

Treaty between Tibet and China AD. 821-822  
(Translation from the Tibetan text)

The Great King of Tibet, the Miraculous Divine Lord, and the Great King of China, the Chinese Ruler Huangdi, being in the relationship of nephew and uncle, have conferred together for the alliance of their kingdoms. They have made and ratified a great agreement. Gods and men all know it and bear witness so that it may never be changed; and an account of the agreement has been engraved on this stone pillar to inform future ages and generations. The Miraculous Divine Lord Trisong Detsen and the Chinese King Wen Wu Hsiao-te Wang-ti, nephew and uncle, seeking in their far-reaching wisdom to prevent all causes of harm to the welfare of their countries now or in the future, have extended their benevolence impartially over all. With the single desire of acting for the peace and benefit of all their subjects they have agreed on the high purpose of ensuring lasting good; and they have made this great treaty in order to fulfill their decision to restore the former ancient friendship and mutual regard and the old relationship of friendly neighbourliness.

Tibet and China shall abide by the frontiers of which they are now in occupation. All to the east is the country of Great China; and all to the west is, without question, the country of Great Tibet. Henceforth on neither side shall there be waging of war nor seizing of territory. If any person incurs suspicion he shall be arrested; his business shall be inquired into and he shall be escorted back.

Now that the two kingdoms have been allied by this great treaty it is necessary that messengers should once again be sent by the old route to maintain communications and carry the exchange of friendly messages regarding the harmonious relations between the Nephew and Uncle.

According to the old custom, horses shall be changed at the foot of the Chiang Chun pass, the frontier between Tibet and China. At the Suiyung barrier the Chinese shall meet Tibetan envoys and provide them with all facilities from there onwards. At Ch'ing-shui the Tibetans shall meet Chinese envoys and provide all facilities. On both sides they shall be treated with customary honour and respect in conformity with the friendly relations between Nephew and Uncle.

Between the two countries no smoke, nor dust shall be seen. There shall be no sudden alarms and the very word 'enemy' shall not be spoken. Even the frontier guards shall have no anxiety, nor fear and shall enjoy land and bed at their ease. All shall live in peace and share the blessing of happiness for ten thousand years. The fame of this shall extend to all places reached by the sun and the moon. This solemn agreement has established a great epoch when Tibetans shall be happy in the land of Tibet, and Chinese in the land of China. So that it may never be changed, the Three Precious Jewels of Religion, the Assembly of Saints, the Sun and Moon, Planets and Stars have been invoked as witnesses. An oath has been taken with solemn words and with the sacrifice of animals; and the agreement has been ratified.

If the parties do not act in accordance with this agreement or if they violate it, whichever it be, Tibet or China, nothing that the other party may do by way of retaliation shall be considered a breach of the treaty on their part. The Kings and Ministers of Tibet and China have taken the prescribed oaths to this effect and the agreement has been written in detail. The two Kings have affixed their seals. The Ministers specially empowered to execute the agreement have inscribed their signatures and copies have been deposited in the royal records of each party.

*The treaty is carved in Tibetan and Chinese on one side of a stone pillar near the Jo-Khang, Cathedral of Lhasa. On another side is a historical introduction in Tibetan only; and on the other two sides are bilingual lists of the names of the ministers who witnessed it, The texts have been edited in Ancient Historical Edicts at Lhasa (H. E. Richardson. Vol. XIX of the Prize Publication Edicts of the Royal Asiatic Society).*

*The translation of the Tibetan text of the treaty proper is a revision of the somewhat clumsy, literal rendering given in the above-mentioned publication.*

*The king of Tibet named in the treaty is better known as Ralpachen (815-841); and the Chinese Emperor is Mu Zong of the Tang dynasty (821-821). The frontier appears to have been not far to the west of the Kansu-Shensi border. Two translations of the Chinese text of the treaty can be seen in G. Timkowsky's *Travels of the Russia, Mission through China, etc.* London 1827 and one by S.W. Bushell in *JRAS* 1880.*