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SOME TIBETANS IN SELF-EXILE HAVE REPEATEDLY CLAIMED  
THAT TIBET AND CHINA ARE TWO DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.  
WHAT DOES HISTORY HAVE TO SAY?

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“This argument does not conform with recorded history. It is nothing but an excuse to conduct activities aimed at splitting Tibet from China and making it into an independent state.

“China is a multi-national country. The Tibetans . . . established the “Tubo kingdom” in the seventh century, which “friendly [sic] coexisted with the Tang Dynasty” for more than two hundred years; then it collapsed, and Tibet was in a “state of disintegration” for about three centuries.

*[The end of the Chinese answer, which is much more detailed and deals with the rise of the Yuan dynasty in the thirteenth century, is quoted below, at the beginning of the second part of our reply. Inasmuch as the unchanging Chinese arguments invariably belittle the greatness of the Tibetan empire (or so-called Tubo kingdom), it seemed necessary to highlight this essential period of Tibetan civilization’s formation.]*

### *The Tibetan Empire (Seventh–Ninth Centuries)*

HELGA UEBACH

Nonspecialist readers may be puzzled by the terms “Tubo dynasty,” “Tubo kingdom,” and “Tubo rule” in Chinese writings dealing with the early Tibetan empire. A few words of explanation are thus in order. The Tibetan name for Tibet is Bö. In Chinese texts of the period under consideration, the Tibetans are called Tu-fan. The Chinese claim that the pronunciation of the respective Chinese characters was Tu-po. However, this interpretation is not corroborated by any gloss to ancient Chinese texts, and it was long ago rejected by the famous French scholar Paul Pelliot (1878–1945). Its constant use in Chinese publications, even when translated into Western or other languages, may be explained by the wish to equate Tu po with Tu Bö. Given that the name Tibet is well established all over the world, adopting the questionable Chinese term for the country is both unnecessary and pointless.

Tibet's recorded history begins in the early seventh century C.E. with the reign of Trisong Tsen, more popularly known as Songtsen Gampo (r. 617–649/50). From this time on, the most important events of the empire were recorded in the *Tibetan Annals*. China, Tibet's great neighbor to the east, was at that time ruled by the Tang dynasty. In the *Annals of Tang Dynasty*, there are some chapters dealing with Tibetan affairs where the data and records of the *Tibetan Annals* can be counterchecked. These main sources of exact historical data are supplemented by inscriptions, documentary evidence from Central Asia, and information supplied by the histories of India to the south, the Arabs and Persians to the west, city-states with Indo-European populations in the oases along the Silk Road to the north, and various confederations of Turkic peoples still farther to the north, all of which were soon involved in Tibet's expansion.

An impression of how Tibetans see their early history—in a less strict sense of the term—is gained from fairly old chronicles. The Tibetan rulers are said to be of divine origin or, in the words of Old Tibetan inscriptions, their ancestor was a “god who descended from heaven to become ruler of men.” There had been more than thirty generations of rulers prior to Songtsen Gampo whose names included the word *tsen*, “mighty.” They resided in the fortress of “Tiger-Peak” in Chingwa, a side valley of the fertile Yarlung valley, watered by a right tributary of the river Tsangpo, or Brahmaputra, to the southeast of Lhasa. In the time of Namri Longtsen, the father of Songtsen Gampo, the chiefs of some great clans plotted against their overlords and allied themselves with Namri Longtsen. This conspiracy was the starting point of the coming into being of the Tibetan state. The surrounding principalities and petty kingdoms soon were subdued and bound by the ties of vassalage. The court moved to the strategically more favored northern bank of the Tsangpo River, while the valley of Chingwa farther on was significant as site where the huge tombs of the rulers were built.

For the sake of simplicity, the name “Yarlung dynasty” has been introduced, but no Tibetan dynastic name has been transmitted. The epithet of the Tibetan rulers was transformed into their title, *tsenpo*, and it is by this title that they were generally known. Translating it as “the mighty one” does not quite seem to do it justice. In an early Old Tibetan–Chinese glossary, it is paraphrased by the Chinese characters for “Son of Heaven,” and doubtless was taken as equivalent to the title otherwise exclusively used by and for the Chinese emperor. It is interesting to note that in the *Annals of the Tang Dynasty*, the title *tsenpo* is reproduced phonetically.

When Songtsen Gampo ascended to the throne, the various subjects of his father and those of his mother, including the people of Sumpa in

present-day eastern Tibet, were hostile to him. They revolted but were soon put down. The *tsenpo* continued expanding the empire. He invaded the kingdom of Zhangzhung in the region around Mount Kailash, imposed tribute on it, and sent a Tibetan princess for matrimonial alliance. In the east, he step by step subdued the various Qiang tribes in the mountainous border regions and attacked the Azha kingdom (Chin. Tuyuhun) in the area of Koko Nor (Chin. Qinghai). By that time, the *tsenpo's* forces had reached the confines of the Chinese empire. The *tsenpo* sent an embassy to the Chinese court at Chang'an (present-day Xi'an) in 634 C.E. and asked for a Chinese princess in matrimonial alliance. The Chinese emperor was reluctant and only consented under the threat of the Tibetan warriors. In 641, a Chinese princess was escorted to Lhasa, and for the first time the so-called "uncle-nephew" (i.e., father-in-law-son-in-law) alliance was established.

Matrimonial alliance was a political means frequently employed by the *tsenpo*. In addition to ladies of Tibetan noble clans, Songtsen Gampo is also said to have married a Nepalese princess. Both princesses, the Chinese and the Nepalese, were devout Buddhists, and each had a temple built in Lhasa. The Chinese princess founded the Ramoche temple, and the Nepalese princess built the Jokhang temple, a sanctuary still highly revered by Tibetans.

In about 647 C.E., a Tibetan army crossed the Himalayas—sometimes rashly considered an insuperable natural barrier—on a punitive expedition, because a Chinese embassy on a mission to India had been ill-treated, and China had called upon its Tibetan ally for help. Taking revenge, and doubtless also because it fitted in very well with the *tsenpo's* policy of expansion, the Tibetan army penetrated deep into the North Indian plain.

The Tibetans had first become known to the Chinese as strong and powerful warriors. The *Tang Annals* note their fine weapons, their excellent armor, and their bravery with admiration. The empire they won by force might have been short-lived had it not been for Songtsen Gampo's far-sighted government and legislation. It was his grandson and successor Manglong Mangtsen (r. 650–676) who organized the Tibetan state and had the legal code written down in 655. Noble Tibetan youths were sent to the Chinese imperial academy at Chang'an for higher education and, although perhaps at a somewhat later date, also to India. An Indian alphabet had been adjusted to the peculiarities of the Tibetan language and henceforth served as script for Tibetan.

Diplomatic relations with China, once established, were maintained during the whole period of the Tibetan empire, and embassies were exchanged almost uninterruptedly. They were regularly sent to announce the death of the *tsenpo* or the Chinese emperor and to offer condolences. Apart from

trade, which played an important role, the subjects discussed most frequently were problems connected with war and peace, such as negotiations over territorial claims, the exchange of prisoners of war, and peace treaties. At least eight bilateral peace treaties were concluded, and almost one hundred official missions are enumerated in the *Tang Annals*. The numerous missions reflect, not only the close contacts, but also the many conflicts between the Tibetan and Chinese empires provoked by their politics and geography.

In the early seventh century, in addition to the military governments of Longyou and Hexi (roughly present-day Qinghai and Gansu), the Chinese had established protectorates and the Four Garrisons in Central Asia, of which Kashgar was the farthest west, to prevent incursions on their western frontier, and doubtless also to control international trade. The Tibetans, who were continually trying to gain a foothold in the highly civilized city-states of Central Asia, which were important trading centers along the Silk Road, were thus in permanent conflict with Chinese interests. The Chinese military presence barred access to the two main routes linking central Tibet with Central Asia. One of these led to the northeast via Koko Nor. The other, to the north, ended at the crossroads near Lop Nor, from where two routes ran west to the southern and northern Tarim basin and another two ran northeast to Hexi and southeast to Koko Nor (see map 1).

Another route opening into Central Asia led over the high mountain passes in the Karakorum and Pamir ranges in the extreme west. During *Tsenpo* Manglong Mangtsen's reign, the Tibetans therefore concentrated on getting control of these strategically important mountain passes. Having subdued the small kingdoms of Brusha (Chin. Polü), the Gilgit area, and Gogyül (Wakhan), they allied themselves with the western Turks and launched an attack on the westernmost Chinese stronghold, Kashgar. From there, they proceeded to Khotan and, having taken it, reinforced by the Khotanese, they also conquered Aksu. The Chinese thus lost the southwestern and northern parts of the Tarim basin and withdrew their garrisons. At the same time, the Azha people in the northeast were subjugated. Their kingdom ceased to exist (663), and their territory came under Tibetan administration.

Tibet's Central Asian dominions were lost in 692 due to internal weakness resulting from *Tsenpo* Düsong's (676–704) struggle to put an end to the rule of the powerful Gar clan, whose members had hereditarily held the office of great councilor not only during the *tsenpo*'s infancy but since the time of Songtsen Gampo. Düsong set out at the head of his army. Having twice inflicted a defeat on the Chinese in Qinghai and Gansu, he proposed another marriage alliance with China. He then directed his army toward

the southeast, subdued the kingdom of Jang (Chin. Nanzhao), and died on a campaign against the Mywa tribe in northern Yunnan.

One of the *tsempo's* elder sons managed to be enthroned but was soon deposed. During the infancy of the heir to the throne, Tride Tsugtsen (b. 704, enthroned 712), his grandmother Trimalö, of the noble clan of Dro, practically acted as regent. Negotiations for peace with China had been successful and the matrimonial alliance proposed by Düsöng was concluded. In 710, a Chinese princess came to Tibet for the second time. The renewed alliance did not change things much, and obviously it was differently interpreted by Tibetans and Chinese. The *Tang Annals* report that the Tibetans insisted on being addressed in terms of equality in diplomatic correspondence. It is a characteristic feature of the Chinese to have taken this legitimate demand as hostile behavior.

Meanwhile, the Tibetans had entered into diplomatic relations with the Arabs and strengthened their position by an alliance not only with the Arabs but also with the Turgesh (a western Turkic tribe living in the Ili region, which at that time had formed a confederation). This was a matter of great concern among the small states in the west allied with or dependent on China. The Tibetans started to attack the Chinese garrisons in the Tarim basin and conquered Kucha (727). At the same time, they continued raiding China's northwestern border. A number of battles were fought against the Chinese army, with varying success. In 730, another peace treaty was concluded with China. According to the *Tang Annals* (Pelliot 1961), on this occasion the Chinese tried to trick the Tibetan councilor into accepting among other presents the fish insignia purse that was the mark of a tributary state. The Tibetan councilor politely refused, in Chinese, however, to accept the gift. (The fish insignia purse, a handsome bag meant to be worn on the belt, was presented by the Chinese to the representatives of foreign countries leading "tributary missions"; it contained one half of a bronze fish, the other half of which was kept in China so that it could be checked whether the two halves were a good match.) Peace between Tibet and China did not last. When war broke out again, the Chinese army managed to overrun the Tibetans far in the west and conquered part of Brusha. Moreover, although successful on the eastern border, the Tibetans lost battles in Central Asia and in the northeast. The series of Chinese victories came to an end in 751, however, when the Arabs and Qarluqs, a Turkic people in the region of Ili (Grousset 1941: 158), inflicted a great defeat on them in the battle of Talas. This marked the end of Chinese domination in Central Asia, and finally this whole region adopted the Muslim faith.

In 755, China was shaken by the rebellion of An Lushan (Gernet 1999:

227). In the same year, *Tsenpo* Tride Tsugtsen was murdered, and there was some turmoil in Tibet until his son, Trisong Detsen (742–797?), was enthroned with the help of loyal nobles. After having eliminated the disloyal nobles, Trisong soon took advantage of China's weakness. The Tibetan army advanced steadily in the northeast, occupying all of Longyou (Qinghai), east of Koko Nor. At the height of their military power, the Tibetans in 763 even occupied the Chinese capital, Chang'an (modern Xi'an), and installed a puppet emperor, thus endangering the very existence of the Tang dynasty. The victorious Tibetan general, Tara Lugong, was richly rewarded by the *tsenpo*. A huge inscribed stele commemorating his deeds and the rewards he received was erected at the foot of the hill on which the Potala Palace stands in Lhasa and still can be seen there today. After having enthroned their candidate for emperor of China, the Tibetans withdrew within a few weeks. Short-lived though it was, this episode is noteworthy because, conversely, no contemporary Chinese army—or any other army of the time—ever managed to penetrate deep into Tibetan territory, let alone central Tibet.

In the following years, the Tibetans conquered the important towns of Hexi (Gansu corridor) one after another, up to Hami, completely cutting off China from its Central Asian dominions. A peace treaty was again concluded in 783, confirming the Tibetan conquests in detail. In 791, the Tibetans also dominated Khotan and the southern part of the Tarim basin. During Trisong Detsen's reign, the Tibetan empire reached its greatest territorial extension. In order to protect the empire, which included peoples of different ethnic origin, like Indo-Europeans, Turks, and Chinese, speaking a variety of languages, military governments were established all along its frontier, stretching like a bow from the Karakorum range via the Tarim basin up to the Nanshan range and down to the Sichuan basin. Throughout the empire, Tibetan law and administration, in which local residents also took part, were applied.

Meanwhile, an important event had taken place in Tibet: Buddhism had been proclaimed the state religion. From the start of their expansion, the Tibetans had come into contact with adherents of all the great religions to be found at the confines of their empire: Buddhists, followers of the various other Indian religions, Christians, Muslims, Confucians, Taoists, and Manichaeans. It is known that the Tibetans asked for information on Islam, and it may be assumed that they showed similar interest in the other religions. Buddhism was widespread and flourishing in the surrounding regions, however, from Kashmir in the west to China itself, not to speak of the many monasteries in the states along the Silk Road. Many of these states were temporarily or permanently dominated by the Tibetans, who, to say the least, obviously tolerated Buddhism and other religious beliefs. Buddhist monks from Khotan

fleeing the fighting in that kingdom in 739 sought refuge in Tibet. Thus, since the first contacts in the time of Songtsen Gampo, the ground for adopting the Buddhist way of life in Tibet had been continuously prepared.

Having decided to officially adopt Buddhism as state religion, *Tsenpo* Trisong Detsen took a great personal interest in Buddhist doctrine. He invited Indian and Chinese Buddhist masters who respectively represented the opposing views on the “gradual way” and the “immediate way” of attaining Enlightenment for a debate and concluded in favor of adopting the “gradual way” advocated by the Indians. However, there were no serious ill effects for the representatives of the Chinese side or for their adherents. Their doctrine coexisted with the officially adopted one, especially in the border regions of the Tibetan empire. The *tsenpo* made sure that Buddhism was disseminated as effectively as he had managed military affairs. The first monastery was built in Samye, provisions for the clergy were regulated and granted by the government, commissioners for Buddhist affairs were appointed, a number of colleges for the teaching of the Buddhist doctrine were established in Tibet itself, as well as in the northern and eastern border regions, and Indian scholars were invited in order to start the great work of translating the Buddhist canon into Tibetan.

Though the *tsenpo* himself was fervently engaged in the study of Buddhist doctrine, he did not neglect external affairs. Hostility with China soon had flared up again. The Chinese side had not kept the terms of an agreement of mutual military assistance. The Tibetans therefore attacked and occupied a number of Chinese prefectures in the Ordos region and farther in the east. During the ensuing peace negotiations, the Tibetans took revenge by kidnapping the Chinese negotiators.

Toward the end of the eighth century, the Uighurs, allies of China, had become a threat on Tibet’s northern border. The Tibetans, together with their allies the Qarluqs, had taken the important city of Beiting from the Uighurs in 790. However, the Uighurs retook it in 792. In the same year, they also captured Qocho from the Tibetans. It was a setback when the Jang kingdom, Tibet’s vassal in the southeast since the times of Düsung, refused to supply soldiers and defected to the Chinese in 794. But nevertheless Tibet was able to maintain its position.

The exact date of the death of the great *tsenpo* Trisong Detsen and the ascension to the throne of his son Tride Songtsen (r. 800?–817) is one of the problems in Tibetan history still not solved satisfactorily. Despite Tibet’s involvement in a war with its former allies, the Arabs, in western Central Asia and although almost permanently engaged in fighting the Uighurs to keep them off their territory in the north and northeast, as well as the usual

clashes with the Chinese, the new *tsempo* continued the pious work of his father. It was during his reign that a translating committee consisting of a great number of Indian and Tibetan masters compiled a dictionary ordered by his father establishing the Tibetan equivalents of Sanskrit terms.

Negotiations for a new peace treaty with China came to an end only in 821 during the reign of Tride Songtsen's son Tritsug Detsen (r. 817–838 or 841?). In 823, the carefully drafted text of the treaty came into effect, after having been signed and sworn by both parties, each both according to their own custom and to the custom of the other side.

The text of the treaty was inscribed on three pillars, erected in the Chinese capital, on the frontier, and in Lhasa. Only the pillar in Lhasa in front of the Jokhang temple survives, where the bilingual inscription of the treaty and the names of the Tibetan and Chinese signatories still can be deciphered. The treaty replaced the one concluded in 783 confirming the new Tibetan conquests and the actual frontiers. The Tibetans and Chinese are treated as equals, and the treaty concludes by saying: "Tibetans shall be happy in Tibet and Chinese shall be happy in China." The treaty was kept by both sides for almost two decades.

Under the patronage of the *tsempo*, Buddhism spread and flourished throughout the empire. Many temples and monasteries were founded, and the number of monks increased. A great number of Buddhist texts were translated from Sanskrit, Chinese, and other languages. Numerous Tibetan manuscripts dating from that period found in a walled-up cave of the famous monastery of the "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas" near the oasis town of Dunhuang at the eastern end of the Silk Road give evidence of the translation activities.

Buddhist thought had also gained influence in the Tibetan government: the highest-ranking Tibetan official was a Buddhist monk. This fact was like a thorn in the flesh of those heads of Tibet's great noble clans who for centuries had tried to wrest power from the *tsempo*. The Great Monk and Great Councilor Pelyön who had so successfully negotiated the treaty of 821/823 was murdered. In 838 (or 841?), the *tsempo* shared his fate. Since he left no heir, his elder brother Ü Dumtsen, better known as Langdarma, ascended to the throne. The most popular account of his death in 842 says that a Buddhist monk killed him in order to put an end to his persecution of Buddhism. This "persecution" (for which there is no historical testimony) may have been the immediate cause, but, doubtless, the reason must be sought in the lack of central authority. After the *tsempo* was murdered, one of his wives gave birth to a son, and another likewise claimed the dead ruler to have been

the father of her son. Each had his partisans, and their struggle for power led to the disintegration of the empire. By the 860s, the Tibetan no longer dominated Gansu, and toward the end of that century, Tibetan domination of the Tarim basin also came to an end. The empire was partitioned between the two lines of heirs in the succession of the *tsenpo*, and there was no longer any central government.

This era when Tibet was a great military power, independent in every respect, with an extensive empire in Asia, ruled over by its *tsenpo*, who maintained international relations with and received embassies from China, the Arabs, and various Turkic states, is not well known. The renown of those centuries has given way to the perhaps more praiseworthy idea—equally rooted in that period—of Tibet as the “roof of the world,” a country where Buddhism has penetrated every aspect of life and survived irrespective of all political changes.

### *The Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368)*

*[A brief note is needed to fill the gap left by the Chinese authors between the Tibetan empire and the Yuan era.]*

*With the death of the last tsenpo (ca. 842), what the Tibetans call “the first diffusion of the doctrine” came to an end. Tibet broke up again into several principalities waging war against one another. The blossoming of Buddhism, at least in its monastic form, stopped in central Tibet, but continued in the west and in the northeast, leading to the “second diffusion of Buddhism” at the end of the tenth century (see Question 56).*

*Various schools of Tibetan Buddhism appeared at that time, composed of both monks and lay tantric practitioners. The inclusion of laypeople in this religious revival led to the transformation of the formerly warlike Tibet into a pious Buddhist country. Thanks to donations, the monasteries acquired prestige and economic power that foreshadowed both their political power and conflicts over that power. Later, the hegemony of the Sakyapas in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was replaced by that of the Phagmodrupas, until the Gelugpas gained control in the seventeenth century, with the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama.]*

*[Continuation of the Chinese answer:] In 1206, “the Mongolians of northern China . . . founded the Mongol Khanates.” After having de-*

stroyed several kingdoms in China, Genghis Khan and his descendants established the Yuan Dynasty in 1271.

As early as the 1240s, various political forces in Tibet had pledged allegiance to the Mongols; Tibet then became an administrative region under the Yuan. "In the following 700 years, Tibet remained under the jurisdiction of China's central governments."

#### ELLIOT SPERLING

The question of whether Tibet has been a country separate from China cuts right to the heart of the ideological difficulties that China has had to deal with in redefining itself, in moving from what was recognized by other members of the world community as an empire at the beginning of the twentieth century to a "people's republic" at mid-century. The Chinese authorities have made the ideological leap by setting forth a Maoist interpretation of history that dictates that China is and always has been a "multinational" state; and moreover that it is not and never has been an empire. This manner of contextualizing China's claims to Tibet postulates that neighboring states and peoples that China has conquered and assimilated have been actors in an inexorable historical process that destined them to be (a priori, in some cases) "integral parts of China," incapable of true nationhood on their own. This worldview is not very far removed from that of older imperial Chinese ideologies that held that the peoples beyond China's frontiers were essentially subnational—peoples not at a level of nation formation comparable to China's, who could not but gravitate submissively into the sphere of China's influence and domination. Thus, China's modern claims that neighboring peoples are nothing but China's own "national minorities" mesh very well with Chinese worldviews from earlier centuries. To a large extent, this is nothing but the assimilation of much of China's traditional international environment into the People's Republic of China (PRC) as its frontier lands. As such, it represents a significant political and ideological development for China; but this is not to say that the worldviews of the peoples thus incorporated into China have developed, or have foreseen developments, along remotely similar lines.

Tibet, as much as any other Inner Asian dominion of China, has had its history distorted by modern Chinese writers in order to conform to the ideological requirements of the modern Chinese state. Thus the statement in *100 Questions* that Tibet became a part of China during the Yuan period assumes that the reader agrees that the Mongols who conquered and ruled China considered themselves "Chinese" and established their empire as a

Chinese empire, both rather untenable propositions. Assuredly, Tibet was incorporated into the Mongol dominions, but this was in a manner distinct from the Mongol conquest of China. In the late 1240s, the Tibetan lama Sakya Pandita (Sapan), leader of the Sakyapa sect of Tibetan Buddhism traveled with his nephews to the court of the Mongol prince Godan and sent a letter back to other leading figures in Tibet urging that they submit to Mongol authority. The letter that he is held to have sent (in 1249) and the acquiescence that other Tibetans accorded to the imposition of Mongol domination, as described in it, are generally considered to have marked the beginning of Mongol rule over Tibet. The Mongol hold weakened considerably in the fourteenth century, and the Mongols were ultimately unable to maintain their rule in Tibet, other than nominally, after 1354, when their local Sakyapa representatives began to suffer serious substantive losses of their broad authority to the rising power of Changchub Gyeltsen, a sectarian leader of the Phagmodrupa subset of Tibetan Buddhism. These events are quite separate from the collapse of Mongol rule in China.

The submission of the Tibetans to the Mongols meant submission to the Mongol world empire. There is no doubt about the fact that Tibet was ruled, for the most part, by that branch of the Mongol empire based in China. There were also clear lines of influence between scattered areas of Tibet and the Mongols in Iran as well. However, the most telling indication of Tibet's status is the fact that the Yuan dynasty's official history (the *Yuanshi*, compiled a year after the dynasty collapsed), in detailing the geography of the Yuan realms, excludes Tibet from the relevant chapters. Clearly, Tibet, although under the domination of the Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty, was not attached by them to China, much less made an "integral part" of China. Interestingly enough, Chinese authors are either unable or unwilling to point to an actual act or decree that specifically designated Tibet "an integral part of China." Thus Chinese publications exhibit an inability to agree on when Tibet became a part of China: the *Beijing Review* (February 1988) has dated it to 1264; an article in *Social Sciences in China* (1984) dated it to Sakya Pandita's trip to Godan's court; and the "White Paper" published by the Information Office of the State Council of the PRC in the *Beijing Review* (September-October 1992), vaguely dates it to after the establishment of the Yuan central government (the same document dates the establishment of centralized Yuan rule to 1279). Evidently, the event that modern Chinese writers make so central to their arguments about China's claim to Tibet never registered among Yuan annalists and historiographers. There is a good reason for this, of

course: it never happened. Moreover, the assertion that Tibet has been an integral part of China since the Yuan period is clearly a modern creation; when China, Tibet, and Britain met at Simla in 1914 to discuss the Tibetan question (see Question 10), the official Chinese response to Tibetan claims about the status of Tibet stated that definite Chinese sovereignty over Tibet commenced only during the Qing dynasty, after the conclusion of the Gurkha war in 1792.

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SOME TIBETANS HAVE ARGUED THAT THE YUAN EMPEROR, KUBLAI KHAN, AND PAGBA, A LEADING TIBETAN LAMA OF THE SAGYA SECT, ONLY ESTABLISHED THE RELIGIOUS RELATIONSHIP OF "THE BENEFACTOR AND THE LAMA"; POLITICAL SUBORDINATION WAS NOT INVOLVED. IS THIS RIGHT?

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The authors deny this theory [implicitly sustained by Tibetan historiography]. They summarize Tibeto-Mongol relations from Genghis Khan's accession (1206) and his conquest of the Xixia (1227) and Jin (1234) kingdoms up to the relationships established between Kublai and Phagpa.

"After Kublai's accession to the throne in 1260" [actually to the position of Great Khan; he founded the Yuan dynasty after his conquest of China in 1276, taking the emperor name Shizu], he granted Phagpa the title of "State Tutor" and in 1264, he appointed him to head the Zongzhiyuan [renamed Xuanzhengyuan in 1288], "to handle Buddhist affairs across his empire, including the government and religious affairs of Tibet."

"At the Yuan court, Kublai Khan always regarded Pagba as his subject." Thus "the relationship between Kublai Khan and Pagba was primarily one of political subordination." There were also religious bonds between them, and only when preaching did Pagba occupy a higher seat than Kublai.

ELLIOT SPERLING

It is true, as 100 Questions states, that Tibet's relationship to the Mongol rulers of the Yuan was not limited to "priest-patron" links, as sometimes