

Troubled Times

Two Difficult Centuries



Lhazang Khan



The 7th Dalai Lama receiving Mongol and Chinese guests



French map of 1778 showing the 'Kingdom of the Dalai Lama'

The 18th and 19th century witnessed one of the most troubled times in Tibet's history. After the Qosot Mongol chief, Lhazang Khan kidnapped the young Sixth Dalai Lama, he became extremely unpopular. The invasion of the Dzungar in 1717 however saw the end of Lhazang Khan's reign over Tibet. Three years later, the young 7th Dalai Lama entered Lhasa. He was accompanied by Manchu troops; this did not stop the internal strife.

In the following years, Miwang Pholanay played a constructive role in reducing the sectarian struggle and reorganising the Tibetan administration.



Amban's residence in Lhasa

In 1793, a 29-Point 'Regulations for Governanc' of Tibet was promulgated by Emperor Qianlong. It is today cited by Beijing as proof of the Manchus' control over Tibet. One of the major contentious issues was the role of the Ambans.

Rev. Huc and Gabet, the two French missionaries who visited Lhasa in 1846 however noted: "*The Government of Tibet resembles that of the Pope and the position occupied by the Chinese Ambassadors was the same as that of the Austrian Ambassador at Rome.*"



Emperor Qianlong portrayed as a Tibetan Lama



The Chinese 29-Point Regulation

The twenty crucial years between the death of a Dalai Lama and his successor assuming power exemplify the fragility of the Tibetan system of governance. It was murmured that the Chinese exploited this weakness as many Dalai Lamas died in their adolescence. The 19th century saw five Dalai Lamas.



Illustration of the Chinese 'recognition' of the 9th Dalai Lama



Chinese Amban and party