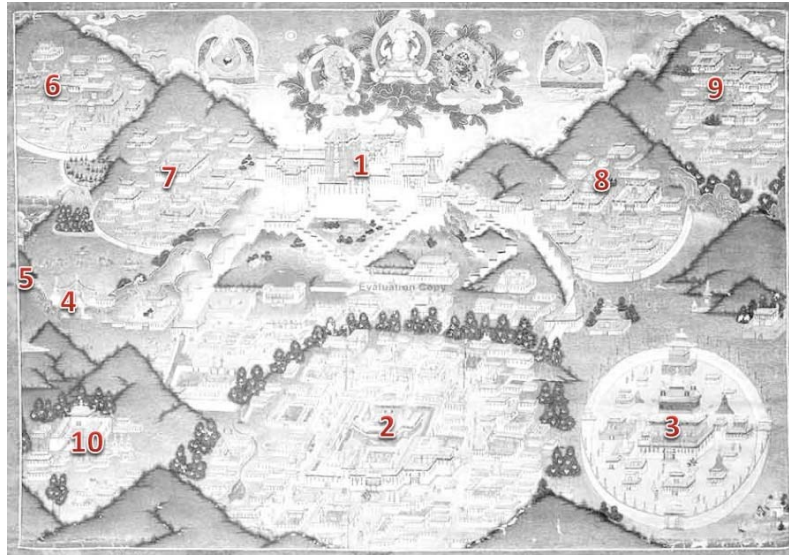


Figure 49. "ArtStor", 1900-1933 (adapted from Huntington Archive)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang-Tsuglakhang
3. Samye
4. Western Gate
5. Chakpori
6. Tashilhunpo
7. Drepung
8. Sera
9. Ganden
10. Unknown monastery

Note: there is no event being depicted, however there are many people and animals throughout. This includes monks, traders, pilgrims and others. Notably there are ducks in a pond located under Tashilhunpo.

There are five beings in the sky, from left to right: a lama or Dalai Lama, Manjusri, Shadakshari Avalokiteshvara, a wrathful form of Vajrapani, and another lama or Dalai Lama.

## Composition & Style:

This is a true "mandala"-style composition. The Potala is at the center with the Jokhang and town below. The bottom corners contain: the unidentified monastery and Samye. There are two monasteries in each upper corner: Tashihunpo and Drepung, Sera and Ganden. The style is very rich with very careful dotted shading and beautiful outlining and fading of colors. The image is careful and detailed, but not strongly exact or accurate.

**Date of Creation:** 1900 - 1933

This work can be dated tentatively. The tomb-roofs of the Dalai Lamas go up to the 9<sup>th</sup> (d. 1815) and there is no 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama tomb (d. 1933), thus we know this painting pre-dates 1933. Tashilhunpo is not rendered carefully enough to use for certain dating. However, perhaps there are four Panchen Lama tombs (indicating post 1853) or five (indicating post 1882). However, according to John Huntington the style of this painting makes it more modern than that, perhaps created around the 1920s.<sup>534</sup> Thus I have selected an estimate of 1900-1933.

**Condition & Material:**

Material is cloth with colored pigment and gold.

Condition appears to be very good.

**Collection History:**

It is possible that this image was in the Dalai Lama's own collection and that it is still part of the Potala collection.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- *Precious Deposits, Volume 4, Qing Dynasty*, (Beijing: Morning Glory Publ., 2000), Image 35
- Art Stor website
- Huntington Archive website (#0050760)

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<sup>534</sup> In-person discussion with John Huntington, September 2013.

**VIE- (Vienna)**



Figure 50. "Vienna", 1933-1970 (Galerie Zacke website)

Current Location: Unknown (possibly Galerie Zacke, Vienna, Austria)  
ID #: n/a  
Date (approx.): 1933- 1970  
Size and format: 61 x 78; horizontal format  
Inscriptions: unknown

**Overview:**

This is one of the more odd and problematic Lhasa paintings. The spacing and detail of this work are not remotely accurate. It is also likely that this is a fragment of a painting.<sup>535</sup>

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<sup>535</sup> Special thanks to Dr. Diana Lange for alerting me to the existence of this work.

## Subject Matter & Iconography:

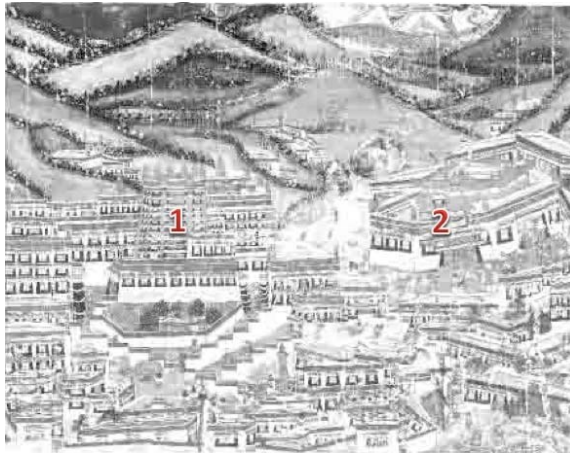


Figure 51. "Vienna", 1933-1970 (adapted Galerie Zacke website)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang

Note: there are people throughout, particularly in front of the Jokhang.

## Composition & Style:

This is considered a “balanced”-style composition, with the Potala and the Jokhang appearing more or less on the same horizontal axis. The style of this work must be called naïve. The buildings are crowded together, and although they are recognizable, they are executed without much attention to architectural realism, detail or perspective. Spacing is particularly odd in this painting. The buildings are squeezed together and there are overlapping and nearly empty hills beyond.

## Date of Creation: 1933- 1970

This work can be dated tentatively. We can see the tomb roof of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama to the west of the Red Palace, dating this painting to after his death in 1933. There is nothing to indicate an end-date for this work, however it seems likely that it was not created recently. While it seems reasonable to assume that this would have been created prior to 1959, it is possible that someone created this after leaving Lhasa, perhaps a Tibetan living in India or elsewhere. Thus I have assigned a possible end-date of 1970.

## Condition & Material:

Material is cloth with colored pigment.<sup>536</sup>

Condition appears to be fair, with some vertical cracking as though the work has been rolled.

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<sup>536</sup> According to the Galerie Zacke website.

**Collection History:**

This work belonged to a private collection in Vienna. It was for sale at the Galerie Zacke in Vienna, Austria in 2013 and 2014 (Catalog # AK 1112-129) and was examined by Wolfmar Zacken. It is not clear whether this painting has been sold.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Galerie Zacke website: [http://www.zacke.at/de/sammlung/14719/kunst-  
aus-asien-auktion-november-2012/eintrag/11699/bildkunst-himalaya-  
kulturkreis-der-potala-lhasa-bildkunst](http://www.zacke.at/de/sammlung/14719/kunst-aus-asien-auktion-november-2012/eintrag/11699/bildkunst-himalaya-kulturkreis-der-potala-lhasa-bildkunst)



**OLS- (Olschak)**



Figure 52. "Olschak", 1933-1973, location unknown, possibly Olschak or other private collection, Zurich (Olschak, *Mystic Art of Tibet*)

**Basic Facts:**

Current Location: Unknown (possibly Olschak or other private collection, Zurich, Switzerland)  
ID #: n/a  
Date (approx.): 1933- 1973  
Size and format: Approximately 50 x 70 cm; horizontal format  
Inscriptions: uncertain

**Overview:**

This is one of the most recent Lhasa paintings. It may have been created in Nepal, possibly based on a sketch.

**Subject Matter & Iconography:**

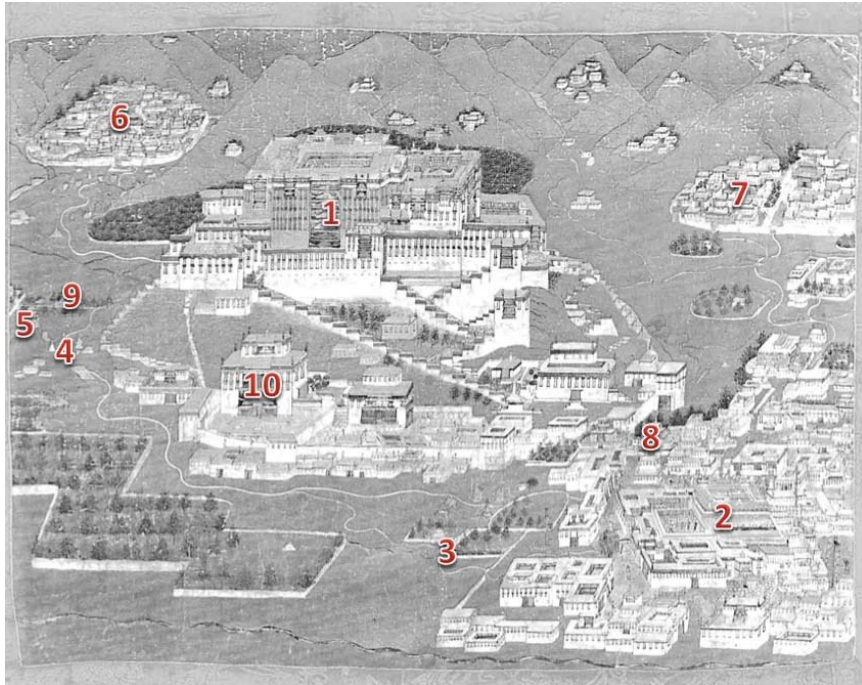


Figure 53. "Olschak", 1933-1973, location unknown, possibly Olschak or other private collection, Zurich (adapted from Olschak)

1. Potala
2. Jokhang
3. Turquoise Bridge
4. Western Gate
5. Chakpori and Medicine College
6. Drepung
7. Sera
8. Ramoche
9. Lukhang?
10. Barkhang Chenmo (see below)

Note: This painting includes the Barkhang Chenmo (Potala Printing Press), built in 1926, in the Zhöl compound. There are people in the courtyard of the Jokhang and a crowd in the Barkhor.

**Composition & Style:**

This is considered a rough “mandala”-style composition because the Potala is the clear focus. However, it does not have any mandala-like symmetry. The Jokhang and town are in the lower right corner, Drepung and Sera in the hills beyond.

Although this is a relatively simple painting, it is very accurate. Interestingly, this is one of the few paintings in which the Jokhang faces the “correct” direction, that is, it faces the right side of the painting (west).

**Date of Creation:** 1933- 1973

This work can be dated with some certainty. The Potala roof includes the tomb of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (d. 1933) which gives a start-date and the end-date is definitively determined by the publication of the work in 1973, although it was undoubtedly collected some years earlier.

**Condition & Material:**

Material is unknown, probably cloth with colored pigment.

Condition appears to be fair, with some vertical cracking and flaking particularly apparent along the top of the work.

**Collection History:**

Blanche Christine Olschak mentions that this painting came from a Tibetan monastery in the north of Nepal. She says it was based on an old sketch of Lhasa.<sup>537</sup> In her index of illustrations she does not list this image individually, but comments that any painting not listed individually can be found in her personal collection or another private collection in Zurich. The current whereabouts of this painting are unknown.

**Exhibited/Published:**

- Olschak, *Mystic Art of Tibet*, 78

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<sup>537</sup> Olschak, *Mystic Art of Tibet*, 78.

## **Appendix C: Assigning Dates to the Lhasa paintings**

This appendix provides an overview of methods and sources useful in estimating the date of creation for a Lhasa painting.

Throughout this study, and particularly in Appendix B, I use a date range to indicate the years during which each painting was likely to have been created. I have assigned these dates based on extensive analysis and taking into account the opinions of other scholars and museum curators (where this is the case, I have noted the source in a footnote or directly in the text). Dating the paintings has been a long, painstaking undertaking, continuously adjusted as new information came to light. As they stand now, these dates represent only my best estimates at this point. With a closer and longer examination by myself or other scholars or should additional relevant information be found, these dates could change a little, or even greatly. Thus, this study represents a starting point for a chronology of Lhasa paintings, and further research will no doubt help to refine and add to this chronology.

In assigning dates to Lhasa paintings I have used the methods below to ascertain a “start-date” and an “end-date.” The start-date represents the earliest possible moment that the painting could have been created, reasonably speaking. And the end-date is a cut-off point, beyond which the painting most likely had to be in existence. These two dates, once determined, create a date range for the creation of the painting.

Methods for assigning dates:

#### 1. Architectural elements

As many scholars have pointed out, placing individual Tibetan artworks within a precise historic timeframe is challenging.<sup>538</sup> Fortunately, the Lhasa paintings have in-built clues that may help in dating them, as demonstrated by Gilles Beguin in his 2003 article.<sup>539</sup> Beguin shows that we can use knowledge of when particular buildings were built, added to or renovated, to assist in dating the Lhasa paintings. This method is also used by Knud Larsen and Theresia Hofer in their discussion of painted images of Lhasa’s medicine colleges in *Bodies in Balance*.<sup>540</sup> This can be a very effective method for establishing a date. If we know that a certain building was built in, say, 1850 and we see it in the painting, then we can be certain that the painting could not have existed prior to 1850. And, to some degree, this works in reverse. If a building was destroyed in 1780, we would not expect to see it in a work made centuries later (though there are exceptions to this, see below).

Using architectural elements (iconography) to date a painting requires that one be able to identify the building and its components in the painting with certainty and that the building’s history is known. In the Lhasa paintings the best buildings to use for dates are:

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<sup>538</sup> Kreide-Damani ed. *Dating Tibetan Art*; David P. Jackson, *The Place of Provenance*, 1

<sup>539</sup> Beguin, “The Great Monuments.”

<sup>540</sup> Larsen and Hofer, “Pillars of Tibetan Medicine,” 257-269.

the golden tomb-roofs of the Dalai Lamas on the Potala palace roof and the red tomb buildings of the Panchen Lamas at Tashilhunpo and Tengyeling monastery<sup>541</sup>. Other potentially useful monuments include the buildings of Zhöl and of Norbulingka, the roof of Samye, and additional buildings in Lhasa and the three monastic compounds. Using the presence of elephants in the paintings is problematic as there were elephants in Lhasa at many times throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (see discussion in chapter 3).

Some useful dates:

1. Potala golden roofs:

- a. The tomb roofs of the Dalai Lamas are golden hip-and-gable roofs on the Potala roof, usually very easy to spot. As each was built after the death of the corresponding Dalai Lama they can provide a date range for the painting. The Phagspa chapel also had a golden roof on the top of the Potala and is sometimes found in paintings, so this can complicate identification.
- b. *Example:* The Pal painting has the 9<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's tomb roof but not the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's tomb roof, thus the painting must have been created after the death of the 9<sup>th</sup> (1815) and prior to the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> (1933).
  - A. 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama d. 1682 (tomb built by 1694)
  - B. 7<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama d. 1757
  - C. 8<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama d. 1804
  - D. 9<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama d. 1815
  - E. 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama d. 1933
  - F. Phagspa Chapel (built 1694, not always appearing)

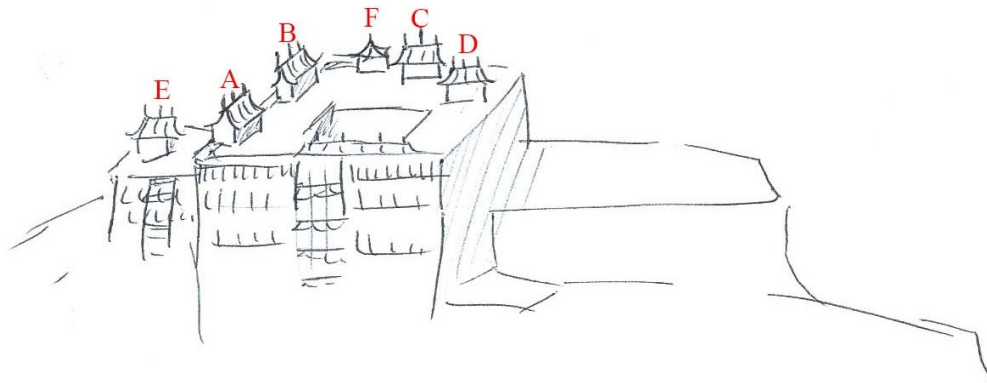


Figure 54. Drawing of Dalai Lama tomb-roofs on Potala (drawing B. Arthur based on Henss)

2. Tashilhunpo red tombs:

- a. The tombs of the Panchen Lamas are red buildings that were added mostly from right to left after each Panchen Lama's death. This is frequently one of the most reliable methods of dating using architectural features. A good example is the

<sup>541</sup> As demonstrated by Larsen and Hofer, "Pillars of Tibetan Medicine," 257-269.

Antwerp painting, which contained 4 tombs at Tashilhunpo and thus must have been created between the deaths of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama (1853-1882).

- A. 1<sup>st</sup> Panchen Lama d. 1662
- B. 2<sup>nd</sup> Panchen Lama d. 1737
- C. 3<sup>rd</sup> Panchen Lama d. 1780 (no longer extant)
- D. 4<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama d. 1853
- E. 5<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama d. 1882 (no longer extant)
- F. 6<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama d. 1937 (no longer extant)
- G. Maitreya temple built 1914-1918

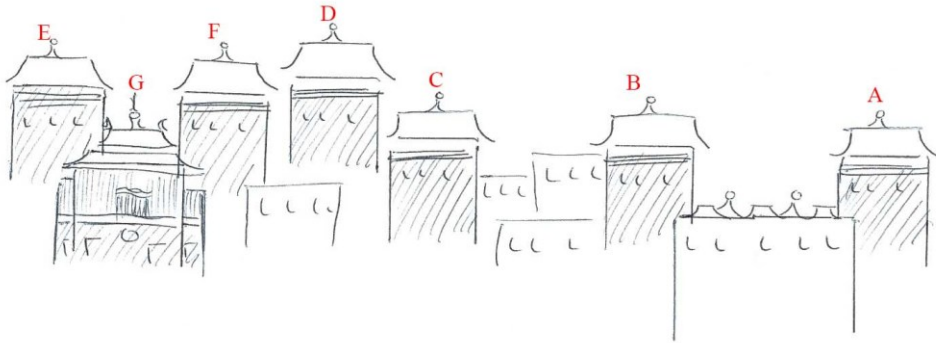


Figure 55. Approximate relationship of Panchen Lama tombs and other monuments at Tashilhunpo, drawing (B. Arthur)

### 3. Other dates:

- a. Tengyeling monastery destroyed 1912
- b. Samye roof renovated in the 1850's
- c. Zhöl printing press, Barkhang Chenmo, built in 1926

While architectural iconography can be very helpful in establishing a beginning date for the painting, it is not necessarily precise in establishing an end-date. An artist cannot paint a building that does not yet exist, but there is nothing to stop him painting a building after it has ceased to exist. This could happen if the artist is intentionally showing the past (eg. Bod-kyi-thang-ka), is copying from an older work (eg. maybe Nepal 3), or is unaware that the building is gone or has changed (eg. Brussels).

## 2. Collection, Exhibition or Publication Facts

A useful means of ascertaining a date, particularly an end-date, is by what happened to the painting. If it was bought, published, photographed, copied or exhibited in a certain year (and if records can prove this), then this logically shows that the painting was in existence by that year. For example, we know that Crofts bought the ROM

painting in 1921. So, of course, the painting could not have been made after that. In some cases this method can be tricky or unreliable. Perhaps the collector cannot recall when he purchased the piece (eg. Guimet 2). Sometimes a work may be mentioned in a vague manner in a publication or museum record but without an image and thus we cannot verify that it is in fact the same painting. In the case of copies of paintings, there is nothing to prove that they were created prior to the publication or collection of another copy. For example, Nepal 4 can be dated prior to 1901 because it was published in that year. This does not mean that the other Nepal works are necessarily that old.

### 3. Other Clues

Sometimes additional information is available within the work itself. The British Library painting may be dated by the watermarks in the accompanying keys. The date of the Mongolia work can be linked to the date of the photographs that may have been used as models in the creation of the painting.

Finally, stylistic elements, materials, physical damage and comparative visual analysis can also help in placing the painting within a chronology, or can be used to corroborate a date ascertained by other means (eg. Prague).

I have used all of the above methods, at times in combination on a single painting, to arrive at the dates I propose for each painting in this group. I attempted to be realistic and conservative in my date-range estimates. Justification for individual dates can be found in Appendix B. My current chronology of the Lhasa paintings may be found in Appendix A.



## **Appendix D: Figures**

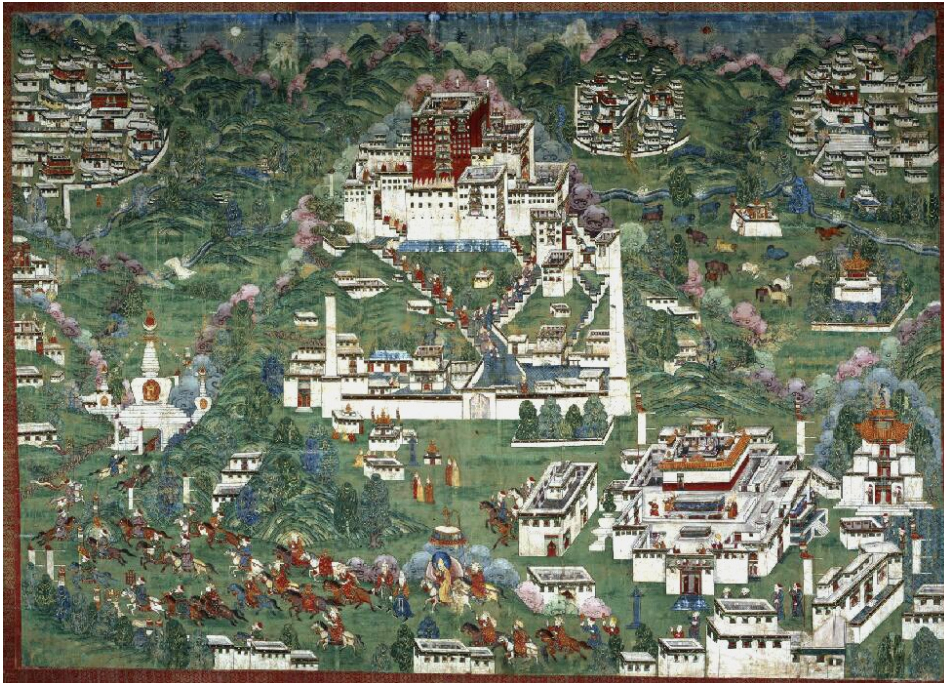


Figure 56. Lhasa, "ROM," 19th c, Royal Ontario Museum (Himalayan Art Resources website)



Figure 57. Map of Tibet (Tibetan and Himalayan Library website, ID M37)

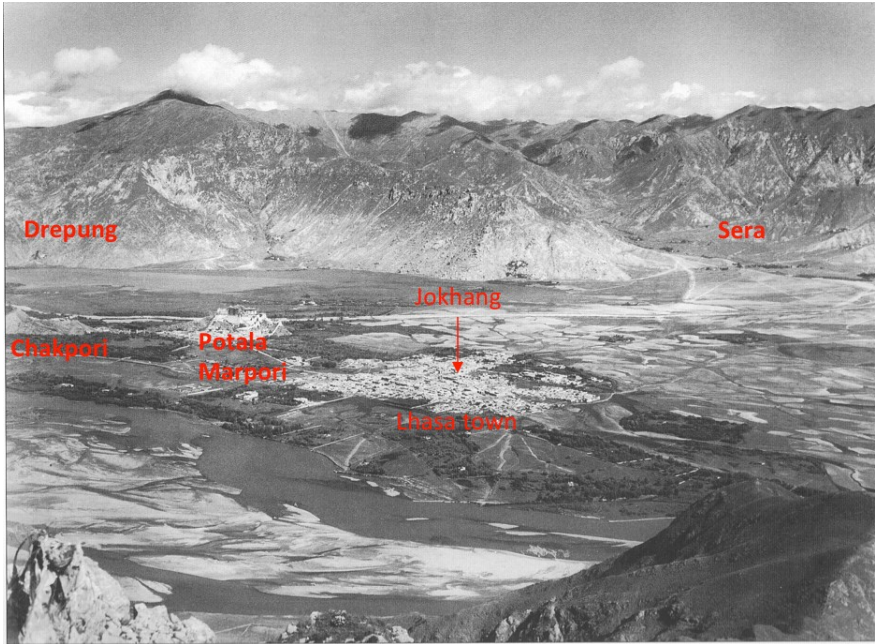


Figure 58. Lhasa valley from Southeast, photograph by Spencer Chapman, 1936 (The Tibet Album, The Pitt Rivers Museum, Accessed 29 Jun. 2015 <[http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo\\_1998.131.222.html](http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo_1998.131.222.html)>; labels B. Arthur)



Figure 59. Detail, Jokhang-Tsuglakhang complex, "Guimet 1," 1815-1910, Musée Guimet (B. Arthur)



Figure 60. Srinmo, The Demoness, Tibet Museum, Lhasa (B. Arthur)



Figure 61. Jowo statue, date unknown, Jokhang, Lhasa (Alexander, *Temples of Lhasa*, 35)



Figure 62. Detail, images inside the Jokhang, "RMA," 1757-1804, Rubin Museum of Art, New York (B. Arthur)

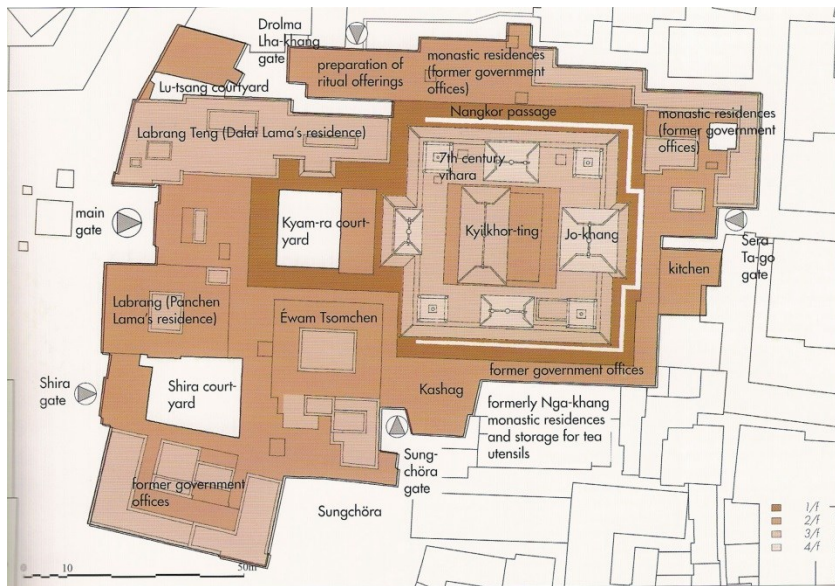


Figure 63. Plan of the Tsuglakhang complex, roof level, current state (Alexander, *Temples of Lhasa*, 29)

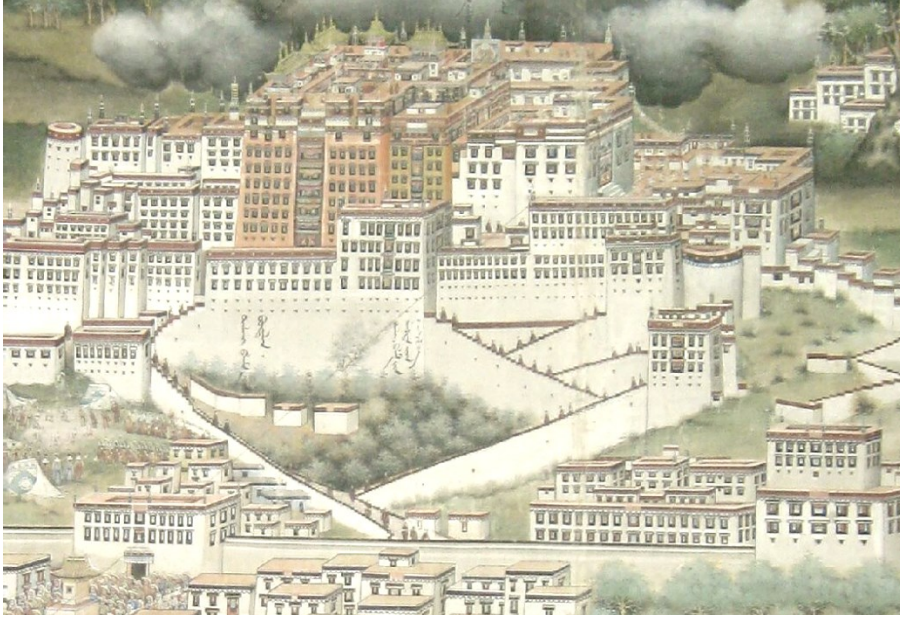


Figure 64. Detail, Potala palace, "Mongolia," 1920-33, Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art, Ulaan Batur (B. Arthur)



Figure 65. Detail, Potala palace and Zhöl village, "RMA," 1757- 1804, Rubin Museum of Art (B. Arthur)



Figure 66. Detail, Lhasa town, "RMA," 1757- 1804, Rubin Museum of Art (B. Arthur)

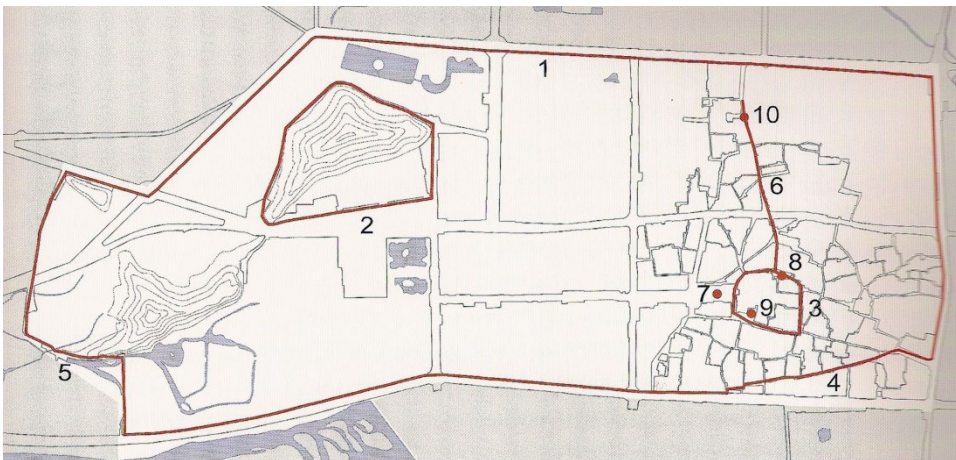


Figure 67. Map of the pilgrimage routes of Lhasa (Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 77)

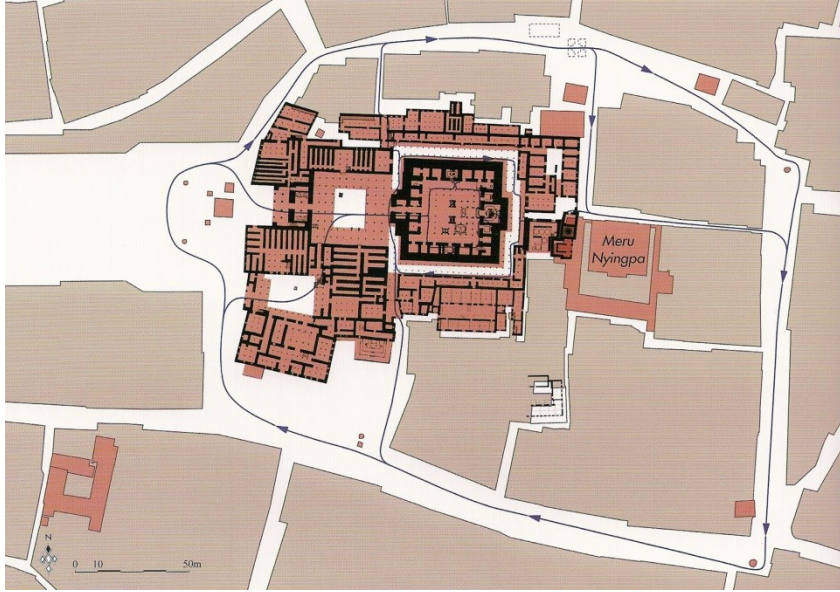


Figure 68. Map of the Barkhor and Nangkor routes of Lhasa (Alexander, *Temples of Lhasa*, 28)



Figure 69. Detail, Lhasa town, "Guimet 2," 1800-1910, Musée Guimet (B. Arthur)



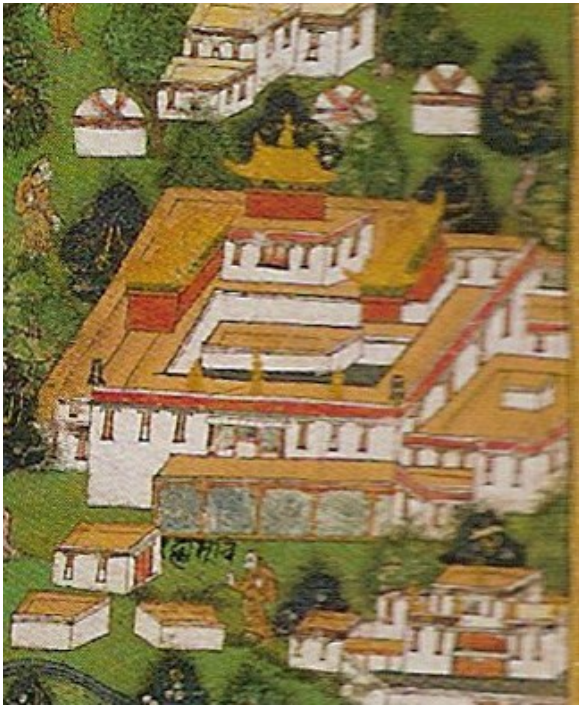


Figure 70. Detail, Ramoche temple, "Guimet 1," 1818- 1910, Musée Guimet (B. Arthur)

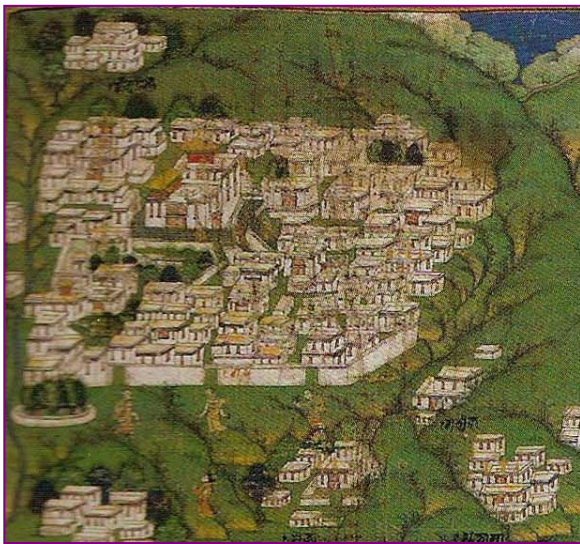


Figure 71. Detail, Drepung monastery, "Guimet 1," 1815-1910, Musée Guimet (B. Arthur)



Figure 72. Detail, Sera monastery, "RMA," 1757 -1804, Rubin Museum of Art (B. Arthur)



Figure 73. Aerial view of Sera monastery, Lhasa (Google Earth)

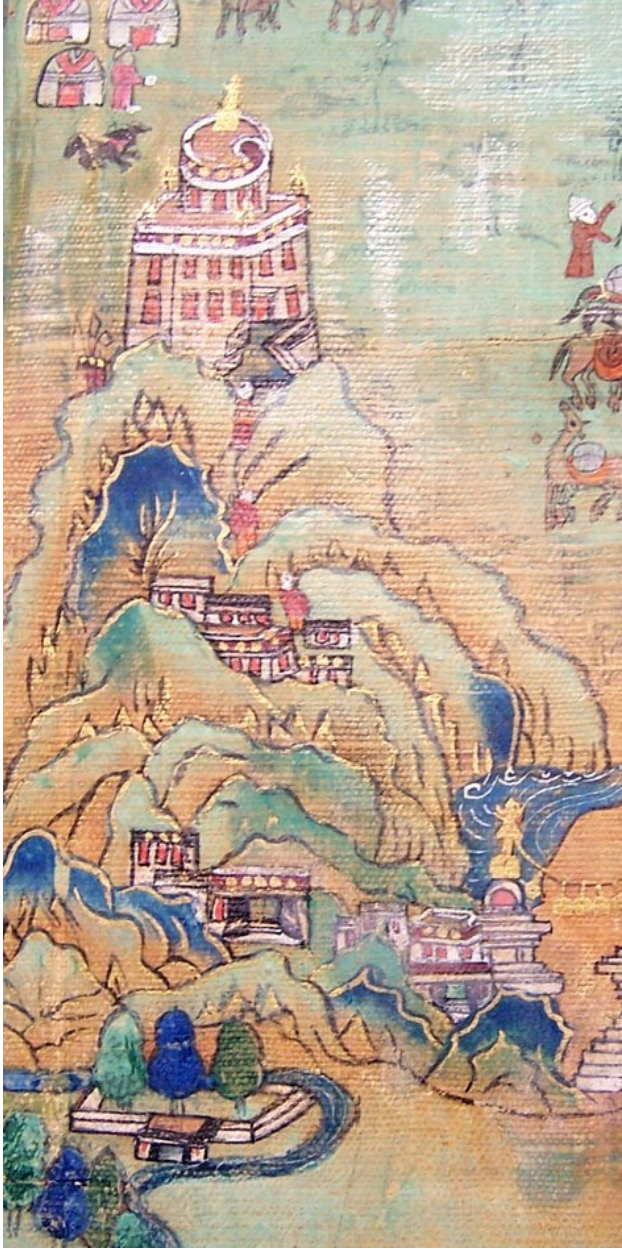


Figure 74. Detail, Chakpori and Mentsikhang, "RMA," 1757- 1804, Rubin Museum of Art (B. Arthur)



Figure 75. Detail, Bargo Kani or Western Gate, "ROM," 19th c, Royal Ontario Museum (B. Arthur)

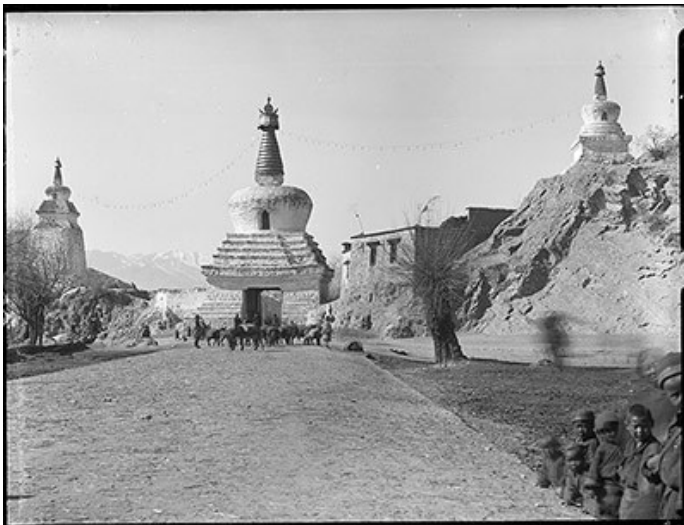


Figure 76. Western Gate, photograph by Charles Bell, 1920-21, Pitt Rivers Museum (The Tibet Album, Pitt Rivers Museum website, # 1998.286.244.1)



Figure 77. Detail, Turquoise Bridge, "British Library," 1856-1865, Wise Collection at the British Library (Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 20)



Figure 78. Yuthok or Turquoise Bridge, Lhasa, photograph by Charles Bell, 1920-21 (The Tibet Album, Pitt Rivers Museum, [http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo\\_1998.285.283.html](http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo_1998.285.283.html))

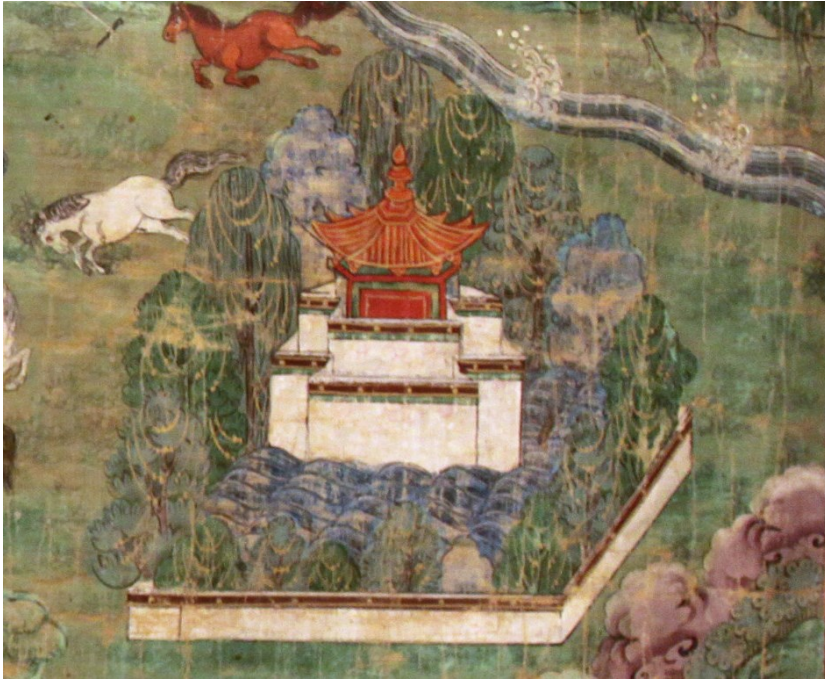


Figure 79. Detail, Lukhang, "ROM," 19th c, Royal Ontario Museum (B. Arthur)



Figure 80. Detail, Amban and Amban house, "Stockholm," 19th c, Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm (Etnografiska Museet website)



Figure 81. Detail, Trapshi Tsisher, "British Library," 1856-65, Wise Collection at the British Library (Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 20)



Figure 82. Detail, Ganden monastery, "Brussels," 19th c, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (Lambrecht, *Art du Tibet*)

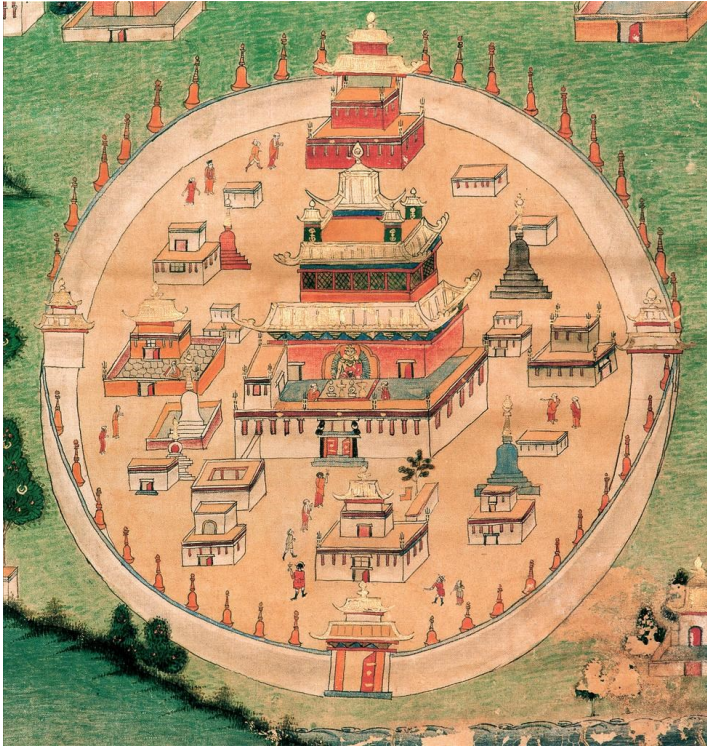


Figure 83. Detail, Samye monastery, "ArtStor," 1900-33 (Art Stor website)



Figure 84. Detail, Tashilhunpo monastery, "Antwerp," 1853-1882, Museum aan de Stroom (B. Arthur)





Figure 85. Detail, Samye monastery with cloud separators, "Guimet 2," 1810-1910, Musée Guimet (B. Arthur)



Figure 86. Detail, Monlam procession with foreign groups, "Basel," 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen, Basel (B. Arthur)



Figure 87. Detail, Censer-bearing horses, "Basel," 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen, Basel (B. Arthur)



Figure 88. "Customs of Tibetan Religion," etching by Orazio Della Penna, *Missio Apostolica Thibetano-Seraphica*, 1740 (from Brauen, *Dreamworld Tibet*, 14)



Figure 89. Detail, Dalai Lama's palanquin, "Basel," 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen (B. Arthur)



Figure 90. Detail, 13th Dalai Lama on procession, "Mongolia," 1920-33, Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art, Ulaan Batur (B. Arthur)

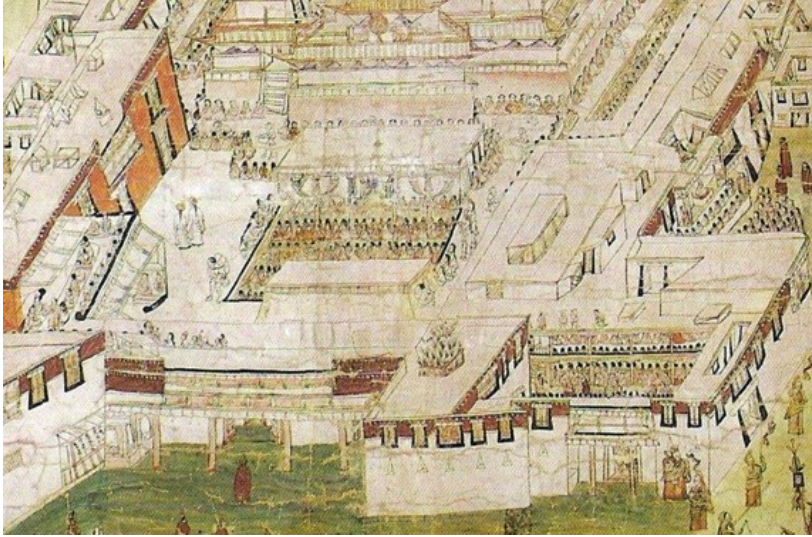


Figure 91. Detail, Crowds at the Jokhang, "Basel," 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen (B. Arthur)



Figure 92. Detail, Teaching at the Jokhang, "RMA," 1757-1804, Rubin Museum of Art (B. Arthur)



Figure 93. Detail, Figure in Barkhor possibly Nechung Oracle, "Basel," 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen (B. Arthur)



Figure 94. Detail, Monk-police, "Basel," 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen (B. Arthur)



Figure 95. Detail, Military practice, "Basel," 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen, Basel (B. Arthur)



Figure 96. Detail, Jumping over shields, "Basel," 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen (B. Arthur)



Figure 97. Detail, Gallop behind the Fort, "RMA," 1757-1804, Rubin Museum of Art (B. Arthur)



Figure 98. Detail, Sliding down a rope like a bird, "Mongolia," 1920-33, Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art (B. Arthur)

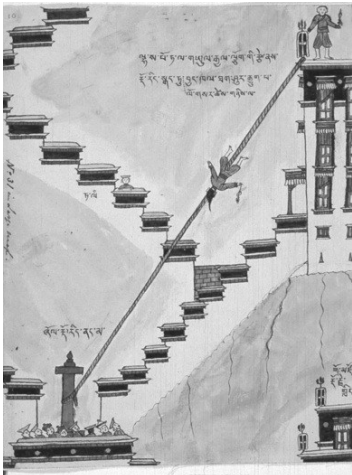


Figure 99. Folio, Sliding down a rope like a bird, Wise Collection at the British Library (Müller, *Der Weg*, 286)



Figure 100. Sliding down a rope like a bird, photograph, 1937, Spencer Chapman (from Pitt Rivers Tibet Album) The Tibet Album. "Man on pole at *Namdrotagtse* ceremony by Potala" 05 Dec. 2006. The British Museum. Accessed 16 Mar. 2015 [http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo\\_BMR.86.1.57.3.html](http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo_BMR.86.1.57.3.html))



Figure 101. Detail, Sertreng Festival of 1694, wall painting, ca.1694- 1701 "Art Gallery" in the Potala Palace, Lhasa (from *Mirror*, 122)





Figure 102. Detail, Procession, "ROM," 19th c, Royal Ontario Museum (Himalayan Art Resources website)



Figure 103. Detail, Chinese Amban, "Stockholm," 19<sup>th</sup> c, Etnografiska Museet (Etnografiska Museet website)



Figure 104. Detail, Various ethnic groups in Lhasa, “Basel,” 1815-1912, Museum der Kulturen (B. Arthur)



Figure 105. Detail, Monks debating in Drepung courtyard with pilgrims looking on, “RMA,” 1757-1804, Rubin Museum of Art (B. Arthur)



Figure 106. Detail, Monks debating, “Mongolia,” 1920-33, Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art, Ulaan Batur (B. Arthur)



Figure 107. Detail, Pilgrims on Lingkhor and coracle boat, "British Library," 1856-1865, Wise Collection at the British Library (Larsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 20)



Figure 108. Detail, Pilgrims on Barkhor, "Guimet1," 1815-1910, Musée Guimet (B. Arthur)



Figure 109. Detail, Pilgrim at Samye, “Guimet1,” 1815-1910, Musée Guimet (B. Arthur)



Figure 110. Detail, Townperson, “ROM,” 19<sup>th</sup> c, Royal Ontario Museum (B. Arthur)



Figure 111. Detail, Figures on Potala stairs, “ROM,” 19<sup>th</sup> c, Royal Ontario Museum (B. Arthur)

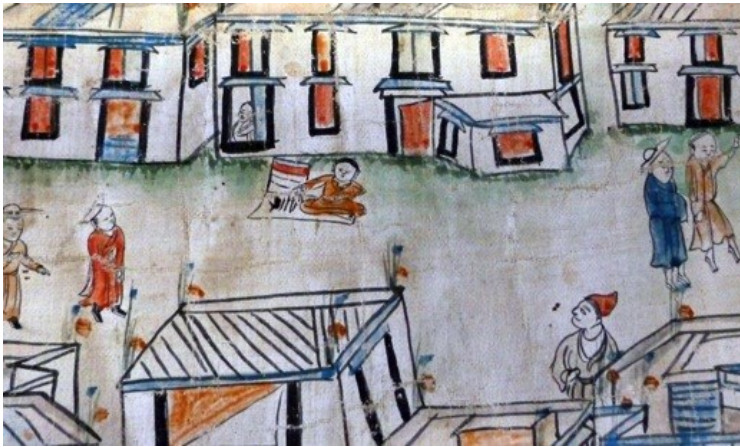


Figure 112. Detail, Traders in Barkhor, “Antwerp,” 1853- 1882, Museum aan de Stroom (B. Arthur)



Figure 113. Detail, Sky Burial, "Basel," 1815- 1910, Museum der Kulturen (B. Arthur)



Figure 114. Detail, Camel train, "RMA," 1757-1804, Rubin Museum of Art (B. Arthur)



Figure 115. Detail, Nomad camp, "RMA," 1757-1804, Rubin Museum of Art (B. Arthur)



Figure 116. Detail, Horses and yak, "ROM," 19th c, Royal Ontario Museum (B. Arthur)



Figure 117. Detail, Elephants in front of Potala, "Guimet2," 1800-1910, Musée Guimet (B. Arthur)

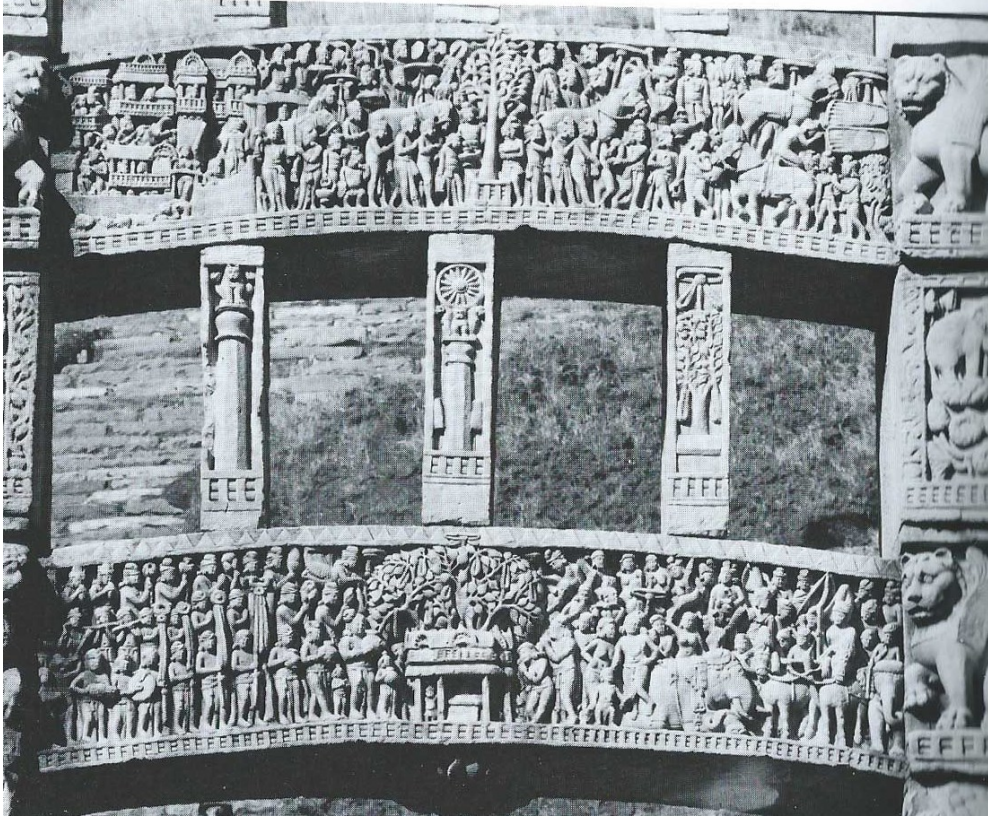


Figure 118. Eastern *torana*, Sanci I, Madhya Pradesh, India, 1st c. CE (Huntington, *Art of Ancient India*, 98)



Figure 119. Detail, Wutaishan, mural, Cave 61, 10th c., Mogao, Dunhuang, China, (UBC Buddhist Studies Forum website)





Figure 120. "The glorious *caitya* (*stūpa*) of Kaniska in the land of Puruṣapura (Peshawar) in Uttarapatha (Northern Province)," folio of *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, 11th c (Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, plate 30a)

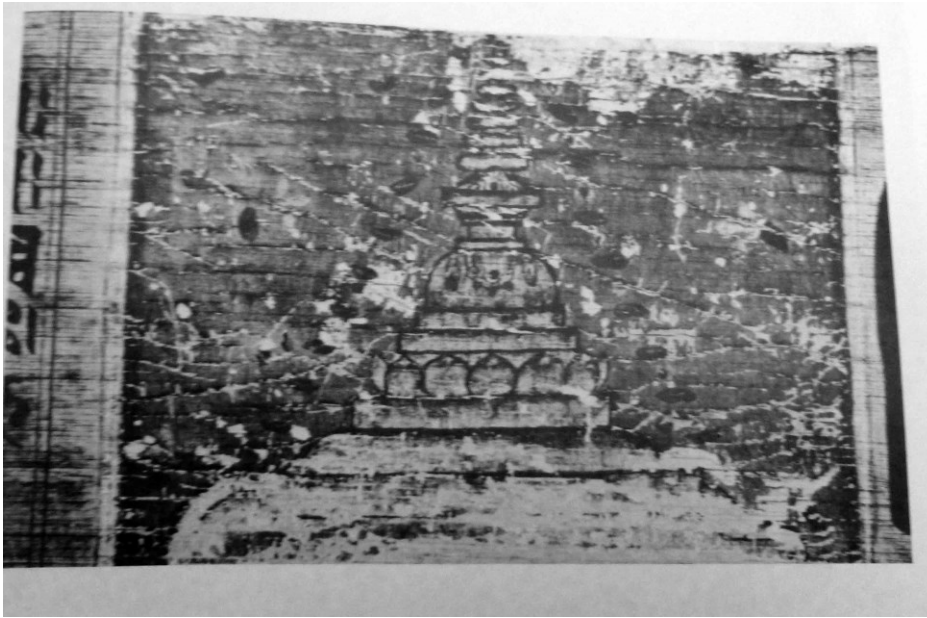


Figure 121. Detail, "Nepāl-Svayambhū-caitrah," palm-leaf manuscript, A.D. 1071 (Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*, plate 494)



Figure 122. Avalokiteshvara, sculpture, Sumtsek temple, Alchi, Ladakh, 11th c (Goepper, *Alchi*, 47)



Figure 123. Detail showing Tara (Buddhist) and Hindu temples, Avalokiteshvara sculpture, Sumtsek temple, Alchi, Ladakh, 11th c (Goepper, *Alchi*, 59)



Figure 124. Virupa and the Great Adepts, painting, Tibet, 1230-1250 (Jackson, *Nepalese Legacy*, 102)



Figure 125. Taklungthangpa Chenpo with lineage and manifestations, painting, Tibet, early- mid 14th c. , Brooklyn Museum (Jackson, *Mirror of the Buddha*, 152)



Figure 126.- Detail showing monastery, Taklungthangpa Chenpo with lineage and manifestations, painting, Tibet, early- mid 14th c. , Brooklyn Museum (Jackson, *Mirror of the Buddha*, 152)



Figure 127. Third Karmapa and life scenes, painting, Tibet, 14th c, Private Collection (Jackson, *Mirror of the Buddha*, 59)



Figure 128. Tidal Bore by Moonlight, Li Song, Song dynasty, National Palace Museum (National Palace Museum website)



Figure 129. Detail from "Tsurphu handscroll," c. 1407, China, Tibet Museum, Lhasa (Henss, "Cultural Monuments," 180)



Figure 130. Fifth Karmapa, painting, late 18th- early 19th c, Tibet (Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, 67)



Figure 131. Fourth Sharmar, painting, Tibet, early 16th c (Jackson, *Patron and Painter*, 86)



Figure 132. Drukpa Kagyu lama, painting, Tibet, mid-late 16th c, Private Collection (Jackson, *Place of Provenance*, 9)



Figure 133. "The Re-consecration of Svyambu Mahacaitya," painting, Nepal, 16th c, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (Slusser, "Conservation Notes", image 22)



Figure 134. Tsongkhapa and life scenes, painting, Tibet, 15th c, Rubin Museum of Art (Himalayan Art Resources website #410)



Figure 135. detail of Jokhang (?), Tsongkhapa and life scenes, 15th c (Himalayan Art Resources website #410)





Figure 136. Third Dalai Lama, painting, 16th, Western Tibet, Private Collection of Robert Ellsworth (Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 268)

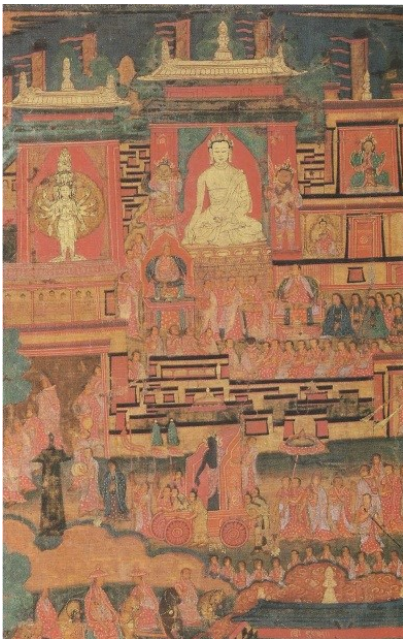


Figure 137. Detail of Jokhang-Tsuglhakhang and procession, Third Dalai Lama, painting, 16th c (Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 269)



Figure 138. Potala Palace, etching, from *China Illustrata*, 1667 (Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 111)



Figure 139. Etching, from *China Illustrata*, 1667 (Brauen, *Dreamworld Tibet*, 8)



Figure 140. Tsongkhapa, painting, 17th c, C. Tibet, Private Collection (Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 457)

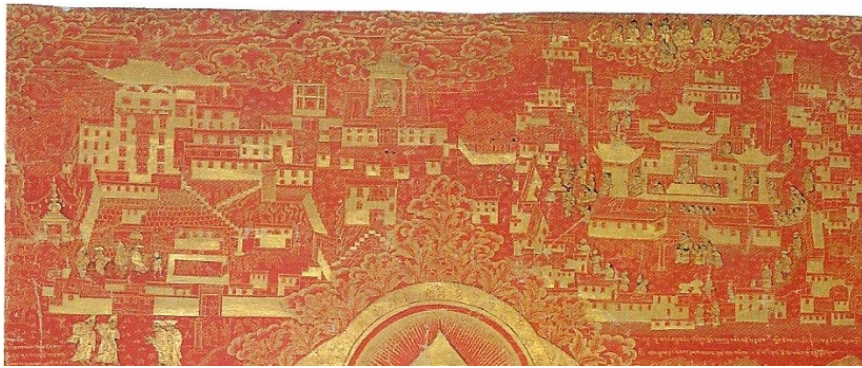


Figure 141. Detail showing Potala and Jokhang-Tsuglakhang, Tsongkhapa, 17th c, (Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 457)



Figure 142. Detail showing descent of the Yarlung kings, mural, Eastern Assembly Hall, Potala, Lhasa, 1645-48 (Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, 107)



Figure 143. Detail showing Samye, mural, Eastern Audience Hall, Potala, Lhasa, 1645-1648 (*Mirror of the Potala*, 74)



Figure 144. Detail showing Jokhang-Tsuglakhang, mural, Western Audience Hall, Potala, Lhasa, 1690-94 (*Mirror of the Potala*, 94)



Figure 145. Detail showing Forbidden City and meeting of the Emperor and the 5th Dalai Lama, mural, Western Audience Hall, Potala, Lhasa, 1690-94 (*Mirror of the Potala*, 92)



Figure 146. "Picture Gallery," Red Palace, after 1694 (*Mirror of the Potala*, 104)

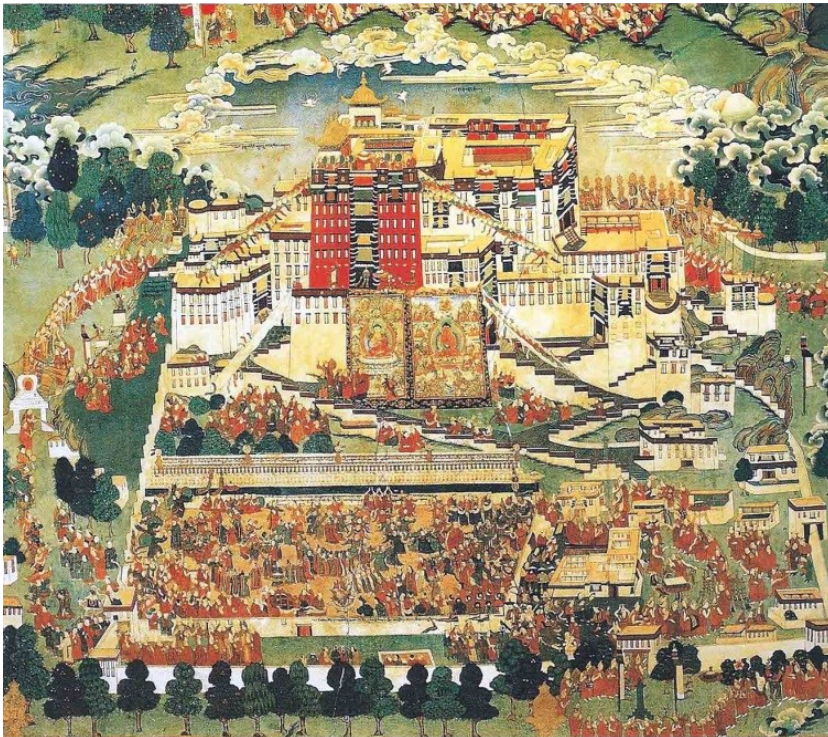


Figure 147. Detail showing Sertreng Festival, mural, "Picture Gallery," Red Palace, Potala, Lhasa, after 1695-1701 (*Mirror of the Potala*, 122)



Figure 148. Detail showing Sertreng festival and Lhasa, mural, "Picture Gallery," Red Palace, Potala, Lhasa, 1695-1701 (*Mirror of the Potala*, 123)



Figure 149. Fifth Dalai Lama and life scenes, painting, Tibet, 18th c, Rubin Museum of Art (Himalayan Art Resources, Item # 65275)



Figure 150. Unidentified lama, painting, Tibet, 18th c. (Himalayan Art Resources, #65050)



Figure 151. Tutob Wangchub 26th Sakya Tridzin, Khon Family Lineage set, painting, Central Tibet, 17th c, Private Collection (Himalayan Art Resources item # 69909)





Figure 152. 1st Tatsag, Kundeling set, painting, Tibet, 19th c, Rubin Museum of Art (Himalayan Art Resources item # 65918)



Figure 153. Tsongkhapa and Tashilhunpo, painting, Tibet, 18th c, Private Collection (Himalayan Art Resources item # 69912)

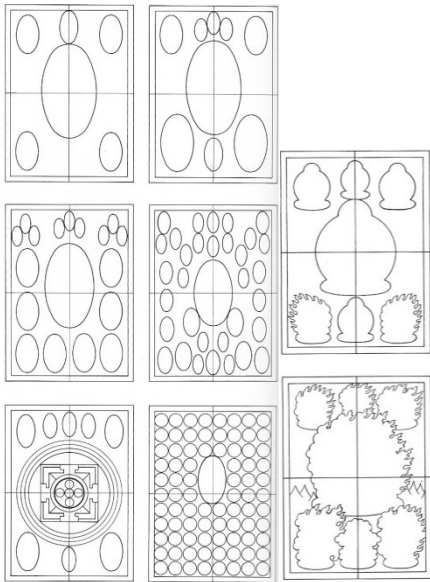


Figure 154. Charts of compositional layouts by David Jackson, (Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 70 & 48)



Figure 155. "One Day in Mongolia," B. Sharav, painting, Mongolia, 1912-13, Zanazabar Museum, Ulaan Baatar (B. Arthur)

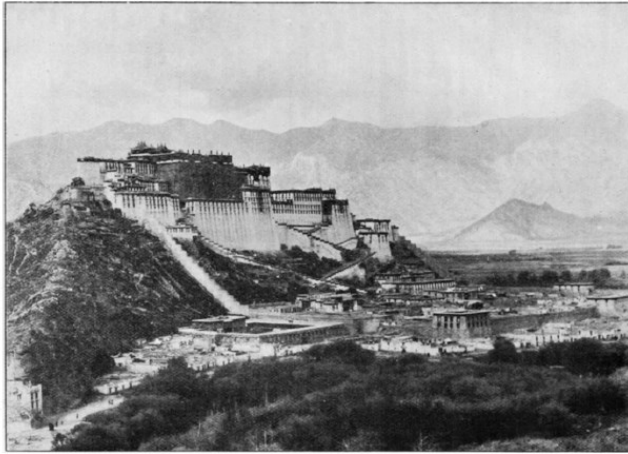


Figure 156. Potala, photograph, before 1901 (Holdich, "Lhasa," 607)



Figure 157. Painter at the Potala, photography, by Evan Yorke Nepean, September 6, 1936, Lhasa, Collection of Pitt Rivers Museum (Pitt Rivers # 2001.35.297.1)

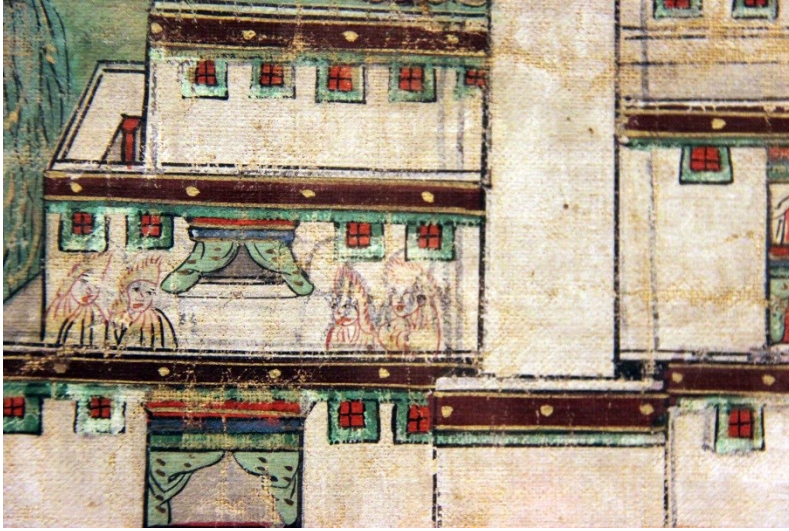


Figure 158.- Detail showing underdrawings, Lhasa painting- ROM, 19th c, George Crofts Collection in the Royal Ontario Museum (B. Arthur)

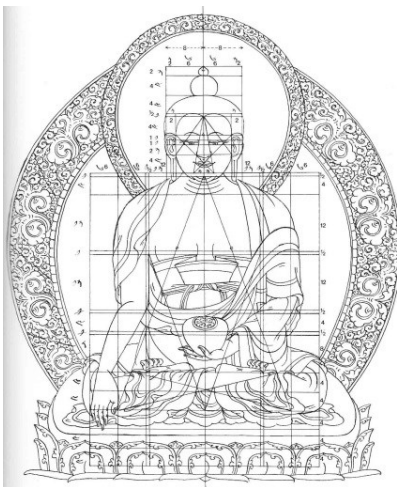


Figure 159. Iconometrical diagram of a Buddha (Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 57)



Figure 160. Detail, Ganden, “Mongolia,” 1920-33, Zanabazar Museum, Ulaan Baatar (B. Arthur)

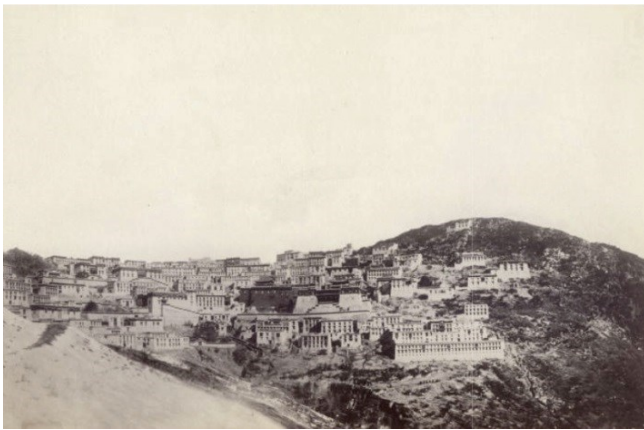


Figure 161. Ganden monastery, photograph, by O. Norzunov, 1900-1901, American Geographical Society Library Print Collection (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, “Tibet” online photographic collection, <http://collections.lib.uwm.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/tibet/id/146/rec/2>)



Figure 162. Detail, 13th Dalai Lama, "Mongolia," 1920-33, Zanabazar Museum of Fine Art (B. Arthur)

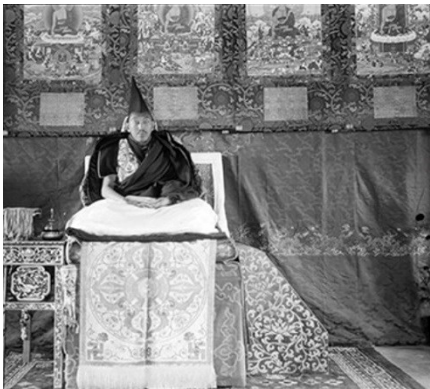


Figure 163. 13th Dalai Lama, photograph, by Sir Charles Bell, October 14, 1921, Norbulingka, Lhasa (Pitt Rivers item # 1998.285.89)

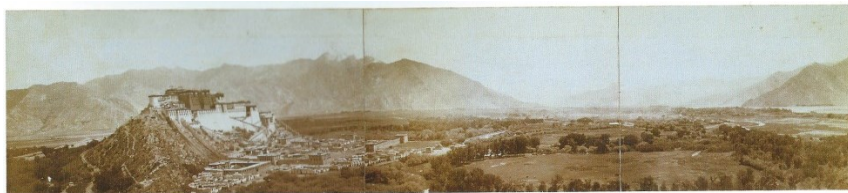


Figure 164. Lhasa valley, photograph by John Claude White, August 3, 1904 (Knudsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 22)

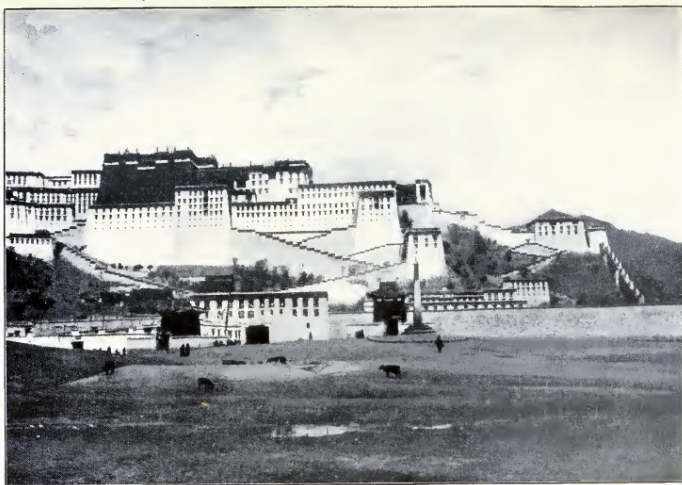


Figure 165. Potala palace, photograph by G. Tsybikov or O. Norzunov, 1900-01 (Tsybikov, *Smithsonian Report*, plate iv)



Figure 166. Itū Ryūzan, 1857, Map of Mount Kōya (Proser, *Pilgrimage and Buddhist Art*, 100-101)



Figure 167. Interior of Bhutanese teahouse with Lhasa photo on display, note the photo above with the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama superimposed over the Potala, July 2010 (B. Arthur)





Figure 168. Potuozongcheng, Chengde, China ([worldheritage.routes.travel/world-heritage-site/mountain-resort-and-outlying-temples/](http://worldheritage.routes.travel/world-heritage-site/mountain-resort-and-outlying-temples/) 6/5/15)



Figure 169. Detail, Potala in Lhasa, "ROM," 19<sup>th</sup> c, Royal Ontario Musuem (B. Arthur)



Figure 170. Page from *Wei Ts'ang t'u chih* (National Library of Australia: [www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pl=nla.gen-vn472374-3-s7-v](http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pl=nla.gen-vn472374-3-s7-v))

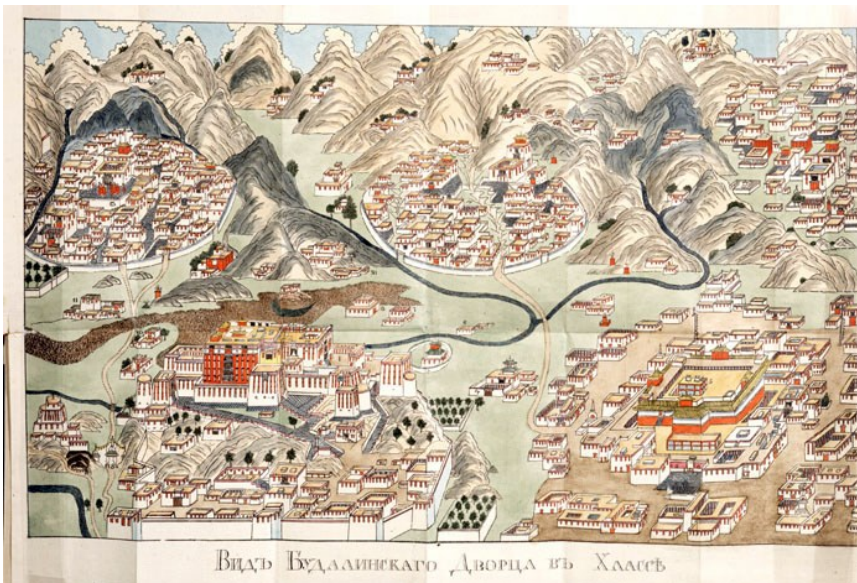


Figure 171. View of Lhasa, from *Opisanie Tibeta...* translator Iakinf Bichurin, 1828 (Spencer Research Library, Univ. of Kansas)



Figure 172. View of Lhasa, from Rockhill, *Tibet*, 1891 (Tibetan Himalayan Library website)

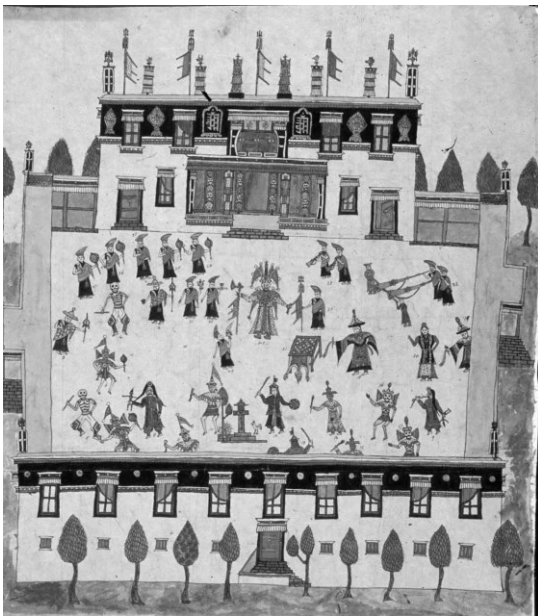


Figure 173. Tibetan Buddhist Ceremony, Add.Or. 3043 in Wise Collection, British Library (Müller, *Der Weg*, 357)

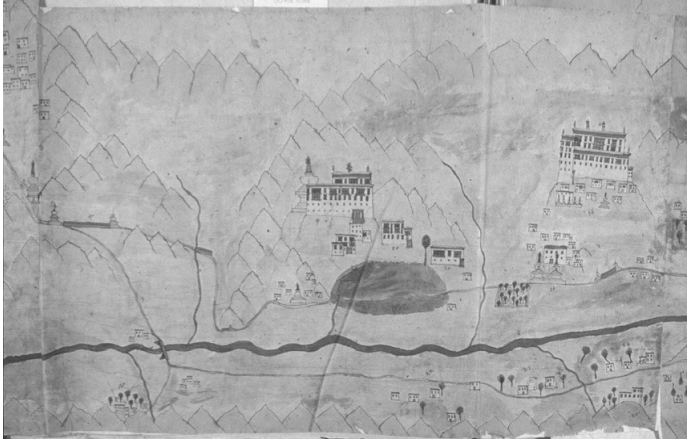


Figure 174. Route between Lhasa and Ladakh, Add.Or. 3014-2 Wise Collection, British Library

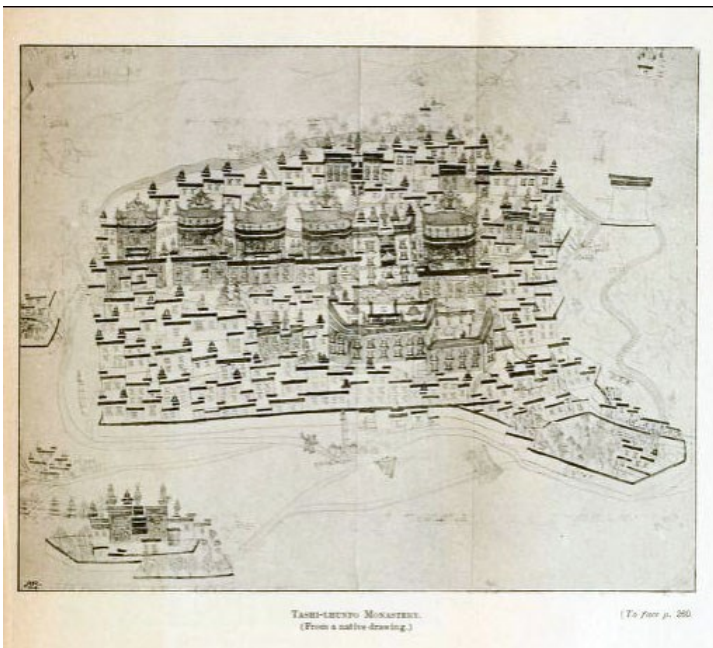


Figure 175. Tashilhunpo (Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 260)

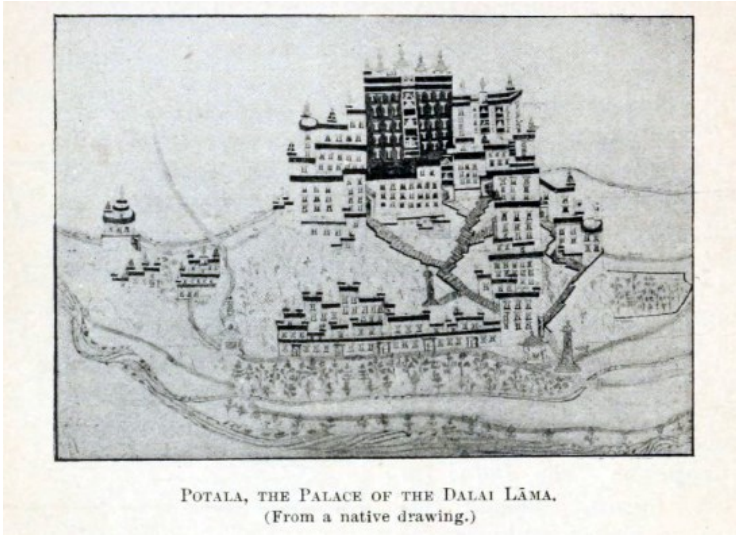


Figure 176 Potala (Waddell, *Buddhism of Tibet*, 40)

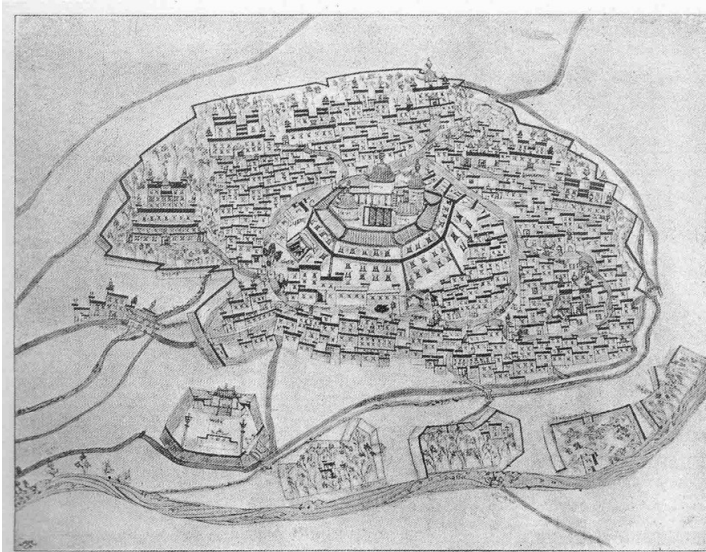


Figure 177. Jokhang and Lhasa, from *Buddhism of Tibet* by L.A. Waddell, 1895 (Knudsen, *Lhasa Atlas*, 66)

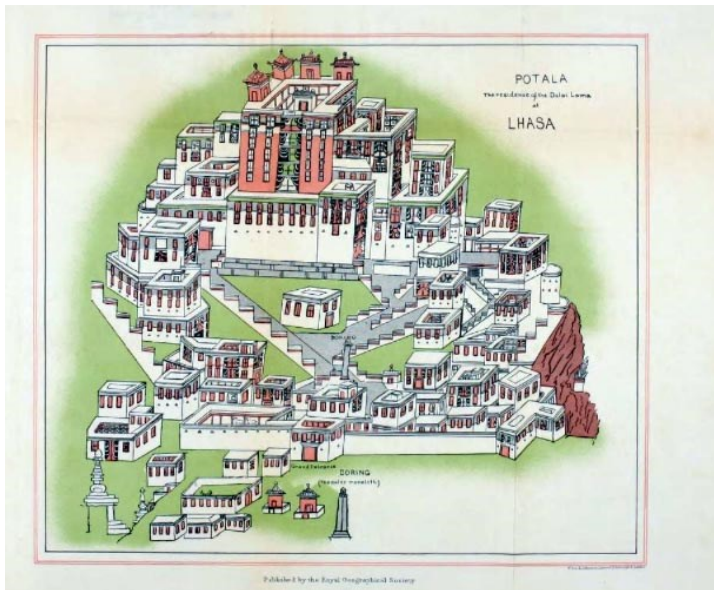


Figure 178. Potala (Das, *Journey*, 155)



Figure 179. Jokhang and Lhasa (Das, *Journey*, 161)

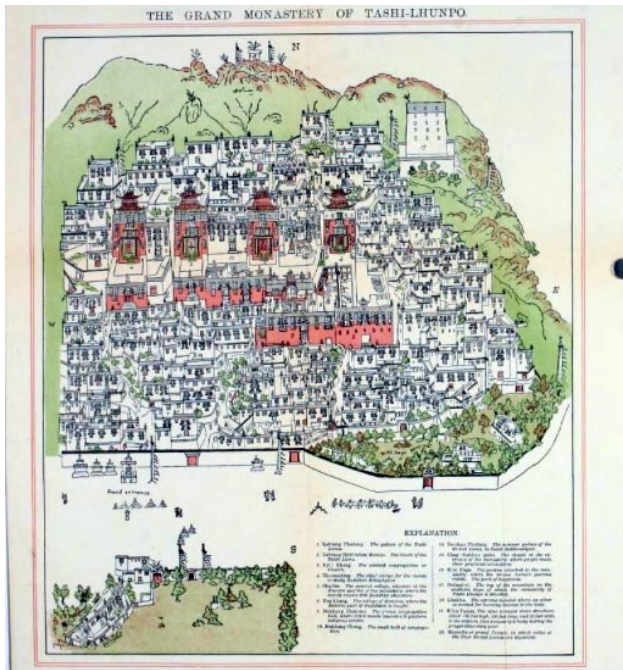


Figure 180. Tashilhunpo (Das, *Journey*, 51)



Figure 181. Shigatse (Das, *Journey*, 45)



Figure 182. Tashilhunpo and Shigatse, American Natural History Museum (Himalayan Art Resources)

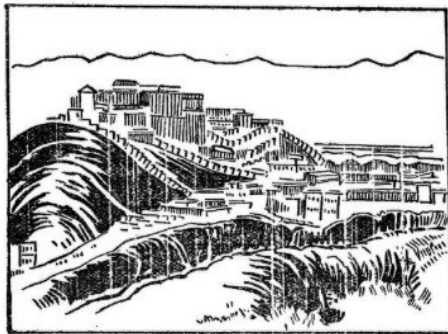


Figure 183. Potala (Kawaguchi, *Three Years*, 287)



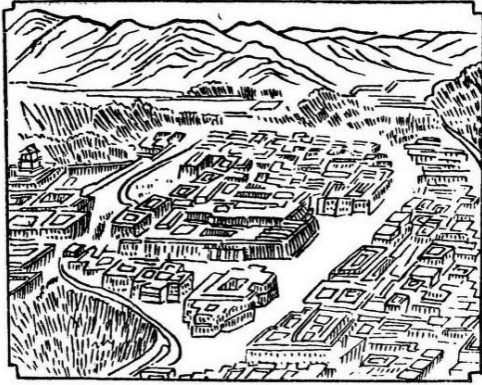


Figure 184. Lhasa (Kawaguchi, *Three Years*, 605)



Figure 185. Tashilhunpo (Kawaguchi, *Three Years*, 32)

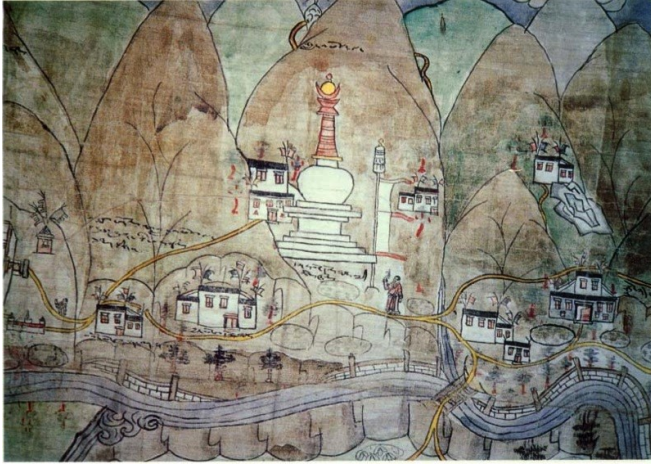


Figure 186. Detail, map of lho kha, Tibet (Huber, "A Tibetan Map," frontispiece)