

TAXATION AND THE STRUCTURE OF A TIBETAN VILLAGE*

by
MELVYN C. GOLDSTEIN
Ohio

INTRODUCTION

Although academic interest in Tibetan affairs has increased of late, we still know relatively little about the structure of Tibetan society. Studies (e. g., Downs¹) continue to discuss aspects of 'village life', or 'peasants', or 'the families living in the village' as if only one type of village and only one basic type of village family were extant in Tibet. This however was not the case. Cassinelli and Ekvall present an even more distorted and erroneous picture when they talk of "subjects" and "allegiance".² These terms not only are misleading (as will be seen below) but also oversimplify the complex social structure that characterized traditional Tibet.

To understand Tibetan social organization and social processes cognizance of the different types of villages and the ascriptively differentiated statuses within these villages is of critical importance. Talking about 'mobility', for example, has little utility unless it is

* The data on which this study is based were collected during the course of a twenty month (1965-67) field study in a Tibetan refugee agricultural settlement in Mysore, India. The research was greatly facilitated as a consequence of the large number of informants available from specific areas. For example, there were about eighty persons encompassing all the main ascribed and achieved statuses from the village area discussed in this paper, as well as numerous others from neighboring villages.

For a brief discussion of the methodological techniques I employed, I refer the reader to the introduction of my paper: "Marriage Law in the Stem Family in Tibet," in D. Buxbaum (ed.), *The Role of Law in Modernizing Nations: A Case Study of Chinese Family Law and Social Change in Historical and Comparative Perspective*. University of Washington Press, (tentative publication date: 1970).

¹ James Downs. "Livestock, production and social mobility in high altitude Tibet", *American Anthropologist* 66: 1115-1119.

² C. W. Cassinelli and R. Ekvall. *A Tibetan Principality: the political system of Saskya*. Cornell University Press, 1969, pp. 77-79.

clear what type of serf, and what type of village unit is referred to. Unfortunately, most of the writings on Tibet do not make such critical distinctions. It is the objective of this paper, therefore to illustrate this structural complexity by focusing on the nature of taxation in a specific village and county in central Tibet.³ Through this examination of taxation the salient features of one important type of village as well as important aspects of the general social and political organization in Tibet will be illustrated.

SAMADA (*Sa mda'*)⁴

The areal focus for this paper is the village (*grong gseb*) and county (*tsho* or *rgya tsho*) of Samada. These were situated at an elevation of about 12,500 feet above sea level approximately forty miles southeast of the important city of Gyantse (*rgyal rtse*) which was the administrative center for the district (*rdzong*) of the same name of which Samada was a part. The village was located on an important traditional trade-communications network which ran between India-Sikkim-Bhutan and Lhasa and Shigatse (see maps 1 and 2, p. 5).

The region in which Samada was a part was characterized by an agropastoral subsistence pattern which is known in Tibetan as *sa-ma-dro*⁵ (*sa ma 'brog*). The distinguishing feature of this pattern was that it encompassed both agricultural production and the maintenance of livestock such as sheep, goats, yak, 'bri and *mdzo*. The *sa-ma-dro* pattern was thus an adaptation which combined aspects of both pastoral nomadism and agriculture, and when we talk of an agropastoral complex we refer to a very broad continuum which ranged from predominately agricultural areas to ones which were predominately nomadic. Samada represents the most typical type since the herding aspect of the economy was important but clearly secondary to the agricultural aspect. In fact, generally only the

³ Although I shall focus in this paper on a specific village complex, I believe - on the basis of substantial cross-checking with villagers from other areas in political Tibet - that the material presented here is applicable to all of central Tibet, and probably with some modifications also to Eastern Tibet.

⁴ The transcription of written Tibetan used in this paper follows that proposed by Turrell V. Wylie. "A standard system of Tibetan transcription", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 22: 261-267, 1959.

⁵ Tibetan words other than standard proper names are given in a rough phonetic notation which is indicated by hyphenation between the syllables.

richer village families were able to maintain large herds. Agriculture was the basic technique and, although individuals expressed the notion that the ideal mode of subsistence was neither solely agriculture nor solely nomadic but rather the *sa-ma-dro* way broadened to include trading, when asked to select only one of these modes they invariably chose agriculture.

Although Samada was situated at a high elevation, a number of crops were grown. The staple crop was barley (actually five or six varieties) but lentils (*srans ma*) in several varieties, radishes, turnips, mustard and potatoes were also grown. Like many other areas in Tibet, Samada was fortunate in having readily available sources of water power which they ably harnessed for irrigation purposes. Water was sometimes tapped directly from a stream and sometimes first collected in an irrigation pond from which it was later drawn. Great use was made of irrigation and the crops, – contingent of course on the amount of rainfall – were generally irrigated five or six times a year.

Fertilizing agents such as human excrement, domestic animal dung, silt from irrigation canals and lawn squares were universally used. Furthermore, annual winter forays were made by the larger families to the upland pasture areas to collect dung. The various types of dung were categorized as to potency, and then used on land which had also been categorized as to fertility in complicated patterns which also took into account the grade of seed used. Subsequently, yields varied considerably, but in general Samada obtained yields ranging from about ten times the amount of seed sown to at worst, about two times the seed sown. The families that had livestock generally hired their own shepherd, or – if they had only a small number of animals – placed them together with one of the larger herds to whose owner or shepherd they paid a fee.

As indicated above, the name Samada referred to two units which have been referred to as a 'village' and a 'county'. However, let me emphasize at the outset that the English names and glosses found throughout this paper, e. g. "county", are merely rough approximations used to facilitate discourse. The specific semantic content of the terms is presented in the text and it is to this that the reader should relate.

THE VILLAGE OF SAMADA

The village of Samada was a shung-gyu-ba (*gzhung rgyugs pa*) or government serf type corporate village containing about 250 residents of which only eight families (approximately 35-40 persons) had jural rights in the village corporation. With the exception of about 300 noble families, all laymen and laywomen in Tibet were serfs (*mi ser*) tied via ascription by parallel descent to a particular lord (*dpon po*) through an estate, in other words sons were ascribed to their father's lord but daughters to their mother's lord

There were three basic serf sub-statuses which were instrumental in establishing behavioral parameters and defining an individual's rights and obligations with respect to a broad range of activities.

The most prestigious serf status was that of tre-ba (*khral pa*) or "taxpayer" as it translates. The tre-ba numerically were the smallest category of villagers. They were characterized by being tied to agricultural land which they held hereditarily.⁶ They could not be unilaterally evicted from their land by their lord so long as they fulfilled formalized obligations, but concomitantly, could not unilaterally and permanently leave their land. Their name of "taxpayer" derives not from the fact that they were the only type of serf that paid "taxes", but rather from the fact that their tax obligation was the most varied and heaviest and in particular included the difficult corvée carrying tax. In general, tre-ba serfs held relatively large amounts of land but had very large tax obligations.

It is important to differentiate tre-ba on the basis of the type of lord they were attached to. One sub-type of tre-ba, the kind that this study is concerned with, were serfs of the central government in the immediate form of the local district (*rdzong*) headed by its Lhasa appointed District Commissioner (*rdzong dpon*). The other sub-type comprised those who had as their lord either aristocratic or religious-monastic units. The main difference between these two relates to the fact that the latter type were attached to estates whereas the former were self contained entities.

The two other major types of serfs were the mi-bo (*mi bogs*) holding dü-jung (*dud chung*) and the "tied" dü-jung. The term dü-jung literally translates as 'small smoke' or 'small household' and referred to the type of serfs who in general were distinguishable

⁶ This discussion does not take into consideration the nomadic tre-ba serfs.

from the tre-ba in that, on the one hand, they did not hold significant amounts of land and on the other, what they did hold was not as permanent as that of the tre-ba. Furthermore, they were not required to pay heavy taxes either in-kind or money, nor were they liable for the very difficult corvée animal carrying tax.

The "tied" type of dü-jung serfs were bound to estates in the same fashion as the tre-ba although, as mentioned above, they possessed only very small plots of land. They were almost always attached to either monastic or aristocratic estates on which they were the main source of corvée agricultural labor on the estate's (the lord's) demesne fields. Since they were not present in Samada, they will not be discussed further in this paper.

The second type of dü-jung is the mi-bo holding one. The key feature of this status was that it did not tie the incumbent to an estate. Mi-bo literally means "human lease", and the analogy aptly describes the nature of the status. The serf, in a manner analogous with the leasing of land, leased his freedom of movement from his lord. He was still tied to his lord through the estate but did not have to live there and work the lord's fields, although he did have to pay an annual fee to his lord, and often was liable for intermittent minor corvée obligations. The status was transmitted to same-sex offspring in the same fashion as the other serf statuses. The mi-bo holding serfs, then, were the only ones who had territorial mobility. They could go where they wanted and work at whatever and for whomever they desired.⁷

A shung-gyu-ba village such as Samada was a corporate entity which consisted of a formally delimited territorial area together with a specified number of corporate families having legal rights to that land, i. e., to membership in the corporation. The number of such families was always small (e. g., in Samada eight) although the total village population normally included large numbers of mi-bo holding dü-jung who also permanently resided within the territorial parameters of the village. These dü-jung had no jural rights in the village and lived there solely with the permission of the village administrative officials (i. e., the tre-ba).

The present boundaries of Samada were established in the land

⁷ For a more detailed examination of serfdom and the institution of mi-bo see M. C. Goldstein, "Serfdom and mobility: an examination of the institution of 'human lease' in traditional Tibetan society", *Journal of Asian History*, May, 1971 (in press).

settlement of 1847 (*me lug zhibs gzhung*)⁸ and Samada possessed an official copy of the parts of the settlement document relevant to it. The official boundary document⁹ consisted of local landmarks such as "horse saddle rock", which were connected by prepositions such as "straight from there", and so forth.

As was mentioned earlier, the shung-gyu-ba village of Samada differed from the tre-ba villages attached to aristocratic and monastic estates in that it was not directly a part of an estate. Samada's direct lord was the Gyantse district, but the district officials were far from the village and were really only concerned with the collection of taxes and the adjudication of disputes brought before them. So long as Samada paid its taxes the district administrators did not interfere in the internal administration of the village. In contrast, the estate attached villages had to contend with resident estate stewards and even with estate appointed village officials. Moreover, the government further viewed villages such as Samada as politico-economic corporations and levied taxes on the village as a collectivity rather than on the individual tre-ba families. It was left up to the tre-ba to arrange internally how the total village tax was going to be apportioned.

There were eight tre-ba families who held hereditary rights in the property and administration of the Samada corporation. These eight families held segments of the total land mass and these holdings comprised all the land, pasture and so forth of Samada. Although the size of each family's land holdings was recorded at the time of the settlement, over the years these amounts had changed some-

⁸ W. G. Surkhang, "Tax measurement and *lag 'don* tax", *Bulletin of Tibetology* 3: 15-28, gives a detailed description of these land settlements.

⁹ The actual boundary document for Samada as was told me from memory by the former headman follows: *gzhung rgyugs sa mda' ba'i phyi 'gro'i sa mtshams byang 'bras khus dgon pa dang sa mtshams lcong g.yang brag rtee nas thad drang brag rta sga gsham rdo gsum 'ju nas brgya lam stong gog khrid (or phred) spe rgya yur nas thad drang na thos po la sprad spe nag zam pa rnying pa nas shar khang 'khris chu yur rgyud khra 'dzoms be le la sprad gas steng pha bong dmar sngon nas thad drang spe nag jo mo'i la rtags nas rtee zla ba ral gri'i ze rgyud shar be re ba dang tsa mtshams g.yags pa brgya lam rgyud lho me long dang tsa mtshams la rdzas lho ma nas ze rgyud sang tshang pa dang sa mtshams dmar yig ri rtee rgyud ka shar ba dang tsa mtshams lcong mo la stag nas thad drang la rdzas dkar nag rgyud shur kha chen mo rgyud rtee rdza phyag rdor nas ze rgyud gshams dmar sbugs bong bu'i rna mchog nas 'dong sngon ri zur nas rgyud rde'u phur sgril tshur sgril nub phreng pa dang tsa mtshams rgyang rgyu la rgan ze rgyud rde'u phar sgril tshur sgril gam ru pa dang tsa mtshams snga chen ri rtee rgyud rde'u phar sgril tshur sgril//*

what due to such factors as the inability of some to fulfill their taxes, merger, and partition. However, it is necessary to emphasize that it was not legally permissible to alienate any of Samada's land to an outsider, i. e., to someone who was not a shung-gyu-ba serf from Samada. The land that each of these corporate families held was called tre-den (*khral rten*). Possession of it obligated them to fulfill a variety of taxes and was perceived as the "basis" (den) from which they paid their "taxes" (tre).

BASIC UNITS AND MEASURES OF TAXATION

The basic unit for the measurement of land relating to taxation was the gang (*rkang*). The gang was a land unit calculated by the amount of seed sowable in a delimited area, although the simple criterion of size was conjoined with other variables such as potential fertility of the soil and the overall climatic condition of the area. The establishment of such gang figures was usually done at one of the land settlements, for Samada, the one made in 1847. Taxes on land were theoretically based on these calculations but the important thing for the villagers was the final list of specific taxes and the amounts required, a copy of which the village possessed.

The gang calculated in the manner cited above was called a chi-gang (*phyi rkang*), that is, an "outer" or "central government gang". It applied to the village as a whole and Samada had as its "outer gang" one tax or dur-gang (*'dur rkang*) and five military or mag-gang (*dmag rkang*). These figures, however, meant very little to the villagers, even the village administrators, and they were actually unsure as to the relation between these units and the actual taxes. As mentioned above, it was the certified list of taxes Samada owed that interested the Samada tre-ba.

There was another type of gang unit, however, which did play a vital role in village affairs. This was the nang-gang (*nang rkang*) or "inner gang". The nang-gang unit was used internally by the villagers to relate the size of the land holdings to the share of the total village tax obligations, and Samada was divided into fourteen such "inner gang" units. Each family of tre-ba held land tenure documents (*lag 'dzin*) issued from the Gyantse district administration which enumerated their fields, the amount of seed each field took, and the total number of nang or "inner" gang the family held. The

breakdown of the fourteen inner gang between the eight families was as follows:

<i>Family</i>	<i>Nang-gang</i>	<i>Family;</i>	<i>Nang-gang</i>
Mao	3 1/4	Shalo	1 1/2
Gyana:	3	Gyanatrangga	1
Genba:	2	Tagba:	3/4
Noba:	1 3/4	Tagsur:	3/4

Whereas the gang was the fundamental land measurement unit for taxes, the basic volume measure for payment was the kay (*khal*). Although there were many different local kay units which varied considerably in volume, the government maintained a standardized kay unit which it used in the collection of its taxes. This was called den-tsing ka-ru (*bstan 'dzin mkhar ru*) or bo (*'bo*) and was equivalent to somewhere between 27 and 33 pounds according to various authors¹⁰ for one kay of barley, but since the kay was a unit of volume, and since different crops differed in weight no single figure precisely suffices.

In order to illustrate the approximate land size a tre-ba family possessed, let us examine the land holdings of the Nopa (*nor skyid*) family as cited in their land tenure document which the head of the family reconstructed from memory. The fields mentioned amounted to about 90 % of all his fields and included all his larger fields:

gzhung rgyugs sa mda' nor skyid kyi khral rkang geig dang bzhi ca gcig¹¹ kyi sa cha thob gras / shar che mo la son khal 80 dpal skyes can la son khal 150 zam gdong son khal 3 shos che gong 'og gnyis la son khal 8 ra zan son khal 15 gyem a skyid mu rur son khal 20 yu ra lho ma son khal 25 bde chen son khal 10 ba rim son khal 8 chu kham ma son khal 10 spe rang son khal 5 lhas kham son khal 20 sha'ul son khal 10 spe zung son khal 5 zhing mo che son khal 30 kyana phu dkyil shos son khal 25 bag chung son khal 3 ngan rgon son khal 9 spel dmar kyid son khal 5 brag gdong son khal 5 sa ri bi khog son khal 3 ka rder che mo son khal 30 khyim spe son khal 12 stong rgyab son khal 6 rgya rbal che mo son khal 20 zing spe zing krug ma li gnyis la son khal 25 ri sog gong 'og gsum la son khal 10 spe ham son khal 10 sngon du kyang bu spe grang gis 'dzin pa khral rkang phyed kyi thob

¹⁰ Surkhang, *op. cit.*, p. 18 cites 27 pounds; Sir C. Bell, *The people of Tibet*, Oxford, 1928, p. 84 cites 33 pounds; W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: a political history*, Yale, 1967, p. 334 cites 32 pounds.

¹¹ It is interesting to note that although this family held 1 3/4 nang-gang (cf. p. 12) only 1 1/4 are cited in their document. This illustrates the point I was making on p. 11 about the internal fluctuation of land.

khong gsar du byung ba zla rgyang son khal 26 ba 'ul son khal 5 bcas dang ri tsa thob gras snga chen dngul srang 115 snga chung dngul srang 5 rkyen chen srang 5 she lung nas srang 10 phrabs rang nas srang 5 du lung srang nas 115 shar sprin nub sprin nas srang 115 mal bzang nas srang 3 lho chung nas srang 5 rdza phu 'dud nas srang 6 bcas bdag 'thus lag 'dzin du khral spyi tshang 'dzoms nas me lug zla tshes la //

A list of the fields listed above according to amount of seed (son) kay each took follows:

<i>Name of field</i>	<i>Seed (son) kay per field</i>	<i>Name of field</i>	<i>Seed kay per field</i>
dpal skyes can:	150	spa ham:	10
shar che mo:	80	ri sog gong	
zhing mo che:	30	'og (3):	10
ka rder che mo:	30	shos che gong	
zla rgyand	26	'og (2):	8
zing spe zing krug: ma		ba rim	8
li (2):	25	ngan rgon:	6
yu ra lha ma:	25	stong rgyab:	6
kyang phu dkyil shos:	25	spe rang:	5
brgya rbal che mo:	20	spe zung:	5
lhas kham:	20	spel dmar	
gyem a skyid mu ra:	20	kyid:	5
ra zan:	15	brag gong:	5
khyim spe:	12	ba 'ul	5
bde chen:	10	zam gdong:	3
chu kham ma:	10	bag chung:	3
sha 'ul:	10	sa ri bi khog:	3
	<u>508</u>		<u>82</u>

In addition to these (and the other 10% of his fields) the family also has rights to ten pasture areas.

Agricultural statistics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1967, quotes the average amount of barley sown per acre in the U. S. as 1.59 bushels, but also indicates that with irrigated land this increases to about 2.5 bushels per acre. Taking the latter figure and then using it with an approximate weight of 27 pounds for a kay of barley, I arrived at an acre total of 146 acres for the 650 son kay of land Nopa held. This total roughly agrees with the acreage total Nopa estimated he had, "a little over 100 acres". It also generally agrees with the statements of the other tre-ba from Samada who estimated that the acreage ranged from about 20 acres for the smallest families to about 300 acres for the largest.

The Tibetan term for tax is *tre (khral)*. Every *tre* obligation was considered to derive from some "basis" (*rten*) which invariably was land in the form of either arable fields or pasture acres. There were two categories of taxes for which taxpayers were liable. One of these was the tax paid to one's immediate lord from whom the tax "basis" was obtained. For aristocratic serfs this was the aristocratic family and for the *shung-gyu-ba* serfs it was the district of which they were a part. These taxes, in keeping with the other terminology, were called *nang-tre (nang khral)* or "inner" tax. The second type of tax was one paid to the central government. The central government claimed ultimate ownership of all land in Tibet, and consequently claimed the right to tax all those who held such land. The nature and amount of such taxes, however, varied considerably and was an important facet of the struggle between bureaucratic centralization and feudal decentralization. For the government *shung-gyu-ba* serfs, however, this matter was not controversial, and they were the main source of the central government's taxes.

Taxes in Tibet included both *corvée (rkang 'gro)* service as well as payments in-kind and money (*lag 'don*). *Corvée* services, in turn, included *wu-lag ('u lag)* or human *corvée* service, *ta-wu (rta'u)* or riding animal *corvée*, and *kay-ma (khal ma)* or carrying animal *corvée*, and Tibetans normally referred to these specific types rather than to the generic *rkang 'gro* term. With this background let us now examine the actual tax obligation of *Samada*.

TAX OBLIGATION OF SAMADA

One of the main groups of taxes was the *seires* known as "district inner tax" (*rdzong nang khral*). These were paid to the village's immediate lord, the district, and were predominately taxes in kind or money.

DISTRICT INNER TAX

1. Dge rtsam	10 kay of parched barley flour
2. Lnga mchod	15 kay of barley
3. 'Bab tsa	75 gya ma of hay
4. Shog rgyugs	2 kay of a poisonous flower
5. Dngos rigs	52 sang (money)
6. Sha khral	92 sha kay, 8 nya-ga, 6 por
7. Khang nyer	1 man and his expenses

1. *Dge rtsam*: a tax which went for the feeding of the monks of the *Dpal 'khor chos sde* monastery in Gyantse during the *sger rtsa* religious prayer festival in the Tibetan fourth month. Although the tax was listed above in terms of barley flour, actually it had been converted into money. Moreover, since it fell at an odd time (taxes normally fell due on the 25th of the 10th Tibetan month) it was paid initially by one of the hereditary district clerks who later was paid by Samada. This arrangement with the district clerk (from the *Bya nyal* family) occurred also with a number of other taxes in this category.

2. *Lnga mchod*: a tax used to subsidize the prayer festival on the 25th of the 10th month commemorating the death of *Tsong kha pa*, the founder of the ruling Gelugpa sect. Like the first tax, it was also paid by the district clerk who was later repaid by Samada according to the price of barley at the time of purchase.

3. *'Bab tsa*: a tax amounting to about thirty standard pack animal loads (*to po*).

4. *Shog rgyugs*: a tax required 2 kay of a flower Tibetans simply called "poison flower" (*dug gi me tog*). The villages thought this flower was used in the preparation of paper. This tax again was initially paid by the district clerk mentioned above.

5. *Dngos rigs*: In the old tax books a number of utensil items were listed in addition to the basic foodstuff taxes, e. g., some typical items were iron rings, needles, and leather ropes. These had been converted into money and Samada was required to pay 60 sang (*srang*).¹² Later, a reform lessened the amount by $\frac{1}{4}$ making the actual total 52 sang, an amount which up until recent times was substantial.

6. *Sha khral*: The meat tax of Samada was one of the harder of the district inner taxes. The tax was measured in a separate meat kay measure. The district officials would not allow any single sheep to count more than 4 such kay regardless of their size. The tax was equivalent to about 25 sheep. These were driven by the villagers to an innkeeper in Gyantse with whom they had a long standing arrangement. The innkeeper slaughtered the sheep for them and kept the internals and the head but had to provide lodging for the villagers.

¹² Surkhang, *op. cit.*, 27, cites the following breakdown:

1 *srang* = 10 *zho* (sho); 1 sho = 10 *skar* (gar); 1 *rdo tshad* (do tahey) = 50 sang.

In about 1860 in Lhasa he says that one kay of grain cost 3 sho (there is an office in Lhasa which goes by the old rate); in 1950 1 kay = about 20 sang; in 1958 1 kay = about 150 sang.

7. *Khang gnyer*: this was a corvée tax which required that the village maintain one person in the district headquarters who served as a district messenger (in rotation with twelve others like him) and was responsible for the upkeep of one section of the district building. He was paid a salary by the village which also had to pay for any repairs.

SERCHOG TAXES

1. <i>Mar khral</i> (butter)	46 mar kay
2. <i>Sha khral</i> (meat)	2½ carcasses
3. <i>Bal khral</i> (wool)	5 kay of wool
4. <i>Snam khral</i> (wool cloth)	4 sang, 8 sho
5. <i>'Bru khral</i> (barley)	130 kay (converted to money)

The Serchog (*Gser lcog*) taxes went to a part of the great *Dpal 'khor chos sde* monastery in Gyantse, although the administration of the estate was actually in the hands of an aristocrat who leased the estate from the government.

1. *Mar khral*: was paid in a special butter kay which weighed about 6½ lbs. each kay. Like the sang (cf. footnote 12) inflation hit this unit. In 1860, 1½ kay of butter cost about 1 sang, but by 1950 in Lhasa 1 kay had risen to 20 sang. In 1958 that same 1 kay was worth about 300 sang. The 46 kay of butter, therefore, represented a significant expense, especially since the kay unit the monastery used was larger than the standard government one for which the above mentioned figures correspond.

Item 2, 3, and 4 are self explanatory.

5. *'Bru khral*: Although the tax was listed as 130 kay of grain, Samada had obtained permission to convert that amount into money. The village held an old document issued by the Council of Ministers (*Bka' shag*) which stipulated the conversion rate at 6 sho per kay, and specified that that rate could not be raised.

This last tax became involved in a controversy during the reign of the Regent Taktra (*Stag brag*: 1940-50). After a reexamination of Samada's lands and taxes, the tre-ba of Samada were informed by the local District Commissioner that the exchange rate of six sho was insufficient since inflation had rendered that amount a mere pittance. Henceforth, they were told, they had to pay the 130 kay of barley in-kind. In reply to that, the tre-ba of Samada told the government that they had no 'basis' (*brten*) for paying that tax.

They said that at first this tax to Serchog was made as an expression of faith and not on the basis of land held. They told the government to check their *sa leb rtsis* record book (for lands) and insisted that no land basis would be found for these taxes. In addition to that, they presented the old document from the Council of Ministers that stated that the conversion rate could not be altered. As a result of these arguments, the Regent (and indirectly the aristocratic family who administered the estate) was unable to alter the tax. This incident is illustrative of the government-shung-gyu-ba relationship and shows the extent to which the rights of the serfs could be upheld when they acted in concert.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TAXES IN KIND AND MONEY

1. *Rgya shing brngos gsum* 3 sho
2. *Bogs ma* (lease) 126 sang

1. *Rgya shing brngos gsum*: In the past this was the basic central government tax. However, as the years went by the amount remained the same and inflation rendered the tax insignificant.

2. *Bogs ma*: This is really a lease fee, but since it relates to Samada's land I include it here.

For generations, the tre-ba of Samada had been using a number of empty fields within their borders to graze their cattle. In the first decade of this century, on the advice of the Emperor of China's representative in Lhasa, the Amban, the Agricultural Office was created to look after 'extra people and extra lands (*mi lhag sa lhag*)'. The Tibetan government claimed ultimate ownership of all land in Tibet and in accord with this, the new office promulgated (via the Council of Ministers and rulers) a rule stating that any agricultural land that had lain fallow (the 'extra lands') for ten years could be put into use by anyone after they informed the Agriculture Office and obtained its permission. For the first three years the user did not have to pay any taxes on this new land, and after that had to pay only 1/10 of the yield to the Agriculture Office and, if there was an owner, 1/20 of the yield or 1/20 of the land to the owner as compensation. These lands were called *gsar 'bol zhu ba*. The new user of the land received a permit (*lag 'khyer*) from the office and did not have to pay other taxes on the land. The land, however, was not considered as the hereditary property of the user. Rather, it was perceived

as *bo-ma* or leased land, the final rights of disposition therefore remaining with the owner, the government. It was, however, possible for the user to eventually petition the Council of Ministers to obtain permanent title to the land. As the following case illustrates, a large number of disputes arose out of this new rule since the old owner usually tried to block the petitioner. On one occasion, the *chan-tsö* (*phyag mdzod*) or Chief Steward of the powerful aristocratic family of Doring (*Rdo ring*) asked the Agriculture Office for use of the fallow lands being used as pasture in Samada. As soon as the Samada villagers heard about this they also petitioned that office to grant them the use of the land and a dispute broke out. The government finally settled the dispute by proclaiming that the village of Samada could retain possession of the land but they had to repay the *chan-tsö* all the expenses he had incurred as a result of the litigation. Moreover, Samada had to pay the Agriculture Office a fixed amount of *bo-ma* (lease payment) totaling 130 *kay* of grain (which was converted to 126 *sang*).

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TAXES IN CORVÉE SERVICE

1. <i>Dmag khral</i> (military)	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ men
2. <i>ra'u khal ma</i> (transportation)	no limit
3. <i>Dud gnam la btang tshad shog</i>	no limit
4. <i>Btsun khral</i> (monk)	irregular

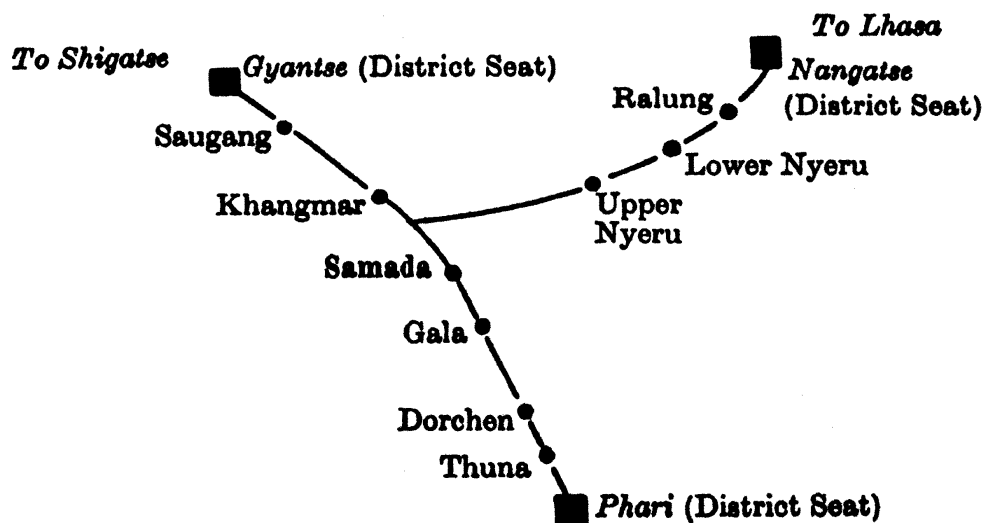
1. *Dmag khral* or military tax. We mentioned above that Samada had five *mag-gang* or military gang in the government record books. For these five *mag-gang* they had to supply five soldiers to the *Gya-jong* (*Rgya-sbyong*) regiment (the first Tibetan regiment which had originated during the time of *Miwang-Polhane* (*Mi dbang Pho lha nas*) in the early eighteenth century) as well as one and one-quarter soldiers for the *Shi-na* (*Bzhi na*) levy for the *Gu-sung* (*Sku srung*) regiment. (The *Shi-na* levy meant that for every four *mag-gang* one soldier had to be supplied.) Samada's total military tax was, therefore, six and one-quarter soldiers.

The *tre-ba* collectively hired men to serve for them, paying their expenses and salary. Until about 1933 they paid nine sheep carcasses and nine *sang* per man. However, during the time of the *Reting Regent* (1934-40), the soldiers demanded their salary be paid in cash and received eight *do-tse* or 400 *sang* per man. This

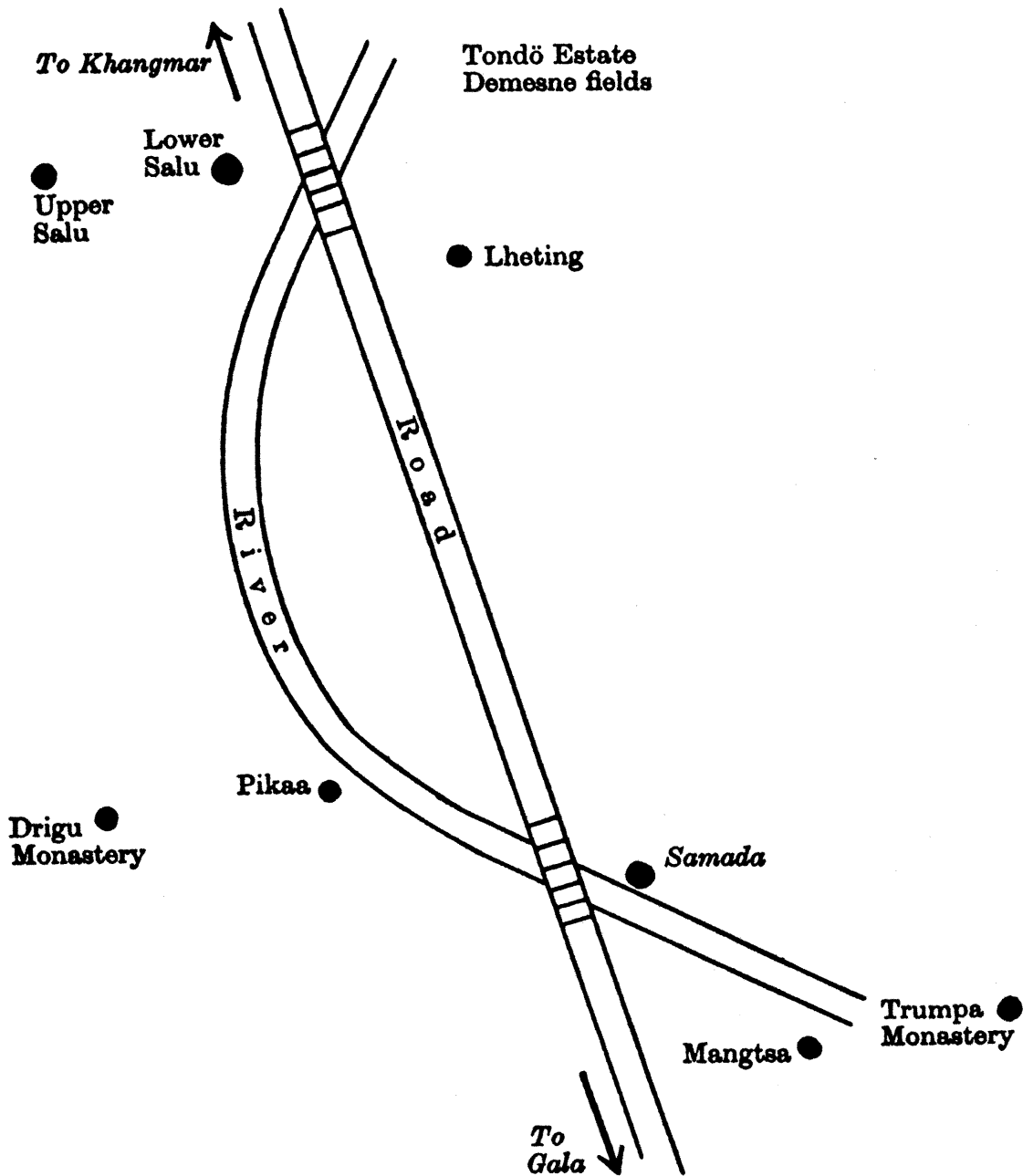
amount kept increasing and at the time of the Chinese invasion of 1950-51, the salary was forty do-tse (2000 sang) a year or about 100 kay of grain. The village also had to supply the soldiers with clothes, and later, even bedding. In addition to this private salary, the government provided the soldiers with a salary in parched barley flour (a few kay a month) and some money (the exact amount varied with regiments according to such things as whether the regiment gave daily soup and tea).

2. The central government transportation-carrying corvée tax was organized through the *tsho* or county administrative unit. The *tsho* was a small territorial unit which consisted usually of a few contiguous villages. It functioned solely in relation to the maintenance of the sa-tsig (*sa tshig*) corvée transportation network which extended to all parts of the polity. This transportation-communication network consisted of hundreds of stations (*sa tshig*) whose function was to provide animals and persons to transport goods and persons to the next sa-tsig (station). The distances between these stations varied, the shortest one I know of being about eight miles, and the longest about 25 miles. Along these routes government-sanctioned goods, communiques and officials were transported.

The sa-tsig obligation required a variety of services, the most important of which were the provision of 1.) kay-ma (*khal ma*) or carrying animals, and 2.) da-wu (*rta 'u*) or riding animals. Because of the importance of these two types of services, Tibetans generally referred to the tax simply as da-wu kay-ma. However, there were other obligations. In addition to these animals, the villagers had to



Map 1. Stations on Corvée Transportation Route in Vicinity of Samada



Map 2. Samada and the Surrounding Settlements

provide, depending on the specifications in the documents (*lam yig*), firewood, lodging, and persons to load, unload and accompany the goods to the next sa-tsig station at either Khangmar or Gala (see map 1).

The tsho of Samada consisted not only of the village of Samada but also of the village of upper Salu (which was a part of the Phala aristocratic family's *Grong stod* estate), and two tre-ba families attached to the monastic estate of Dri-gü ('*Bras khud*) monastery

(see map 2). The basis for the calculation of this corvée obligation was twenty four inner gang units. Fourteen of these were held by Samada, nine by upper Salu, and one by the monastery's serfs. The obligation to provide such services was proportional to the number of nang-gang, thus, Samada was responsible for 58.5 % of the tax, upper Salu for 37.5 % and Dri-gü for 4 % of the tax.

In order to command this corvée service, a person had to possess a document called a *lam-yig*. Lam-yig were issued primarily by the Council of Ministers (prior approval of the ruler was not needed) and also by the Regent (using his own seal) and the Dalai Lama (using his own seal). The Provincial Governors (*Spyi khyab pa*) could also issue lam-yig, but only for their province. The Trade Agents (*Tshong spyi*) sometimes issued them but only in relation to trade matters. These lam-yig specified what the holder could demand, e. g. the amount of riding and carrying animals that had to be provided. Before presenting the lam-yig to the villagers (actually to the village headman), the holder had to present it to the District Commissioner for his validation that process being called *tong-tsin* (*thong 'dzin*). Without the *tong-tsin*, the villagers did not have to perform the tax, but on the other hand the District Commissioner could not refuse to authorize a lam-yig. There were two general types of lam-yig: the permanent variety and the single-instance variety. While the single-instance holders can not be specified, the permanent ones for Samada will be cited below. Before enumerating these, mention should be made that any loss or breakage – a significant factor since the roads were bad and often flanked by precipitous drops – had to be repaid by the particular villager doing the tax. Also, during the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's reign a new rule was promulgated stating that each user of such carrying and riding animals had to pay 2 sho per kay-ma or carrying animal and 4 sho per ta-wu or riding animal. Although the villagers only had to furnish the specified amount of animals, the users often claimed that such and such an office needed the goods at once and urged them to furnish extra ones. The villagers usually did this with the idea that when loss or breakage occurred they could remind the users of their former extra services.

For the county of Samada the main permanent lam-yig holders were: a) *Ding ri 'Bras khang*: this tax was for a large amount of rice which came to Samada via Gala once in the sixth or seventh Tibetan month and once in the eleventh or twelfth month. The rice

eventually went to the *Bla phyag* office in Lhasa. Their lam-yig entitled them to come four times a year with 150–160 carrying animals each time, but they had that emended so that they could come twice a year but levy 300 carrying animals each time. Accompanying the rice loads were four *dö-gyab* (*dod rgyab*) or caravan bosses sent by the *Ding ri* office. When they arrived, housing had to be arranged for them. The general arrangement was that the three village units took turns: for every fourteen days Samada supplied the house and so forth, Salu did nine days and Dri-gü one day. Along with the house, the provider had to supply firewood, fodder, bed, but not food. In addition to the 300 carrying animals they had to provide 4 ta-wu (riding animals). These 300 animals were divided on the 14–9–1 basis and then internally on the village's nang-gang basis. If a family did not have enough animals to take his share of the load in one trip he had to either hire animals or ask (and/or bribe) the caravan bosses to let them do it in several trips. Three trips was the maximum permitted. Usually if the carrying animals amounted to more than ten animals for a single family, it was done in two trips. For example, for an order for 300 carrying animals, Samada with 14 nang-gang would have had to send 174 animals. From this, the Nopa family with their 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ nang-gang had to send about 22 animals. Moreover, the villagers usually sent two men for every 15 animals. The *Ding ri* office was also entitled to a return trip but this usually did not require many carrying animals.

b) *Phag ri 'Bras khang*: they came twice a year (once in the eleventh month and once in the twelfth month) and used about 200 carrying animals. On the return trip, however, they required 300 carrying animals. However, since this occurred in spring when the animals were in poor condition due to agricultural work and the dearth of fodder, this was one of the hardest of the animal corvée taxes.

c) *Bsam yas Dkar me*: theoretically this lam-yig was for the transportation of butter for butter lamps at the *Bsam yas* (Samye) monastery. However, the command over the tax was leased out by the monastery to traders who paid them in money for the use of the lam-yig. All of this was administered by a large family in Lhasa who had to send a fixed cash amount to the monastery. These caravans came up once from Gala and once back using about 200 carrying animals each way. They did not come at any set times since that depended on which trader leased the right and what types of items he was transporting.

d) *Shog grub*: this was paper which was being transported to Lhasa and Gyantse from *Phag ri* and totaled about 200 carrying animals.

e) *'Brug pa La phyag*: this was a big Bhutanese family which held, until the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's time, four or five lag-gyer (*lag 'khyer*) which were documents like lam-yig but usually related to an individual's exemptions. Each of these lag-gyer was good for about 40-50 carrying animals.

f) At New Year's time there were usually emergency shipments of dried fruits from *Phag ri* and *Gro mo* for Lhasa that had to be transported by day and night to ensure their arrival in Lhasa before New Year's day.

The above holders of permanent lam-yig were the largest of those who passed through Samada. But in addition to these there were many small irregular shipments which came from various government offices, as well as a variety of officials travelling with lam-yig, some of whom were regular like the postmen (*sbrag pa*) and the government messengers (*e drung*) but most of whom were irregular.

The arrangement for all of these corvée taxes in the county was the responsibility of one of the two gen-bo (headmen) of Samada. In general, if the county included shung-gyu-ba, their gen-bo had the overall responsibility for organizing the tax. The gen-bo had to maintain records of who had done what sa-tsig taxes in the county, whose turn it was on any particular day, and also had to make sure that the documents (lam-yig and tong-tsin) were in order when the users initially brought them to him. This performance of the sa-tsig transportation tax by the shung-gyu-ba was one of the most important services they provided the government and in a number of cases, villages were specially created along major trade routes so as to facilitate this corvée movement of goods.

A similar corvée levy was the tsong-gye (*rdzong 'khyer*) or literally, 'district carrying' levy. Unlike the sa-tsig levy which was the kind of tax that Tibetans called go-bab (*sgo 'bab*) or 'one that lands at the door', the tsong-gye required animals from all over the district to be assembled at the district headquarters (in this case Gyantse). From there large shipments of goods were transported to the next district's headquarters. This levy was irregular and could occur at any time. It was called by the District Commissioner and administrated by local district officials called Tsho-pön (*Tsho dpon*).

The general practice was for the District Commissioner, on the basis of the load's size, to issue an order to the Tsho-pön telling him

to assemble, e. g., 600 carrying animals. The Tsho-pön then in turn issued an order to all the *tsho* or counties in the district for the needed amounts. However, since this meant travelling to the next district, most villages preferred to let the Tsho-pön arrange the transport himself and paid him in cash.

3. *Dud gnam la btang tshad shog*: this was a universal, though relatively minor, corvée tax which literally translates as "whoever sends smoke to the sky, come!" This tax fell on all households whether tre-ba or dü-jung and was activated on rare occasions for special work projects such as repairing major irrigation canals. It required one person from every household to appear at the specified time.

The last tax we shall mention here was the one called tsün-tre (*btsun khral*) or sometimes tra-tre (*grwa khral*) both of which however, gloss as 'monk tax'. This tax referred to the right of monasteries, in the case of Samada, dri-gü monastery, to take children from their locality when the monastery's monk population could not be maintained at some specified level via voluntary entrance. There were two customary norms for this 'monk tax':

- a) for tre-ba families the norm was that if there were three sons, the middle one should become a monk (*bu gsum bar ma*).
- b) for dü-jung families the norm was more oppressive in that even if there were only two sons in a family the monastery claimed the right to make one, the older, a monk. Concerning this tax, not only were the tre-ba better off in terms of their obligation, but they were able to evade their obligation much more easily than the generally poorer dü-jung families.

Taxes in Samada, as indicated earlier, were paid primarily according to the number of nang-gang of land each tre-ba family held. A family holding 2 (of the 14) nang-gang therefore was responsible for 2/14 of the total tax of the Samada corporation. However, an attempt was made to compensate for other types of non-landed wealth through the mechanism of a biannual reapportionment known as "head count (*mgo sgrangs*)". This reapportionment operated in terms of a sub-unit of the local nang-gang called a phu-lu. Six phu-lu equalled one gang and in Samada the following items equalled one phu-lu: 75 sheep, or 105 goats, or 22 yak, 'bri, bulls, mdzo and cows, or one newly constructed house, or one person over eighteen. For each such phu-lu a fee of one sang two sho was required. This money was kept separately in a village fund (called *spyi*

gam or "common box") which was used for village needs such as the salaries of the *gen-bo* (see below) and *khang-nyer*, and expenses incurred in litigation concerning the entire village. This biannual reapportionment was important since on the one hand, one of the clearest differences between wealthy and poor *tre-ba* was the former's possession of very large herds, and on the other hand, one of the first indications of economic decline for a family was the dwindling or loss of their herds.

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF SAMADA

Shung-gyu-ba villages like Samada operated within a framework of jural inequality between the *tre-ba* and *dü-jung* strata and jural equality within the *tre-ba* stratum. *Dü-jung* were always subordinate to *tre-ba*, and *tre-ba* were all equal.

The actual decision making processes in the village corporation were restricted solely to the *tre-ba*, in Samada, therefore, to the eight families mentioned earlier. Policy decisions affecting the village required the agreement of each of these families and when the *tre-ba* family heads met together (in what amounted to a village council) consensus was required before action could be taken. If unanimity was not reached, the matter in question had to be taken to officials (or important individuals) outside of the village for either mediation or adjudication. These village meetings took place regularly to deal with recurrent matters such as tax payments, but also, and probably more often, were convened on an *ad hoc* basis whenever the need arose for the village to take a stance on some issue.

The day to day administration of village affairs, however, was handled by two officials called *gen-bo* ("elder"). These two officials were appointed by the village council from among the *tre-ba* family heads for indefinite terms, but the village council clearly retained the right to remove them from office. One of the two *gen-bo* primarily was responsible for internal affairs in the village, particularly for the organization and administration of the complex and continual *corvée* carrying tax (*da-wu kay-ma*). The other *gen-bo* primarily functioned as the representative for Samada in dealings with officials and individuals outside of the village area. The two *gen-bo* were paid only nominal salaries and, in Samada at least, could not accumulate wealth through their position. That this was not an

exceptional situation can be seen from the following example. All shung-gyu-ba villages had officials equivalent to the gen-bo in Samada, but their modes of recruitment, even within the Gyantse district, varied from hereditary transmission to a system wherein each tre-ba family head rotated holding the position. In one of the former type villages (*Phye 'brog*) the hereditary official considered the office so burdensome that he actually litigated to force the other tre-ba share in the administrative duties.

But the authority of the gen-bo was clearly limited. They were the *agents* of the corporation, of the tre-ba families, and had no right or authority to unilaterally make policy decisions affecting the other tre-ba. The relationship between these gen-bo and the other tre-ba is aptly illustrated in the common whereby the tre-ba selected delegates (*'thus mi*) to accompany the gen-bo when he went either to represent them or to transact business for them at the district headquarters. Although ostensibly these delegates were sent to facilitate the gen-bo in his work, tre-ba quite openly stated that the underlying reason was to ensure that he was representing them properly and to their best advantage.

However, while the gen-bo had no formal authority over the other tre-ba they did normally exert considerable influence over policy decisions. This influence derived in part from their personal character and achievements and in part from their economic stature. The position of gen-bo was prestigious and commanded respect from the other tre-ba. It implied a set of highly valued skills and qualities such as literacy, verbalness, intelligence, fairness, the ability to get along with others and, generally, success in the management of one's own land and family. Although gen-bo were selected normally from the middle or well-to-do families, wealth by itself was not the dominant criterion. Without the accompanying personality traits listed above, the position could not be obtained in Samada. But because the gen-bo were economically stable, they were relatively free from the potential pressures of the wealthy tre-ba and conversely, were able to exert additional pressures on the poorer families to bring them into line.

The above limitations on authority, however, were not relevant for the relationship between the gen-bo (as agents of the tre-ba) and the numerous resident mi-bo dü-jung. In theory, these dü-jung were the concern of their lord (from whom they held mi-bo) but the fact of residing on land held by the village corporation placed

them in a very vulnerable position and the gen-bo actually exercised tremendous power over them. Gen-bo adjudicated disputes between dü-jung, issued fines and even in some instances carried out corporal punishment. The gen-bo (and tre-ba) clearly dominated the resident dü-jung.

But what of these dü-jung? What role did they play in the maintenance of the village and in the social system in general?

THE ROLE OF THE DÜ-JUNG IN THE VILLAGE OF SAMADA

The dü-jung provided an indispensable labor source without which the entire shung-gyu-ba village system and consequently the government's provincial administrative system could not have operated. The seventy-five or so dü-jung families in Samada provided not only the bulk of agricultural field labor but also all the various occupational specialities from crafts such as blacksmithing to untouchable occupations such as corpse carrying. Still, it is clear that agriculture provided the basic source of their livelihood, even for those who practiced a trade.

The dü-jung obtained their livelihood primarily by leasing arable plots from tre-ba and from day-wage labor for the tre-ba. The former mode, however, was clearly the single more important subsistence pattern and stood at the heart of the complex economic strategies related to the tre-ba/dü-jung relationship.

The most common type of leased land was called a "work field" (*las zhing*) in Tibetan. In this type of arrangement one or more plots of agricultural land were leased for an agricultural season by

But all labor was not negotiated in a free market environment. The tre-ba of Samada were also able to use one type of mi-bo dü-jung serfs in certain contexts to guarantee their labor supply. The type of serf I am referring to was called a "common serf" or chi-mi (*spyi pa'i mi ser*) with the "common" denoting not the sense of low prestige but rather of collective. Chi-mi were the serfs of the village as a corporate entity.¹⁸

One of the ways in which this was accomplished was through the institution known as tre-ro (*khral rogs*) or "helper to the taxpayer". Tre-ro were resident chi-mi serfs of Samada who were generally poor

¹⁸ See Goldstein, *op. cit.*

and who the village collectively forced to work for specific tre-ba families on the basis of the tre-bas' share of the tax burden. The chi-mi dü-jung serf had no say in the matter, although they did receive the standard daily-wage rate for their labor. Similarly, tre-ba used the resident chi-mi as a source from which to obtain soldiers. Young, unmarried chi-mi were liable for service as the village's hired soldier, but again they were paid a salary in the same fashion as someone hired from the outside.

Another mechanism by which dependent labor was obtained came into existence during the first decades of this century after the newly created Agricultural Office commenced issuing mi-bo documents at very low rates to anyone who had successfully run away from his lord for three or more years. Although at first this was extremely popular among serfs, eventually a practice called kab-gong-ser (*khab gong gzer*) or "to attach the needle to the lapel" emerged which allowed taxpayers (tre-ba villages and lords) to petition that office for permission to force the mi-bo serfs of that office in their region to work for them. The tre-ba of Samada had done this and consequently were able to make use of these serfs although again they had to pay the going day-wage salary.

I think it will be instructive at this point to present an example of the labor needs of a tre-ba family. Earlier, the fields and acreage of the Nopa family of Samada were discussed and I said that the family held $1\frac{3}{4}$ nang-gang (about 12% of the total tax) or about 100 acres. Moreover, far from being the largest of the Samada tre-ba, Nopa fell in the middle range. There were three larger and four smaller families.

Nopa had ten gang-mi tied to him through "work fields". Furthermore, although he had no hereditary servants of his own (*mi rtsa*) he regularly hired the following servants (*g. yog po*) on an all-year basis: 2 shepherds, 1 donkey herder (for the corvée transport tax), 1 individual to look after the horses, cows and bulls, and 1 woman housekeeper. In addition to these he also hired 2 more shepherds at the end of the first Tibetan month to help out in the critical period when the sheep give birth. These 2 shepherds usually stayed on for about three months. As his labor core, therefore, Nopa had 15 regular laborers and 2 he used for the several month duration. But this was by no means the total of his labor needs. In fact, he hired numerous individuals throughout the year on a day-wage basis (one doh per day plus food) to supplement the labor force he

controlled. It is clear that the tre-ba families (and therefore ultimately the village corporation) could not function without this indispensable labor source the dü-jung provided.

CONCLUSION

This, then, was the system of taxation and the structural configuration through which it was extracted. I should like now, in conclusion, to examine the relationship between this structure and certain political and technological-economic factors, specifically, I shall indicate the manner in which political and techno-economic parameters have shaped the village social structure examined in this paper.

Just as the dü-jung played an indispensable role in the village economic system, the shung-gyu-ba villages in turn played a critical role in the maintenance of the general Tibetan political system. For the central government, shung-gyu-ba villages such as Samada were not only the main source of tax revenues in-kind and in-money, but in particular, were the backbone of the critical corvée carrying tax network through which the central government maintained communications with all points in the polity with a minimum of personnel and expense. Although participation in this corvée operated communications-transport network was not restricted to shung-gyu-ba villages, they unquestionably shouldered the bulk of the burden. In fact, it was not uncommon for the government consciously to create or reorganize shung-gyu-ba villages in key geographic locations so as to expand or sustain the network. The central government's provincial administration was clearly based on the corvée service these shung-gyu-ba villages performed. That the government in fact perceived the critical importance of these villages can be seen in the history of the creation of the official called the lang (*glang*) or "bull".

The land settlement of 1847 provided for the creation of the new position of the Lang. Initially this was only experimentally introduced in the three districts of Gyantse, Wangden (*Dbang ldan*) and Nam (*Rnam*) to determine its efficacy. The purpose of the innovation was summed up in the phrase *glang ske be'u dogs* or "the calf is tied to the neck of the bull". The calf in this metaphor stands for the shung-gyu-ba, the bull for the aristocratic or monastic lords.

The aim of the government was to make wealthy and prestigious holders of large estates in these districts look after, and if necessary intervene on behalf of, the heavily taxed, tre-ba government serfs. At the time of the settlement, as a result of heavy taxation and natural catastrophies, many government serfs were running away from their land because of inability to fulfill their tax responsibilities. It was to be the responsibility of the lord designated to appoint a Lang official to aggregate and articulate the interests of the government serfs so that the causes of their dissatisfaction and inability to pay their taxes would be eliminated. These Lang were in effect to use wealth and power of their lords to aid and protect the more helpless shung-gyu-ba and to do whatever they could to see that they were able to both pay their taxes and earn their livelihood.¹⁴

This concern of the government with maintaining the viability of these shung-gyu-ba villages was not unwarranted. We have seen how Samada not only had a variety of taxes in-kind and in-money but also a heavy military corvée tax and two kinds of corvée transport tax. These latter two obligations were particularly difficult since, unlike the other taxes, they were quantitatively and temporally open-ended, in other words, there was no limit on the number of times the service had to be provided, on the number of animals required during the year, or on when and in what amounts the tax users arrived in Samada. Although the villagers could count on a few of the large users coming at regular times, there was still a continual but erratic flow of goods and people through the network and consequently the taxpayers had to maintain the requisite animal and human resources in constant readiness. For example, a tre-ba family in Samada such as Nopa maintained a donkey-herder all year round to look after the twelve or thirteen donkeys and the three or four horses used in this tax.

Political needs, then, imposed substantial demands upon taxpayers which, as a result of basic technological-economic factors, in turn produced limitations on the type of structure which could fulfill these needs. The necessity to maintain animals on a ready basis for the corvée animal carrying tax required the production of an economic surplus which the tre-ba mode of organization was most adapted to fulfill. If we compare the potential output from the tre-ba

¹⁴ Although this intention was laudable and illustrates the importance of these villages, by the 1930's, at least, the villagers viewed the Lang as merely another potentially avaricious official above them.

mode of organization and that illustrated by the '*Bras khud* example discussed on page 24, we find a significant difference. The villages attached to this monastery were comprised of a large number of serfs each of which held a small plot of arable land. From this base these serfs were able to provide corvée human labor for the monastery's fields, but themselves produced little more than a subsistence crop. They clearly were not able to produce the surplus needed to maintain donkeys and horses. Animals required fodder and hay (both of which were very expensive in Tibet) as well as considerable expenditure of human time and effort. Moreover, the already low Tibetan yields were considerably lowered when an individual held only a small amount of land. In such circumstances the holder could not leave fields fallow nor even rotate various crops on his fields since he was limited almost completely to planting the staple barley varieties. Restorative crops such as mustard (pad-gang) were uneconomical and were not planted. Because of this, his yields were significantly lower than the tre-ba who were economically able to rotate their crops and often to leave fields fallow yet still obtain substantial harvests.

The Example of the '*Bras khud* monastery illustrates this. I indicated earlier that that monastery was in fact responsible for $\frac{1}{14}$ th of the corvée carrying tax. According to my contention, their "tied" dü-jung serfs would not have been able to maintain the animals required to fulfill the tax, and in fact, that was the case. The monastery had created two tre-ba families who held large amounts of land and whose primary function was the fulfillment of the corvée carrying tax. They were given larger economic resources from which they were expected to generate the economic surplus necessary to maintain the animals and other expenses implicit in that tax. The other corvée carrying taxpayers in Samada – the serfs of the aristocratic Phala family – similarly were divided into two units (upper and lower Salu) one of which was a tre-ba village responsible for the corvée carrying tax, and the other a "tied" dü-jung village which primarily provided human corvée agricultural labor on the lord's demesne lands.

The tre-ba/mi-bo dü-jung organizational pattern can be seen, therefore, to be the result of the government's need to maintain a corvée communication transport network and the economic-environmental limitations the provision of such taxes generated.