

ASIA INSIDE OUT

CONNECTED PLACES

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Kashmiri Merchants and Qing Intelligence Networks in the Himalayas

The Ahmed Ali Case of 1830

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On the night of August 21, 1830, a Kashmiri merchant named Ahmed Ali penned an urgent petition to the East India Company's governor-general, explaining that he had been imprisoned by the authorities of the Qing empire on suspicion of spying for British India. This chapter uses his case as a microcosm through which to analyze the ambiguous status of Kashmir and Kashmiris in the worldview of Qing officials.¹ In part, it examines the case itself: the events leading to his arrest and the policy choices of the Qing state during this significant counter-intelligence operation and diplomatic incident. Here Qing official documents are complemented by the British Indian archives recently explored by John Bray (2011). More broadly, this chapter approaches Ahmed Ali's case as an instance of the evolving Qing efforts to manage frontier crossings in Tibet, complementing Peter C. Perdue's study of the frontier elsewhere in this volume. From this perspective, the case represents an instance in which the Qing state's efforts to assert centralized oversight over the flow of people and correspondence across the Himalayan frontier intersected with the complex web of relationships facilitating Kashmiri trade in Tibet—within the Kashmiri merchant community itself, and between that community and the two administrations it had to deal with, the Tibetan government and representatives of the Qing state sent from Beijing.

Ahmed Ali's case highlights the ambiguous status of Kashmir and Kashmiris in the spheres of commercial access, merchant identity, and political intelligence. Over the course of the eighteenth century the Qing state developed controls to limit European and Russian merchants to certain marts of trade on the frontier itself, notably Canton and Kiakhta. These controls were not, however, applied to traders arriving on other parts of the frontier from Central and South Asian homelands. Kashmiris, who represent perhaps the most extreme instance of this permissive Qing policy, lived and traded across much of Qing Inner Asia. Like other merchants enjoying relatively unrestricted access, notably Newari and "Andijani" traders, Kashmiris benefited from the Qing state's vagueness about their place of origin and political allegiances. Yet, as comparable episodes embroiling their Newari (1788-93) and "Andijani" (1828-31) counterparts demonstrate, a political crisis could provoke analysis of their origins and loyalties and threaten to jeopardize their access to Qing markets.

How the Qing state understood Kashmir as a place and the relationship of Kashmiri merchants to that place, then, had both political and commercial implications. This understanding, in turn, influenced and was influenced by the ability of Kashmiris to escape state surveillance by avoiding being implicated in frontier disputes. Ahmed Ali's case, however, was only the clearest in a series of hints reaching Qing officials from 1790 onward that not only were many Kashmiri merchants based in British India, but that the Kashmiri homeland was in increasing contact with that power. The Kashmiri predicament was that of all South and Central Asian merchant communities trading with the Qing: increasingly, they were coming to serve as a commercial conduit connecting Qing territory to the British and Russian empires. Yet the Qing state as well as Kashmiri traders had reason to finesse the complications that might arise from a clearer perspective on their homeland's political identity. What appears at first glance to be evidence of a diminished Qing capacity to gather intelligence suggests, although it does not prove, a different interpretation: that the Qing state deliberately avoided elucidating Kashmiri ties to British India in order to have more flexibility in managing a convenient trade relationship.

Kashmiris in Qing Inner Asia

Kashmiri merchants were perhaps the most geographically dispersed foreign trading community within the Qing Empire, active throughout Tibet,

Qinghai, and Xinjiang. Their trade here predated Qing control, beginning at least as early as the start of the seventeenth century with trade in western Tibet. By 1700 they monopolized the export of prized goat wool to their homeland via Ladakh, and were becoming involved in the caravan trade between India and Central Asia across the Karakorams. In the eighteenth century, many Kashmiri merchants reached Lhasa via Patna and Kathmandu rather than Ladakh. During the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1642–1682), if not before, some began to reside permanently in Lhasa and other central Tibetan cities that they had visited as traders for decades. Their descendants, faithful to Islam and their Kashmiri identity at the same time took local brides and spoke fluent Tibetan. From Tibet, some Kashmiris traded onward to Xining on the edge of China proper; by the first half of the nineteenth century, this may have extended to trading rhubarb up to the Russian border at Kiakhta (*QSL-DG*:37:483 [290.34b-35a]; 16/10/26). Individual traders may also have entered China proper.² Routes within the Qing Empire formed only part of a Kashmiri commercial network reaching westward through Afghanistan into Central Asia, and southward to the Coromandel Coast (Gaborieau 1973; Boulnois 2003).

Qing power in Inner Asia incrementally absorbed these outposts of Kashmiri trade, first in Xining, then Tibet with the expulsion of the Zunghar Mongols in 1720, and finally Yarkand and Kashgar, secured in 1759. During these conquests, Kashmiris attracted little scrutiny and were allowed to continue their pre-conquest activities. A brief review of the nomenclature applied to Kashmiris suggests that they were difficult to classify and track, and that the Qing state exerted little effort to do so.

Vagueness about the Kashmiri merchants' place of origin in the minds of Qing officials stemmed from the interplay of two factors: the terminological conflation of 'Kashmiri' and Muslims in general, and the fact that they entered Tibet from multiple directions. In Tibetan, Kashmiris were called *Kha-che*, a term that sometimes indicated Kashmiris *per se*, and sometimes all Muslims (Das 2000, 126; Jäschke 1998, 36–37). Qing officials and scholars had begun to adopt this term by 1721, when a military commander learned of a place called *Kaqi* (喀齊), whose people were traders (*FDYZ*, 250). In Gansu, also, a 1737 gazetteer of Suzhou listed among lands to the west "*Kaqi* [喀七], a Muslim country close to Tibet . . . [its merchants] frequently peddle their wares up to the outside of the [Jiyu] Gate, and they also market their wares outside Xining" (*CSX* 1967, 3:1289). By the mid-eighteenth century, Chinese sources

began to follow Tibetan practice in applying *Kaqi* as a blanket term for all Muslims reaching Tibet, a usage close to another common term for non-Chinese Muslims, “turbaned people” (*chantou*). One official early in the Qianlong period (1736–1796) commented that, “*Kaqi* lies southwest of Tashilhunpo, that is, where the turbaned Muslims [*chantou Huimin*] live . . . their tribes [*bukuo*] are extremely numerous, and some of them have surrendered to the leader of the Zunghars . . . they come and go from Tibet as foreign merchants” (Chen 1969, 70). Here, Indian and Turkic Central Asian Muslim traders were clearly conflated under one rubric. Laconic mention elsewhere of “turbaned Muslim Kashmiris” (*chantou Huihui Kaqi*) could therefore be construed in either a strict or general sense (Zhang 1968, 67). One 1741 description of Tibet’s commerce mentioned that “there are turbaned Muslims who peddle precious stones . . . there are Newaris and Muslims (*Baibu³ Huimin*) who sell carpets, Tibetan brocade, *Kaqi* silk fabrics, all of which come from such places as Bhutan, Nepal, and India” (Jiao 1968, 124). Another contemporary source enumerated among merchants trading in Tibet “locals and various foreigners (*semuren*) from the Western Ocean (*Xiyang*), the turbaned people (*chantou*), the *Eluoesu* (Orus, Russians?), and the Muslims (*Huihui*) (XFX 1998, 548). Kashmiris certainly number among these “turbaned” and “Muslim” groups.

With the conquest of the Tarim Basin in 1759, the Qing state gained a new perspective on Kashmir. Immediately after the conquest, Kashmiri traders visiting Yarkand via Ladakh offered intelligence about developments in India (Mosca 2013, 78–79). Although Beijing’s political interest in Kashmir soon lapsed, geographers in Xinjiang remained interested. One remarked of Kashmir in 1778 that “many of the rich merchants of Hindustan have homes in this place,” and that, together with Andijan, it was the “homeland of merchants in the Western Regions” (Qi-shi-yi 2001, 96). However, authors in Xinjiang did not mention Kashmiri activity in Lhasa. Moreover, their terminology was different: not reliant on Tibetan mediation, they called Kashmir *Keshimi’er* (Manchu *Kesimir*) rather than *Kaqi*, and unlike in Tibet this term referred to Kashmiris *per se*, not to Muslims in general.⁴

A further shift in the nomenclature occurred between 1788 and 1793, when two Gorkha invasions placed Tibetan affairs under unprecedented scrutiny from Beijing. Although not directly involved, Kashmiris were caught up in the general surge in commentary. A joint memorial of 1789 laying out a framework for postwar trade regulations referred to them as *Kaqi fanhui* (卡契番回) and *Kaqi Huimin* (卡契回民) (QBJ 1992, 323). As state surveillance

became stricter, the term *Keshimi'er* migrated from Xinjiang around 1791 and thereafter became standard in Qing official documents written in Tibet. While this implies that Kashmiris were being distinguished more clearly from other Muslims, and tied to a single homeland, there is no evidence of such a fundamental clarification influencing non- or semi-official geographic writing, even though most authors were Qing officials writing privately. In a private postwar essay, one *amban* observed that “there are the Newaris and the Kashmiri Muslim group [*Kaqi Huizhong* 卡契回眾] who frequently come to Tibet to trade; some among them came and settled in Tibet in years past and make a living by trade,” adding that they should be kept under strict control and protected from harassment by Tibetan and Qing soldiers (Song-yun 1992, 65). His colleague commented more vaguely about “turbaned people” trading in Tibet, adding that some lived there permanently (He-ning 2002, 664). The 1796 *Wei-Zang tongzhi*, a gazetteer of Tibet, gave one entry to the “turbaned people” (*chantou*), also called Kashmiri (*Keshimi'er*), and described them as “Muslims of the Western Regions” (*Xiyu Huimin*) with a homeland southwest of Nepal. A separate entry was given to *Kaqi*, regarded as “a large Muslim tribe south of Bhutan,” although this term was described as “also another name for the turbaned people” (WZTZ, 256). A Chinese scholar in Tibet in the 1790s explained that “turbaned people” were Muslims (*Huihui*), mostly Kaslmiri or Andijani, some having lived in Tibet for a long time. It is unclear if this author equated Kashmiri (*Keshimi'er*) with *Kaqi*, a term he used elsewhere and defined simply as “the name of the tribe of Muslims” (*Kaqi, Huihui buluo zhi ming*) (Zhou 2006, 3, 15).

No official inquiry into the geographic origins and political allegiances of Kashmiris took place before 1800, but at least one Kashmiri informally transmitted political intelligence. This was a merchant, resident in Further Tibet,⁵ who was awarded by the Qianlong emperor a hat button of the fifth rank and accompanying peacock feathers for his diligence in aiding wartime logistics (QKJ 1992, 751). This man, called A-qi-mu-ju-e-er in Chinese sources, impressed Zhou Ailian, a private secretary involved in commissariat affairs, as a widely traveled polyglot. The Kashmiri explained to Zhou that although India was a land of immense wealth, real power had been taken from its *Kaqi* king (i.e., Mughal emperor) by two high officials of the Western Christian religion (*Xiyang Tianzhu jiao*), who handled all matters of revenue, “only using this country’s monarch and its dynastic name to bring the various tribes [*buluo*] to submission” (Zhou 2006, 40).

In Qing sources, then, Kashmiris blended with all Muslim traders from Central Asia as *chantou*, and with all Indian Muslims as *Kaqi*. Only *Keshimi'er* gave them a more specific geographic origin, but the relationship between these identities remained ambiguous. Into the 1830s, Qing observers remained vexed by how to understand the origins of a diasporic trading community whose individual members were resident in many lands.

Foreign Merchants and State Security in Inner Asia

Descriptions of Kashmiris and their origins were cursory and sometimes contradictory in part because they had never received close state scrutiny. To understand the potential impact of such scrutiny, we can consider the Qing investigations of Newari merchants during the two Qing-Gorkha wars, and of Andijani merchants in the wake of the Jahangir incursion into Xinjiang. In these cases, Beijing moved vigorously against foreign merchants when the empire's security seemed to be at stake, but allowed pragmatic economic concerns to temper its policy.

Before 1788, the southern frontier of Tibet lay almost entirely beyond the oversight of the Qing court, which perceived no threat from that direction. Local Tibetan administrators, nominally supervised by Qing *ambans*, determined what foreigners could cross the border. This changed only when the turmoil of the Gorkha wars persuaded Qianlong that greater central oversight was needed, a conclusion that hewed to a middle ground between other potential policies of greater leniency or harshness.

When the Gorkhas invaded Tibet in 1788, it was initially assumed that the Newaris (Tib. *Bal po*; Chinese *Balebu*), whose conquest by the Gorkhas was then unknown in China, had inexplicably turned aggressive. Almost immediately, the *amban* Qing-lin ordered the arrest of the leader of the Newari trading community and two servants, but took no action against ordinary traders (*QBJ* 1992, 19–20, 110). Qianlong criticized even this response as hasty, explaining that although the headman would deserve to be executed if he were indeed a spy, his detention without such proof was unwarranted. Rather, he and other Newaris should simply be prohibited from returning home during the war “without authorization (*si*)” (*QBJ* 1992, 24). Qing-lin assigned the investigation to a high-ranking Tibetan cleric and his underling, who found 98 Newari merchants, some of whom had lived in Tibet for twenty years. The head merchant was exonerated and allowed to stay in Tibet after the war (*QBJ* 1992, 46, 278).

During this first invasion Qing officials relied entirely on Tibetan counterparts for information about Newari merchants. It was the retired Tibetan chief minister Rdo ring Pandita who initially arrested and took custody of the head trader (*QBJ* 1992, 110). Other inquiries were delegated to a high-ranking Tibetan cleric and a governor (*sde pa*) (*QBJ* 1992, 46). It is not surprising, then, that the trade regulations drafted at the end of the first war placed foreign merchants under Tibetan administration—presumably formalizing pre-war practices. Previously, Newaris and Kashmiris had been able to come and go without oversight. Now it was mandated that a foreign headman should formally be sent from their home country to manage the community jointly with a suitable Tibetan governor (*sde pa*) to prevent abuses and disputes. These headmen were to report annually on comings and goings. At the apex of supervision was a member of the Tibetan council of ministers (*bka'-blon*), who would in turn report abuses to the Qing *amban* (*QBJ* 1992, 323).

A more interventionist response followed the second, larger Gorkha invasion of Tibet in 1791. Qianlong feared that Newari traders would spy on Qing military movements, and at the start of the campaign ordered secret investigations to find spies and suspicious people, who would be sent to Beijing. Other Newaris were to be expelled forever, even if Nepal surrendered (*QKJ* 1992, 82, 86). But things were not so simple: it was soon learned that some Newari families had lived in Lhasa since the Kangxi period, had thousands of dependents, and in some cases Tibetan wives, making mass deportations difficult and potentially dangerous (*QKJ* 1992, 111). Qianlong's response to this news was to presume that some merchants had grown loyal to Tibet and thus become potential sources of intelligence about their ancestral homeland (*QKJ* 1992, 114). Interviews with a community leader ascertained the key fact that Newaris were distinct from the Gorkha rulers who had conquered the Kathmandu Valley (*QKJ* 1992, 290). Qianlong suspended his expulsion order, partly to coax intelligence from these traders, planning to revisit their status after the war (*QKJ* 1992, 329). Crisis had led to a more granular understanding of the politics and ethnic composition of once-obscure Nepal.

After the war the Qing government studied trans-Himalayan trade and generated regulations that remained in force for decades to come. As the war was ending, Qianlong decided to prohibit Newari trade: those who wished to remain in Lhasa would be naturalized, enrolled on the population registers and "permanently regarded as ordinary subjects in Tibet (*yong zuo Zangnei minren*). Others would be deported under guard and the frontier closed (*QKJ*

1992, 602–603). It was later acknowledged that such a closure would perforce require a halt to Kashmiri trade because it relied primarily on routes through Gorkha territory (*QKJ* 1992, 745). But as relations improved and Tibet's reliance on trade became clearer, Qianlong relented and instead opted for a new control regime even stricter than that for Russian trade at Kiakhta. Commercial oversight would be removed from Tibetan ministers (*bka'-blon*) and *ambans* would henceforth take personal responsibility for inspecting and supervising cross-border commerce (*QKJ* 1992, 668). In place of the pre-1788 lack of supervision, and the never-implemented reforms of 1789, supervision over foreign merchants would now be directed from Beijing.

From 1793, a series of interlocking control mechanisms were applied to both Newaris and Kashmiris. A population register was to be made for both communities, kept on file in the *ambans'* office. New checkpoints staffed by Qing military officers were to be established on the two major routes into central Tibet, at Dingri for the road from Kathmandu, and at Gyantse for the road from Bhutan. Merchants entering Tibet had to report to these posts for permission, and upon arrival in Lhasa to be duly entered into the register. Those wishing to depart had to apply through their community headmen for permits from the *ambans*, to be inspected during transit through these same posts. A similar pass-based system would manage religious travel into and out of Tibet (*QKJ* 1992, 700–701).

These regulations asserted Qing control over Tibet's foreign intercourse, with imperial officials sent by Beijing, not local administrators, supervising—and, if necessary, interdicting—human traffic across the Himalayas into Tibet. Foreign testimony confirms that this right was maintained: both Thomas Manning in 1811–12 and Evariste Huc in 1846 found that it was the Qing *ambans* rather than Tibetan authorities that took a lead role in investigating their presence and determining their expulsion (Markham 1971, 275–277; Huc 1927, 193). Still, Tibetan authorities retained day-to-day control: most Kashmiri and Newari imports were taxed in Lhasa, not at the border, by the Accounts Department (Tib. *rtsis-khang*, Ch. *shang-shang*) of the Tibetan government, although this process too now came under *amban* supervision (*QKJ* 1992, 738). In short, under ordinary circumstances Newari and Kashmiri merchants would continue to supervise themselves, interact with the Tibetan administration in matters of taxation and commercial law, and deal with the Qing state only when crossing the frontier, or when involved in political cases.

Between 1788 and 1793, Kashmiris escaped the scrutiny applied to Newari merchants, although new regulations devised to control Newari trade also applied to them. Their position was similar during a second episode of frontier unrest, the Khoqandi-backed invasion of Jahangir that devastated southern Xinjiang. In 1828 the Jiaqing emperor approved a plan to end trade with Khoqand, along lines similar to those proposed for Tibet in 1791: foreigners of long residence would be given the option of entering the population register as ordinary subjects, the rest would be expelled. Kashmiris were explicitly acknowledged not to have aided the enemy, but those who remained within the Qing realm would nonetheless be restricted to non-commercial occupations (Na-yan-cheng 1995, 847). Non-resident Kashmiris arriving from abroad would henceforth be limited to trade fairs near the border, essentially applying something close to the Kiakhtha model to Xinjiang (Newby 2005, 135–152). This restrictive trading order collapsed in 1831, after a second Khoqandi invasion, but it is a further reminder that security concerns could lead harsh controls to be imposed on trade that had previously been largely unregulated by Beijing.

Recruiting Ahmed Ali: 1814–1817

East India Company interest in trade with Tibet, dating back to the 1760s, increased after 1809, when it extended its control over northern India up to the Sutlej and gained access to new parts of the Himalayan foothills. In 1812, the Company employee William Moorcroft crossed the Niti Pass to Gartok, the principal administrative center of western Tibet (Alder 1985, 134–156). With the conquest of Kumaon during the 1814–16 war with Nepal, the Company gained direct access to the edge of Tibet. Getting in, however, proved almost impossible for Britons, and between 1816 and 1818 several Company employees were turned back at the frontier. This, coupled with the fear that undue pressure on Qing Tibet might harm British trade at Canton, made the Company seek less obtrusive agents to promote commerce between India and Tibet.

As early as George Bogle's 1774 mission to the Panchen Lama, the utility of Kashmiris for relations with Tibet had been evident to the East India Company (Lamb 2002, 117, 153). Often headquartered in Company territory, but enjoying unimpeded access to Tibet, Kashmiris offered a means of gaining information and promoting commerce without eliciting concern in Beijing. In western Tibet, with justified fears that the British

were trying to break their goat wool monopoly, Kashmiri merchants seem to have been hostile (Moorcroft 2005, 106). However, at least one among those trading between Patna and central Tibet through the Kathmandu Valley was tentatively willing to aid the Company. This was Ahmed Ali, in his early twenties when the Anglo-Nepal war broke out in 1814. He was an acquaintance of Moorcroft, and had briefly served the Company in some capacity collecting tax and opium revenues.⁶ Asked to recruit potential intelligence assets for the impending conflict, Moorcroft approached Ahmed Ali. Although the Company's immediate interest was Nepal, the Kashmiri was also in a position to offer information about Tibet based on his firm's two centuries of trade in Lhasa and its high-level connections (he claimed) with that city's Tibetan and Qing authorities. Indeed, he boasted of inside access to diplomatic correspondence between the ruler of Nepal and the Qing emperor (Alder 1985, 192–197; Bray 2011, 319–323).

In 1815, having “drawn upon himself the resentment of the other Kashmeereean Merchants who traffic from Patna to Lassa by his having been active in the British cause,” Ahmed Ali approached the Company with an offer to promote Indian goods in Tibet as its agent. The governor-general and his staff, wary that the Kashmiri might improperly presume upon any formal status to pursue private commercial ends, refused him an official appointment but were willing to assist at arm's length in an ostensibly private venture. During negotiations Ahmed Ali was issued instructions specifying the parameters of his mission and inquiries, which he later termed his *sanad* or commission, but he ultimately declined the offered terms. When he had second thoughts in 1817, he was told that the Company now wished to leave the expansion of trade “to the operation of natural Causes” (Bray 2011, 323–327). Still, in the end Ahmed Ali did gather information about Tibet. It is possible that Moorcroft—with a record of privately recruiting intelligence agents—made arrangements to keep the project alive.⁷ Ahmed Ali later told his Qing interrogators that Moorcroft supplied him with a blank notebook. However, he was aware of Moorcroft's death when he set off for Tibet, so it is unlikely that a purely personal arrangement was his sole motivation (LFZZ: Deposition of Ahmed Ali). After his release Ahmed Ali maintained that he was fulfilling his 1816 commission. Although technically a dead letter, he presumably believed that the Company would still reward him for the information it had once sought (IOR: Hodgson to Prinsep, June 26, 1831).

Commercial Catastrophe: Ahmed Ali Visits Tibet

Ahmed Ali, although his family firm had long traded in Lhasa, was no old Tibetan hand. He spoke no Tibetan and ran the Lhasa branch through Abdullah, a Kashmiri agent first hired by his father.⁸ This branch was run as a partnership, with shares belonging to Ahmed Ali, his brother Ashraf Ali, Abdullah, and unnamed creditors in India. In 1820, Abdullah returned to India from Lhasa and announced a wish to retire. Three years later he was persuaded to return to Tibet together with Ashraf, who would run the operations of the house. After two years of losses, Ashraf came back with a letter from Abdullah summoning Ahmed Ali to Lhasa himself. Taking along his brother, Ahmed Ali reached that city in the summer of 1827, apparently for the first time (LFZZ::592:8; A.A. deposition). The first order of business was to settle the accounts of the branch and divide its assets, something that recent losses made difficult. Based on what a Kashmiri headman described to Qing authorities as "Muslim custom" (although Ahmed Ali claimed to be unfamiliar with the practice), he was expected to sign in advance a statement that accounts had been settled, to be held in trust by the local community leaders during the actual audit. This led to a later disagreement: Ahmed Ali claimed that despite his receipt no settlement was in fact made, while Ashraf and Abdullah maintained that a fair settlement was concluded in the presence of the local Kashmiri leaders (LFZZ: Depositions of A.A., Ashraf Ali, Abdullah). To the British, Ahmed Ali later complained that his agent and brother had embezzled large sums of money from him, but this charge was not recorded in Chinese documents.

By now Ahmed Ali, deprived by the dispute of his two closest associates, needed a new way to conduct business in unfamiliar Tibetan surroundings. A Tibet-born Kashmiri then living in his shop, called in Chinese documents Zha-ma-er-zu, recommended the services of his elder brother Fazl-ullah Fukro. An employment contract was drawn up, Fazl-ullah was summoned from Further Tibet, and new dealings commenced (LFZZ: Deposition of A.A.). Ahmed Ali by then faced legal as well as commercial woes. Although he had given Ashraf a share of the property, Ahmed Ali himself had kept control of the portion due to partners back in India. Ashraf felt that he could not return to Patna without these funds, lest he be dunned by creditors of the house, and therefore brought suit against his brother in the Finance Department of the Tibetan government, which had jurisdiction over the Kashmiri

community (Gaborieau 1973, 25). Ahmed Ali countersued, alleging that he was still owed money. One of Fazl-ullah's jobs was to act as Ahmed Ali's agent in a proxy lawsuit (*baokong*), in return for a fee of one thousand silver *taels*. A Tibetan official, together with a leader in the Kashmiri community, reviewed the accounts and not only found Abdullah's figures sound, but determined that the former agent was still owed 2,831 *taels* of silver. Ashraf, however, was found to have improperly overspent during his previous sojourn in Tibet and to owe the house 10,000 "silver coins," presumably rupees. (To the British, Ahmed Ali alleged that Ashraf and Abdullah had bribed the judges to obtain this verdict) (IOR: Petition of A.A., Aug. 21, 1830.) Ashraf believed that he could pay this amount from his share of the house's investment put out for sale in Qinghai (Ahmed Ali acknowledged maintaining a "Kothee" [*kothi*, commercial premises] at "Selling" (Xining) (IOR: Petition of A.A., Aug. 21, 1830)). When these goods were brought back to Lhasa, however, Ashraf fretted over Ahmed Ali's insolvency and together with Abdullah requested a Tibetan minister (*bka'-blon*) to impound and liquidate them, so that the cash could be returned to India. This move evidently bankrupted Ahmed Ali, who was losing money under Fazl-ullah's new management. With his shop empty and subsistence difficult, he abandoned his shop and lived off charity at Lhasa's mosque (Ch., *jiangdagang gongsuo*, Tib., *Rgyang-mda'-khang*). Fazl-ullah pursued him, demanding payment for another debt, and Ahmed Ali shot back that Fazl-ullah ought to return to him the funds given for the botched management of the court case. An argument between the two men dragged on for several months.⁹ These commercial and legal disputes, played out in the Kashmiri community and Tibetan courts, did not yet concern Qing authorities.

To Catch a Spy: The Mechanics of Qing Counterespionage

All this time, Ahmed Ali was pursuing inquiries about Tibet and China. His confession to Qing authorities allows his activities to be reconstructed. When Abdullah had returned to India in 1820 Ahmed Ali had quizzed him about Tibetan affairs and had notes of their conversations taken down by a third party. He also copied notes about Tibetan route distances and dating systems made by Ashraf Ali during his earlier trip. After his own arrival in Lhasa, Ahmed Ali recorded his observations and responses to questions he posed to his new employee Fazl-ullah. Also copied was a questionnaire given by the Company's Resident in

Kathmandu, "Gardner sahib" (*Gare'arla'er sahaibu*), to a Tibet-bound Kashmiri merchant named Habib-ullah. As Gardner's successor Brian Hodgson later explained, members of the Residency not uncommonly tried to find Kashmiri agents to prosecute their inquiries (IOR: Hodgson to Swinton, Sept. 2, 1831).¹⁰ In this case Habib-ullah left Lhasa before finishing his task, leaving his instructions behind (LFZZ: 592:9-10; Deposition of A.A.).

Ahmed Ali's inquiries in Tibet seem to have been guided chiefly by what Qing authorities termed a "letter" (*shuxin*) from Moorcroft, but which may have been his Persian *sanad*, enjoining him to study Tibet's commerce and geography. Although one of his supporters later claimed that Ahmed Ali was resolved to aid the Company "regardless both of the Anger of the Rulers of Bhoot [Tibet], and of risking the loss of his property and houses," it seems unlikely that he believed his activities to be risky (IOR: Khajah Fukheeroolla to Sec. to G.G., Dec. 20, 1830). Indeed, Ahmed Ali later claimed to the British that no less an official than one of the *ambans* knew of his voluminous cache of information and would even occasionally visit him to be regaled with its contents (IOR: Hodgson to Prinsep, June 5, 1831). Only an acrimonious commercial dispute turned these anodyne jottings explosive.

It was his plan to appeal the judgment against him, Ahmed Ali believed, that led his panicked cabal of enemies preemptively to denounce him as "a spy on the part of the English" (IOR: Petition of A.A. to G.G., Aug. 21, 1830). Ashraf Ali seems to have been closer to the truth, however, when he later told Brian Hodgson that the root of the problem was his brother's decision to replace Abdullah with Fazl-ullah, who "fomented quarrels between me and my brother, ruined his affairs, and got him committed to prison" (IOR: Petition of Ashraf Ali, Feb. 10, 1832). Certainly it was Fazl-ullah who turned Ahmed Ali in to Qing authorities. In Tibet, those authorities consisted of a garrison composed principally of Han Chinese soldiers (the Green Standard army) and a small number of civilian commissariat officials (*liangtai* or *liangyuan*), the latter acting as deputies for the *ambans* in a variety of capacities, including investigations involving Qing, as opposed to purely Tibetan, justice (Xiao 1996, 85-98). Evidently, or so the Daoguang emperor was informed, the heads of both services, commissariat official Zheng Jinbang and his military counterpart Brigade Commander Sun Ruzao, had reported to the *ambans* ominous rumors of a Kashmiri asking about "circumstances in the core territories (*fudi*)" of the empire. Orders to investigate passed down the chain of command to Company Commander Li Guo'an (LFZZ: 592:7).

Li sought a contact within the Kashmiri community to aid his investigation, and approached a man called in Chinese Ga-ma-er-zu. Like Fazl-ullah, Ga-ma-er-zu was born in Further Tibet but now lived in Lhasa. His father, Ma Fulong, had been granted insignia of the fifth rank during the Gorkha wars. This profile resembles what we know of A-qi-mu-ju-e-er, and it is possible that Ma Fulong was a Chinese name held in conjunction with a transliterated foreign name. However this may be, Li told Ga-ma-er-zu of his mission to find the rumored spy. Reminding him of his father's debt to the emperor, Li asked him, as a Kashmiri, to make secret inquiries in his own language. This he agreed to do. Setting out to find the culprit, Ga-ma-er-zu—putatively by a happy coincidence—ran into Fazl-ullah, who by then had broken with Ahmed Ali and earned his erstwhile employer's ire by (for reasons unclear) packing up Ahmed Ali's notes and letters and sending them to Further Tibet.¹¹ Upon learning of Ga-ma-er-zu's mission, Fazl-ullah recalled suspicious questions that Ahmed Ali had kept posing to him about Tibet and China (*neidi*), and his curiously vehement demands to have his jottings returned. Accompanying Ga-ma-er-zu to the Qing military garrison he lodged his report, and Ahmed Ali was picked up for interrogation (LFZZ: 592: 1007, 1009; depositions of Ga-ma-er-zu and Pa-lu-zu [Fazl-ullah]). Even if this memorial accords Qing officials in Tibet an exaggeratedly proactive role in Ahmed Ali's capture, it is clear that he was turned in by his former agent Fazl-ullah.

Because Ahmed Ali spoke neither Chinese nor Tibetan, and had papers in Persian and English, a team of translators and interpreters was assembled. Worried that a total reliance on Qing Muslim subjects (*neidi Huimin*) would make it difficult to "win [Ahmed Ali's] confidence" (*zhefu qi xin*), but that Kashmiris might collude to shield the prisoner, Qing officials formed a composite working group. Commissariat officials found two Qing subjects to interpret, one a Chinese Muslim from Sichuan named Jin Huailiang, and the other a Muslim subject named Ma-ma-ke-sha who had come from Qinghai and once been employed by Ahmed Ali's firm. Assisting them were the *ambans'* official Tibetan translator, the leaders of the Kashmiri trading community in Tibet, and the two men who had denounced Ahmed Ali, Ga-ma-er-zu and Fazl-ullah. Kashmiris who understood Persian explained the documents to others conversant in Tibetan (including the prisoner's brother Ashraf Ali), and the official Tibetan translator then rendered the material into Chinese. Processing three notebooks required Lhasa's Kashmiri community to work "day and night" for two months (IOR: A.A. reply to Hodgson, undated). They were discovered to contain information about the boundaries, passes,

and topography of Tibet, the numbers and disposition of Chinese and Tibetan troops, the procedures of the Finance Department, itineraries for Tibet and Qinghai, general information about Sichuan and Gansu (the Chinese provinces lying athwart major trade routes into Tibet), and comments about roads from India to Tibet via Bhutan and Nepal. Only the letters in English could not be deciphered (LFZZ: 592:7-8, 24-25).

Ahmed Ali's interrogation by the commissariat officials and *ambans* was laborious, as each question and answer had to be reiterated multiple times to get the meaning across. Ahmed Ali admitted gathering information about China and Tibet, but argued that his aims were innocent. In India his aptitude in managing tax and opium revenues brought him to the attention of the now-deceased leader (*touren*) William Moorcroft (*Eliyamu Mo'ergere*), who had sixteen years earlier proposed to grant him an investment and have him travel to Tibet, giving him a notebook to be sent back to India "in order to facilitate the dispatch of goods to Tibet as necessary." Ahmed Ali had neither agreed to this, nor taken the money, nor gone immediately to Tibet. Only his own affairs had brought him to Lhasa, and not a scrap of information has been sent back across the Himalayas. What notes he had taken were made "according to the customs of my homeland," and intended only to be compiled into a book (*zuanji chengshu*) (LFZZ: 8-10, 25).

Ahmed Ali's story struck his interrogators as implausible: Having been offered capital and notebooks from a British official, was he really planning only to write a book? If he were not honoring his earlier agreement, why then had he taken that old notebook on the long trip to Lhasa? Why had he copied a questionnaire given by a British official to another Kashmiri merchant entering Tibet via Nepal? Even if Ahmed Ali's motives were mainly commercial, it seemed almost certain that he was gathering political information about Tibet and China for a foreign power, and strictly speaking deserved punishment.

Diplomatically, however, there were reasons to handle the case with finesse. The state he served lay beyond Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim, and normally had no contact with Tibet. During its war with Nepal over a decade earlier, it had seemingly obeyed Qing orders to make peace. Extrapolating from the date of Ahmed Ali's first dealings with Moorcroft, the *ambans* correctly linked his commission to that war. If blame lay with the deceased Moorcroft and not any current leader, it seemed expedient to let the matter drop. Still, Qing prestige demanded some action, and they won the emperor's agreement for the following plan. Ahmed Ali would be allowed to wind up his affairs and then be permanently deported from Tibet, as would Ashraf and Abdullah.

Their lawsuit could be settled in their homeland. An official letter would be sent by the *ambans* to the state employing Ahmed Ali, outlining his confession and the evidence against him, and explaining that Qing law mandated a harsh punishment. However, since “you would not dare in this foolish and reckless fashion to send someone secretly to Tibet to make inquiries about its circumstances,” the *ambans* had sought imperial mercy. Since news of this episode would doubtless inspire doubt and fear, this letter would detail the facts of the case and convey that it was proper that its recipients henceforth conduct themselves peacefully in gratitude for the emperor’s clemency. From the Qing perspective the case was closed (LFZZ: 10–12).

As John Bray has elsewhere described the British response to the case in detail, it will only be summarized here (2011, 330–334). Ahmed Ali’s petition led the governor-general to order Hodgson to solicit the intervention of Nepal’s most powerful minister, Bhim Sen Thapa. By the time he was approached, in the spring of 1831, the Nepali statesman had already learned of Ahmed Ali’s release from both Kashmiri merchants (whom Hodgson described as “a small junto . . . probably inimical to each other”) and the correspondence network of a former Nepali ambassador to Beijing. Newari merchants in Lhasa also corroborated this, and soon a letter arrived from the *ambans* ordering Nepal to conduct Ahmed Ali onward to India (IOR: Hodgson to Prinsep, Apr. 20, 1831; Apr. 29, 1831). Ahmed Ali himself reached Kathmandu at the beginning of June, and after initial claims to have “fulfilled the instructions of the Council Board, in the time of Lord Hastings,” he admitted that his inquiries had no official authorization, which British Indian archives soon confirmed.¹² Later that summer, the *ambans*’ Chinese letter, accompanied by a Persian translation already prepared in Lhasa, was received via Sikkim. The British reply denied that Ahmed Ali was an agent or employee of the government, adding that it was not seeking information about “Chinese Tartary.” Qing officials were chided for “foolish anxieties” about foreign merchants making notes.¹³ I have found no record that this response, sent to Lhasa via Nepal, was forwarded to Beijing.

Qing Policy and the Question of Origins

Where then, was Ahmed Ali from, and what power was he supposed to have served? His arrest brought Tibet’s Kashmiri community under particular Qing scrutiny for the first time. One consequence was new rules, devised by the

ambans and approved by the emperor. Every Kashmiri entering Tibet was now to be diligently searched. Documents in the English script were forbidden. Tough surveillance regulations already in place for Newaris now extended to Kashmiris: any correspondence entering Tibet had to be submitted to Qing soldiers at the frontier posts, sent by them to the *ambans*' office in Lhasa, transmitted to the Kashmiri headmen for translation, and resubmitted for inspection. Outgoing correspondence had to be submitted for similar scrutiny via a Tibetan minister in Lhasa. Kashmiri headmen would be required to submit to the *ambans*, through a Tibetan minister, monthly written undertakings that no private correspondence had occurred outside of these channels (LFZZ:: 592:12). In theory, the Qing state now scrutinized all correspondence between Tibet and India.

In stark contrast to this vigorous counter-espionage, neither the *amban* nor the Qing court were inclined to gather detailed intelligence about the homeland of the expelled Kashmiris, its relationship to the regime that had recruited Ahmed Ali, and why that regime might be interested in Tibet. Basic geographic questions raised in the depositions were not pursued. Ahmed Ali, his brother Ashraf, and Abdullah all identified themselves in their depositions as "people of *Jiag'er*," that is, of *Rgya-gar*, a Tibetan word for India. A leader of the Kashmiri community named Jia-ma-po-da and Tibet-born Fazl-ullah were also identified as people of *Rgya-gar*, as was Ga-ma-er-zu's father. In short, these "Kashmiris" or their immediate ancestors were recorded as coming from India. Yet memorials giving the *amban*'s official interpretation of the case ignored *Rgya-gar*: In the memorials Ahmed Ali was termed a Kashmiri (*Keshimi'er fanmin*) and Abdullah as going to Kashmir (not *Rgya-gar*, as stated in the deposition) when he first sought to retire. This was not deception—the depositions were attached for the emperor's reference—but rather a gloss on that raw data. Since only Newaris and Kashmiris were noted in official regulations as trading in Lhasa, the *amban* presumably wanted to clarify to the emperor that these men were part of a known group. Only those born outside the Qing Empire were called "Kashmiris" in these memorials; those of Kashmiri ancestry born within it were referred to simply as Qing "Muslim subjects" (*Huimin*). This presumably signaled to the emperor that Fazl-ullah and Ga-ma-er-zu were *bona fide* residents of the empire, despite being of *Rgya-gar* descent, unlike the foreign Kashmiris Ahmed Ali, Ashraf Ali, and Abdullah, who were to be deported.

Jiag'er was not the only term ignored. Qing documents on the case invariably referred to the polity whose headman Moorcroft had solicited Ahmed

Ali's help as *Pileng*, a Chinese term derived from the Tibetan *Phe-reng*, itself from the Persian *Farangi* ("Frank" or European) (Petech, 334). Written English was referred to as the "*Pileng* script" (*Pileng ziji*). This land below Tibet had first come to the notice of Qing officials in 1792, and since then Nepal had repeatedly accused it of being an aggressive power with designs on Tibet and even China (Mosca 2013, 139–147). In 1830 the *ambans* did not undertake even the most cursory investigation of the identity of the *Pileng*, their connections to Kashmir or *Rgya-gar*, or their economic and political activities. Daoguang was told simply that they were "puny foreigners on the periphery" (*zui'er bianyi*) who had "always been respectful and submissive" and normally had no interaction with Tibet (LFZZ: 592:10–11).

It is possible that neither the Daoguang emperor nor his officials felt any curiosity about the *Pileng*, or were persuaded that they posed no threat to Tibet. This was certainly the impression official correspondence was designed to convey. There is some evidence, however, that the Qing state deliberately avoided studying this issue. First, both the *ambans* and the emperor wished to end the case quickly and without conflict. Repeatedly invoking imperial benevolence, the *ambans* secured special treatment for Ahmed Ali. As a foreigner, it was "inexpedient to put him in prison, which might give rise to doubts and fears (*yiwei*)," so he was confined to a remote temple guarded by soldiers. Avoiding "doubts and fears" was also cited as a reason to excuse him from the full rigor of the law. Ahmed Ali himself claimed that the "authorities in Khetta from fear of the British Government have refrained from killing me, and also diminished the severities of my confinement."¹⁴ As early as 1811, Manning claimed that the incumbent Qing *amban* had connected Calcutta to the English, whom he hated and feared (Markham 1971, 275–276). *Pileng* leaders were assured that there would be no Qing reprisals, albeit in terms that made clear Qing claims to political supremacy. Moreover, Qing officials ignored the opium issue. Patna, Ahmed Ali's base, was in the heartland of British opium cultivation. His testimony recounted that the *Pileng* grew opium, and an earlier Qing commentator's description of that polity had noted that it traded by sea with Canton. By 1830 the maritime opium trade was a major problem for the Qing state, but no attempt made to determine how the *Pileng* might be linked to coastal problems.

Placing the Ahmed Ali case in the context of developments between 1820 and 1840 offers further support for the hypothesis that the Qing state studiously ignored evidence implicating Kashmiris in trends inimical to Qing

security. In the early 1820s, less than a decade before the Ahmed Ali case broke, the Daoguang emperor was told that Hindustan was under English (*Yingjili*) control, that Kashmir “obeyed” (*tingcong*) the English, and that an Englishman in Ladakh had Kashmiris among his retinue (*QSL-DG* 33:463 [26.20b] 1/11/14; *Shiliao xunkan* 1963, 114). After 1840, due to events in the Opium War, it was acknowledged that the *Pileng* who had recruited Ahmed Ali were the same English (*Yingjili*) fighting on the coast (Mosca 2013, 260). Kashmiris were among those captured in China during that conflict (*QSL-DG*: 38:636 [369.9a]; 22/3/6). Around the same time, it was learned that Kashmiris were bringing opium to Yarkand (*QSL-DG*: 37:1182–1183 [329.31b–32a]; 19/12/23). When Dogra forces invaded western Tibet in 1841, Kashmiri leaders were found among their ranks during the ensuing conflict (Meng-bao 1992, 30 [1:52a]).

Officially, the Qing state only acknowledged that Kashmiri traders were connected to British India when the British themselves forced the issue, formally notifying the emperor that Kashmir had come into their possession during the first Anglo-Sikh War (1845–46). Daoguang’s own inquiries confirmed this. Qing fears that Britons might now appear in Tibet wishing to trade provoked a very telling comment about the preference for a commercial *status quo*:

If [the British] desire only trade, then Kulu belongs to them, and Ladakh has rendered them allegiance [*guifu*], so that hiding their traces among these groups they can trade as much as they like. Moreover, in Nearer and Further Tibet there are no fewer than one thousand Kashmiri Muslim [*Keshimi'er Huimin*] households, newly become their subjects, who have brought along their families and act as merchants. They come and go transporting merchandise, so [the British] have even less need to fear shortages [of goods]. Why is it necessary for [the British] to fix their wishes on making things manifest and conspicuous, and trade with Tibet directly [*dimian*, lit. “face to face”]? (*CBYWSM*:416)

In short, by 1847 the Qing state was explicitly willing to overlook the fact that Kashmiris were now subjects of the British, because the alternative seemed to be direct trade with Englishmen. It is at least possible that behind the minimal and relatively conciliatory response to the Ahmed Ali crisis in 1830 lay this sense that the *status quo* was preferable to any new order that might emerge.

Ahmed Ali's case reveals the chain of contact allowing information to flow across the Himalayas in the early nineteenth century. One end was anchored in India, where the Patna-based Ahmed Ali came into contact with Moorcroft and, through him, indirectly with the highest levels of the British Indian government. Even if Ahmed Ali's engagement with the British was exceptional, other Kashmiris aided Hodgson and Gardner in their researches. As an intelligence asset, Ahmed Ali's value lay in his network of contacts with long-term Kashmiri sojourners in Tibet, Ashraf and Abdullah. Given that his premises housed Fazl-ullah's brother, we can surmise that Ahmed Ali's firm also had ties to Tibet-born Kashmiris. Fazl-ullah was the human watershed in the flow of information between India and Qing Tibet, supplying information equally to Ahmed Ali's notebooks, and to the Qing agents tracking him down. Next in the chain was Ga-ma-er-zu, another Tibet-born Kashmiri, but one whose family enjoyed a closer relationship to the Qing state dating back almost four decades. Ga-ma-er-zu in turn was sought out for assistance by the mid-ranking Green Standard officer Li Guo'an. Although Thomas Manning had found during his 1811-12 stay in Tibet that many of its Han Chinese residents, including Green Standard troops, were Sichuanese Muslims, this was apparently not the case with Li Guo'an (Markham 1971, 242n2).¹⁵ Rather, Li's tie to Ga-ma-er-zu was that of shared political allegiance. From Li Guo'an, intelligence passed up the chain of command to the *ambans*, and then to emperor.

In other words, between the pinnacles of power in Calcutta and Lhasa lay a chain of men linked variously by ties of kinship, community solidarity, and commerce—but also divided by nuanced calculations of their self-interest vis-à-vis two imperial structures. In this sense, they reflect the fine shadings of identity that emerge, as Charles Wheeler has shown in the case of the Minh Huong, when mutable group identities encounter the complex political and commercial terrain between competing polities. The Qing state was just as capable as British India of finding Kashmiri informants along this chain. Its counter-espionage was thorough: Ahmed Ali was discovered and arrested, his Persian notes and correspondence recovered and translated, and the frontier tightened. However rigidly these rules were enforced thereafter, it seems that heightened Qing surveillance of the Kashmiri community was effective. In 1846, Huc and Gabet found the community's leader gravely concerned that their presence would inflame Qing suspicions about espionage in Tibet. Although in later decades British India did succeed in sending agents to Lhasa in the guise of merchants, this proved remarkably difficult.

Kashmiri merchants gave the Qing state a grip on a powerful intelligence mechanism, but one it employed only for internal and frontier security, without turning it back toward India to investigate the *Pileng* or the political circumstances of *Rgya-gar* and Kashmir. This returns us to the ambiguous issue of how Qing rulers and officials scrutinized the origin of foreign merchants in the context of frontier politics. In regard to Kashmiris we can draw a spectrum extending from 1721, when the Qing state acknowledged their presence without attributing it any political significance, to 1847, when it was decided to quietly accept that Kashmiris had entered the British Indian orbit. This chapter has argued for placing the Ahmed Ali case of 1830 closer to the latter end of the spectrum, with the Qing emperor and his officials probably suspecting Kashmiri ties to a hostile Western power but not wishing to undermine established frontier trade. If they did indeed opt for calculated ignorance, the reasons are not hard to find. Khoqand's invasion of 1830 made clear the dangers and futility of trying to embargo trade to exert pressure on a troublesome foreign country. Militarily, the Qing was weaker in Tibet than in Xinjiang, and the terrain was more challenging. If vigorous measures seemed inexpedient, it was politically easier to bury the issue than excavate it. Whether the Qing state cared where foreign merchants came from varied across time and space, depending on its strategic calculations of regional political circumstances.

Notes

1. At present the only published Qing document on this case is an extract from an imperial edict, dated DG10/11/12 (Dec. 26, 1830), copied into the dynastic Veritable Records (*QSG-DG*, *juan* 179). The First Historical Archives holds a full report memorialized by the *amban* Hui-xian, dated DG10/10/7 (Nov. 21, 1830), together with depositions (by Ahmed Ali, his brother Ashraf Ali, his agent Abdullah, his subsequent agent Fazl-ullah, a Kashmiri community leader named Jia-ma-po-da, and a witness named Ga-ma-er-zu) and a Chinese draft of the letter sent to British India. A second memorial of November 21 and a further report by Hui-xian and his colleague Xing-ke of DG11/2/16 (Mar. 29, 1831) are also held in that archive. In addition, the Grand Secretariat archive of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan, holds related correspondence from the Board of Personnel (DG/10/11/16, Dec. 30, 1830). Unless otherwise noted, "IOR" in parenthetical notes refers to India Office Record F/4/1384/55154. In citations, Ahmed Ali will be abbreviated A.A., the governor-general as G.G.

2. According to the Jesuit Antoine Gaubil, in June 1729, men from Kashmir had given news of Persian affairs to the emperor's brother Yin-xiang (1970, 237). Just under half a century later, George Bogle met in Tibet a Kashmiri who claimed to have traveled to Beijing via Khams, Yunnan, and Canton (and even to have met the emperor!) (Lamb 2002, 294).

3. Here *baibu*, "white cloth," is probably a corruption of *Balebu*, the term for Nepal and Newari merchants.

4. According to Fletcher (1978), however, in Xinjiang "Kashmiri" was a generic term for traders arriving from the south and southwest (84).

5. In Qing sources, Nearer Tibet [Ch. *Qian-Zang*] refers to the *Dbus* region centered on Lhasa, while Further Tibet [Ch. *Hou-Zang*] refers to *Gwang*, centered on Shigatse and Tashilhunpo.

6. Qing reports state that Ahmed Ali was forty *sui* (approximately thirty-nine West-ern years of age) in 1830, thus twenty-three years old in 1814 (LFZZ 592:8).

7. In 1812 Moorcroft sent Mir Izzet-ullah, confidential Persian secretary at the British Residency in Delhi, to Bukhara (Alder, 287–288); in 1815 he found a "Fugeer" willing to enter Tibet and obtain samples of its script (BL:APAC:F/4/552/13386); later he facilitated the Tibetan studies of the Hungarian scholar Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (Alder).

8. Although in his first petition to the governor-general Ahmed Ali described both Ashraf Ali and Abdullah as his "brothers," Qing documents refer only to Ashraf as his younger brother, and Abdullah as an elderly agent hired by his father, Khwaja Muhammad Ali (Ch., Hua-zha Mo-ha-mai-de A-li).

9. This account synthesizes material from LFZZ: 592:7–9 with the depositions of Ahmed Ali, Ashraf Ali, and Abdullah.

10. Hodgson himself communicated to the Asiatic Society in Calcutta data from "Amfr, a Cashmro-Bhotiah [Tibetan] by birth" and interpreter to traders (*Asiatic Researches*, Vol. 17, 1832).

11. Ahmed Ali claimed that Ashraf, Abdullah, and Fazl-ullah "stole" his papers and gave them to Qing authorities. First sending them to Further Tibet might indicate an attempt to blackmail him.

12. IOR: Note by Swinton, July 22, 1831; Summary of the Correspondence in the Secret Department in 1816/17 Relative to Khajeh Ahmed Alli.

13. IOR: Smith to Swinton, July 25, 1831; Translation of a letter from the Chinese Authorities on the Frontier of Lepcha, through the medium of a Persian Translation which accompanied the original (dated DG11/3/30 = May 11, 1831; July 25, 1831 in English version), Prinsep to Ko Tarin (i.e. Hui-xian) and Shin Tarin (i.e. Xing-ke).

14. BL:APAC:F/4/1384/55154:Urzee of Khaja Ahmed Alli, Aug. 21 1830. "Khet-ta" is elsewhere called the "Durbar of the Tarun at Khetta," Tarun indicating *daren*, Qing *ambans*.

15. Li Guo'an, as Ly-Kouo-Ngan "Le Pacificateur des royaumes," was the officer charged with escorting the French missionaries Huc and Gabet from Tibet in 1846. They explained that he believed "ni aux Bonzes, ni aux Lamas . . . toute sa religion consistait en une fervente dévotion pour la Grand-Ourse" (Huc 1927, 239-240).

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