

# The Zunghar Conquest of Central Tibet and its Influence on Tibetan Military Institutions in the 18th Century\*

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## *Introduction*

**T**he Oirads and the states they built in central Eurasia had intimate relationships with Tibet from the turn of the 17th century when they officially adopted Tibetan Buddhism as their state religion.<sup>1</sup> With respect to politics and international relations, the relationships between the Oirads and the Tibetans have been well-researched by Luciano Petech.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, the military aspect of these interactions has hardly been addressed. However, the Oirads did make a significant impact on Tibetan military institutions and practices during the 17th and the 18th centuries. Over the course of a century, the Oirads twice made audacious military ventures into central Tibet. The first was carried out under the leadership of G<sup>ü</sup>üshi Khan (Mo. G<sup>ü</sup>üsi; Tib. Gu shri; 1582–1665) of the Khoshuud (also Qoshot) in the late 1630s and resulted in the establishment of what is known in Mongolian historiography as the Khoshuud Khanate in Tibet (1642–

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<sup>1</sup> The Oirads, commonly referred to as “western Mongols” by modern scholars, maintained a unique history, quite distinct from that of the eastern Mongols, ever since the fall of the Mongol Empire in the mid-14th century. Although the Oirads were unquestionably a part of the broader Mongolian world ethnically, culturally, and linguistically, they were distinguishable from their eastern neighbours in terms of their political institution. More specifically, the Oirad aristocratic dynasties (e.g., the Zunghar, Dörböd, Khoshuud, Torghuud, and Khoid) did not descend from Chinggis Khan’s golden lineage, whereas the eastern Mongols did. Among the Oirads, the Zunghars succeeded in building a dominant independent state in Central Asia during the 17th and the 18th centuries, while all the eastern Chinggisid Mongols were integrated into the Qing Empire by the end of the 17th century. For more information on the Oirads, see Atwood 2004: 419–423.

<sup>2</sup> Petech 1966: 261–292; Petech [1950] 1972: 8–73.

1717), which also corresponds to the period known in Tibetan scholarship as the early phase of the Ganden Phodrang (Tib. *Dga' ldan pho brang*) government of the Dalai Lamas.<sup>3</sup> The second campaign to central Tibet was led by Tseringdondob (Ma. Tsering dondob; Mo. Čering dondub; Tib. *Tshe ring don grub*) of the Zunghar Principality in 1716–1717,<sup>4</sup> as a result of which the Zunghars succeeded in terminating the Khoshuud Khanate in 1717 and establishing a military government which was the *de facto* ruling apparatus in central Tibet from 1717 to 1720.<sup>5</sup> Due to these vigorous military activities, the Oirads functioned as a dominant source of military power in central Tibet for the entire period from the 1630s to 1720. Naturally, this prolonged Oirad presence in central Tibet considerably influenced the Tibetans with regard to their military institutions and customs.

This article focuses on the second military enterprise by the Oirads, namely the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet from 1716 to 1720. Compared to the first military venture commanded by Gūūshi Khan of the Khoshuud, the Zhunghar military operations are better documented and thus reveal with greater clarity the Oirad influences on Tibetan military institutions. In particular, this article delves into the Zunghar military activities in central Tibet by analysing Qing palace memorials written in Chinese and Manchu, which have rarely been used by Tibetologists; the account—accessed in its English translation—of the Italian Jesuit missionary Ippolito Desideri (1684–1733) who was a first-hand witness to some of these events; and several Tibetan sources, to wit, *The Annals of Kokonor* (Tib. *Mtsho sngon gyi lo rgyus sogs bkod pa'i tshangs glu gsar snyan*) and *The Biography of Pholhané* known in Tibetan as the *Miwang Tokjö* (Tib. *Mi dbang rtogs brjod*), accessed in their English

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<sup>3</sup> As a result of Gūūshi's conquest of Tibet, the Khoshuud Khanate was established in central Tibet in 1642. Its political and military centre was located around Lhasa and the Dam plain. The Khoshuud Khanate claimed its rule over the whole Tibetan regions (e.g., Ü, Tsang, Kham, Amdo, and later Ngari). Regarding the Khoshuud Khanate in Tibet, see Petech 1966: 266–281; Borjigidai 1988: 70–74; Borjigidai 2002: 181–195; Sperling 2012: 195–211.

<sup>4</sup> To denominate the two states that the Oirads built in Tibet and Central Asia, this article utilises two terms, namely khanate and principality. In Tibet, the supreme rulers of the Khoshuud dynasty held the title of khan. Therefore, this article names their state the Khoshuud Khanate. In contrast, the Zunghar rulers rarely used the title of khan. Instead, they ruled their state in Central Asia in most cases as *taiji* or *khungtaiji*, meaning prince or crown-prince in Mongolian. For this reason, the author designates their state as the Zunghar Principality.

<sup>5</sup> On the Zunghar invasion and occupation of central Tibet, see Petech 1966: 290–292; Petech [1950] 1972: 32–65; Chayet 2003: 83–89; Schwieger 2015: 121–142.

and Chinese translations respectively.<sup>6</sup> Based on these sources, this article argues that the Zunghar conquest and their ensuing rule of central Tibet considerably influenced Tibetan military institutions in the following years in three main respects, namely: the defence system, military strategy, and weapons. Although previous research on the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet has already tapped into many of the sources that this article is consulting (the account by Desideri and *The Biography of Pholhané* in particular), the existing scholarship reveals a strong tendency to focus only on political and international aspects of Tibetan history of the time.<sup>7</sup> As a result, rich materials containing numerous hints at the military history of Tibet have often been overlooked by historians.

In the first section, the article explores the opening phase of the Zunghar campaign in central Tibet. Specifically, it investigates the itinerary of the Zunghar army which enabled the successful surprise attack on Lazang Khan (Mo. Lazang; Ma. Ladzang; Tib. Lha bzang; r. 1703–1717). The fact that the Zunghars had utilised an unexpected route at that time left a lasting imprint upon the defence system of central Tibet during later periods. In the second section, the article examines an atypical military strategy which the Zunghars actively used in central Tibet. Interestingly, Tibetan forces appear to have actively adopted this peculiar military scheme in the aftermath of the Zunghar rule. And finally, the third section scrutinises a couple of new weapons that the Zunghars favoured in battle. As a result of the Zunghar rule in central Tibet, the Tibetans also came to extensively employ these novel arms, which the Zunghars had first brought to central Tibet, in their own warfare.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Due to the present author's lack of command of Tibetan, Tibetan sources have been consulted in translation. In the case of *The Annals of Kokonor*, I have used the English translation by Ho-Chin Yang (1969), which translated the second chapter of *The Annals of Kokonor*. With regard to *The Biography of Pholhané*, I have utilised the Chinese translation by Chi'an Tang (1988). Here, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Soyong Choi for helping me check a number of original Tibetan words in the Chinese version of *The Biography of Pholhané*. I would also like to express gratitude to Dr. George Fitzherbert, Dr. Alice Travers, and Mr. Joseph Cleveland for helping me edit this article.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Petech 1966: 290–292; Petech [1950] 1972: 32–65; Shakabpa 2010: vol. 1, 414–427.

<sup>8</sup> Numerous place names in Central Asia and Tibet appear throughout this article. To figure out the locations of these place names, the author has consulted the maps in Tan 1987: 52–53, 59–62 and Ryavec 2015: 110–151. See also the list of place names in different languages in Appendix 1 of this paper.

## 1. *The Zunghar's New Route to Tibet and its Impact on Tibetan Military Institutions*

### 1.1. *Two Traditional Routes between Zungharia and Tibet*

#### 1.1.1. *The Eastern Khökhe-nuur Route*

Prior to the Zunghar campaign, the Oirad people had typically used two conventional routes to travel to Tibet, one in the east and the other in the west (see the map in Appendix 2 of this paper). The eastern route (the “eastern Khökhe-nuur route”) passed through eastern Xinjiang and the region of the “Blue Lake” or Khökhe-nuur (Mo. Köke naγur; Oir. Kükü nour; Ma. Huhu noor; Tib. Mtsho sngon; Ch. Qinghai 青海).<sup>9</sup> This route was used for example when Gūūshi Khan and his Oirad forces advanced to Tibet, and later when the Oirad Zaya Pandita (1599–1662) made pilgrimages to Tibet.<sup>10</sup> According to the Tibetan-educated Mongolian historian Sumpa Khenpo (Tib. Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor, 1704–1788), Gūūshi had travelled from Zungharia to Tibet to investigate the actual situation of Tibet before he and his fellow Oirad princes officially launched their military campaign.<sup>11</sup> On the way, he reportedly met Arslan Taiji (Mo. Arslan tayiji; Tib. Ar sa lan tha'i ji; d. 1636), a son of Tsogtu (Mo. Čoytu; Tib. Chog thu; 1581–1637) Taiji of the Khalkha Mongols,<sup>12</sup> in the upper part of the Driчу River (Tib. 'Bri chu) in 1635, and in the following year went back to his country by the same route.<sup>13</sup>

In 1636, Gūūshi and his forces began to advance towards Tibet along with other Oirad allies. During this time, they passed through the regions around the Ili (Mo. Ili; Tib. Yi le) and the Tarim (Tib. Tha

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<sup>9</sup> When it comes to the transcription and transliteration systems used in this article, the present author employs phonetic transcriptions as well as the Wylie transliteration system for Tibetan, the Pinyin transcription system for Chinese, and the Möllendorff system for Manchu. For Mongolian names and terms, phonetic renderings are presented according to the Atwood system (see Atwood 2002: xv–xviii), while more bookish transcriptions are presented according to the Mostaert system with the sign “Mo.”. Lastly, for personal names and place names written in the Clear Script in *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, the article uses the standard romanisation system for the Clear Script, as found in Rakos 2002: 49–50 and Luwsanbaldan 2015: 24–31, with the mark “Oir.”.

<sup>10</sup> Concerning the Oirad Zaya Pandita, see Atwood 2004: 618. He is not to be confused with the roughly contemporaneous Khalkha Zaya Pandita.

<sup>11</sup> Sum pa mkhan po (trans. Yang) 1969: 34–35. In this article, the term “Zungharia” signifies a geographical area encompassing the Altai Mountains, the Irtysh River, Lake Balkhash, the Ili River, the Chu River, the Talas River, and the Tianshan Mountains.

<sup>12</sup> Regarding Tsogtu Taiji, see Atwood 2004: 550 and Schwieger 2015: 41–48.

<sup>13</sup> Sum pa mkhan po (trans. Yang) 1969: 35.

rim) Rivers and then also traversed the great swamp of Tsaidam (Tib. 'Dam chen po). After that, they arrived at Bulunggir (Mo. Bulunggir; Tib. Bu lung ger) on the border of the Khökhe-nuur region and encamped there.<sup>14</sup> In the first month of 1637, Gūūshi's ten thousand soldiers fought a great battle with Tsogtu Taiji's thirty thousand troops at a place later known as Ulaan-khoshuu (Mo. Ulayān qosiyun; Tib. U lan ho sho) on the northern shore of Lake Khökhe-nuur. Then, in 1639, Gūūshi arrived in Ü (Tib. Dbus) of central Tibet where the Fifth Dalai Lama honoured him with the name Tenzin Chögyel (Tib. Bstan 'dzin chos rgyal).<sup>15</sup> In summary, then, Gūūshi and his Oirad forces reached central Tibet by the following route: Tarbaghatai (in today's northern Xinjiang where Gūūshi's original appanage was)—the Ili River—the Tarim River—the Tsaidam Basin—Bulunggir—Ulaan-khoshuu—the Drichu River (as seen in Gūūshi's preparatory travel to Tibet in 1635)—Ü of central Tibet.

The Oirad Zaya Pandita also used an eastern route when he made his pilgrimages to Tibet. According to *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, in 1650 and 1651 (when he made his first pilgrimage) he travelled from a place called Khöörge-yin Khool (Oir. Köürgeyin xöl) to Lhasa (Oir. ʃou) in central Tibet (Oir. Baroun tala) via Bulunggir, Khökhe-nuur, and Ereen-nuur (Oir. Erēn nour; Tib. Mtsho sngo ring; Ch. Eling hu 鄂陵湖).<sup>16</sup> In all likelihood, he passed the Tsaidam Basin after Bulunggir because his biography states that he sent some of his entourage back to the Greater Tsaidam (Oir. Yeke čayidam) before proceeding from Khökhe-nuur to Tibet.<sup>17</sup> In addition, *The Biography of Zaya Pandita* reports that in the spring of 1651 Zaisang Balbaachi (Oir. ʃayisang balbāči), a nephew of the Oirad Zaya Pandita, caught up with his uncle at Khökhe-nuur after spending the previous winter in Barköl (Oir. Bars kül).<sup>18</sup> Considering this, Zaya Pandita and Zaisang Balbaachi were then participating in the same pilgrimage to Tibet, and thus both must

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*: 36. There were at least two Bulunggir Rivers, each north and south of the Qilian Mountains (祁連山), during the Qing period. The first was the better-known, modern Shule River that runs near Dunhuang north of the Qilian Mountains. The second Bulunggir was located south of the Qilian Mountains, flowing into the little Tsaidam lake. For the first Bulunggir, see Tan 1987: 28–29; for the second one, refer to *ibid.*: 59–60. The Bulunggir that Gūūshi and his Oirad forces passed by must have been the second one south of the Qilian Mountains given their itinerary.

<sup>15</sup> Sum pa mkhan po (trans. Yang) 1969: 37.

<sup>16</sup> Radnaabadraa 2009: 104–105/12r–12v. It seems that the place name “Bulunggir” in *The Biography of Zaya Pandita* denotes the Bulunggir River north of the Qilian Mountains.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*: 105/12v.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

have used similar routes on their way to Tibet, although they sometimes travelled separately from each other.<sup>19</sup> Hence, the entire itineraries of the Oirad pilgrims led by Zaya Pandita and Zaisang Balbaachi can be reconstructed as: Khöörge-yin Khood—Barköl—Bulunggir—the Tsaidam Basin—Khökhe-nuur—Ereen-nuur—Lhasa. This constitutes a different route from that of Güüshi.

In 1662, Zaya Pandita tried to make a second pilgrimage to Tibet but passed away en route. In the first month of the summer of 1662, he departed from a place called Balugtu (Oir. Baluqtu), which was probably on the southern side of the Chu River in Central Asia,<sup>20</sup> and then arrived at Khajir (Oir. Xajir) in the far western part of the Khökhe-nuur region, where he died on the 22nd day of the middle month of the autumn of 1662.<sup>21</sup> According to *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, the entire itinerary was thus as follows: Balugtu—the Ösöq and Saamal Rivers (Oir. Ösöq sāmāl; i.e. two tributaries of the Ili River)—the Khünggis River—Aduun-khürü—Jultus—Kheree-khada (Oir. Kerē xada)—the Middle Tashikhai (Oir. Dundadu Tašxayi)—Khurtag (Oir. Xurtaq)—the Khaidu River (Oir. Xayidu)—the Tarim River—Nükhütü—Khoruli (Oir. Xoriuli)—Gas (Oir. γas)—Khajir.<sup>22</sup>

In 1669, a large number of disciples of the late Zaya Pandita led by Erke Tsorji (Oir. Erke čorji) left Lebshi (Oir. Lebši) to meet the reincarnation of their master who had been identified in Tibet.<sup>23</sup> *The Biography of Zaya Pandita* provides detailed information concerning their itineraries. First, after having set off from the Lebshi River, they passed along the shores of many lakes—probably Lake Alaköl and other small lakes neighbouring it, and Lake Ebi-nuur. Then they proceeded

<sup>19</sup> Zaya Pandita spent the winter at a place called Gurban-bag (Oir. γurban baq) near Bulunggir, while Zaisang Balbaachi wintered in Barköl at that time. Why, then, did Zaya Pandita and Zaisang Balbaachi travel separately? According to *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, at that time Zaisang Balbaachi was accompanied by two great princes of the Oirads, viz., Tsöökür Ubashi (Oir. Čöükür ubaša) and Targun Erdeni Khungtaiji (Oir. Taryun erdeni xong tayiji), while Zaya Pandita travelled only with his own retinue. In light of this, it is plausible that the pilgrimage to Tibet from 1650 to 1651 was not a personal pilgrimage but an official, state-sponsored visit which included not only Oirad princes and officials but also numerous religious figures. If this is correct, one may surmise that the secular section of this delegation was led by Zaisang Balbaachi, while the religious participants were headed by Zaya Pandita. For details, see *ibid.*: 105/12r–12v.

<sup>20</sup> Cheng 1990: 82n168.

<sup>21</sup> Radnaabadraa 2009: 127/23v, 129/24v.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*: 127–128/23v–24r. After the death of Zaya Pandita, his disciples carried his body to Lhasa. Due to the lack of detailed information on their itinerary, it is impossible to know exactly what route they took to reach Lhasa from Khajir. From the context, however, it is likely that they proceeded from Khajir directly to central Tibet towards Lhasa without visiting Khökhe-nuur.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*: 144/32r.

through Minggan-tayag (Oir. Mingyan tayaq), Mt. Ereen-khabirga (Oir. Erēn xabirγa, west of Ürümchi), Dörböljin (Oir. Dörböljin, east of Ürümchi), and Tal-nachin (Oir. Tal način, east of Hami)<sup>24</sup> to reach the Gobi, or desert. To cross it, they split into two groups. The first group, which was composed of Erkhe Tsorji and other disciples, traversed the desert through Khoyor-saikhan (Oir. Xoyor sayixan). The second, composed of a group of interpreters, went by way of Üibeng-kharaat (Oir. Üyibeng xarāt). After this, the two groups together reached a place called Bolodoi in the “Desert of Salt” (Oir. Dabusuni γobi) via Khara-dabaa (Oir. Xara dabā) and eventually reached Khökhe-nuur. After spending the winter there, Erkhe Tsorji headed for central Tibet via a place called Orooichee (Oir. Orō ičē), while the interpreters departed from the Desert of Salt in the first month of the summer of 1670 and arrived at Dam (north of Lhasa) through Khulusun-sübe (Oir. Xulusun sübe) in the last month of the summer. Finally, some pilgrims reached Lhasa via Yangpachen (Oir. Yangpaĭin; Tib. Yangs pa can; Ch. Yangbajing 羊八井).<sup>25</sup>

On their way back, the Oirad pilgrims travelled an almost identical route. In the middle month of the summer of 1671, they set off from Lhasa and then arrived at Serteng and Bulunggir. From there, they started to cross the desert and reached Barköl. The disciples of Zaya Pandita finally came back to Emil by way of Ereen-khabirga, Tesket, Bugu-usun (Oir. Buγu usun), and Shara-bogochi (Oir. Šara boyoči).<sup>26</sup> In light of these place names, the pilgrims this time appear to have taken a route that went along the northern slope of the Tianshan Mountains and then approached the Khökhe-nuur region via Barköl, Hami, the desert to the south of Hami, Bulunggir, and Serteng. This route was almost the same as the one used by Zaya Pandita and Zai-sang Balbaachi from 1650 to 1651. From these data, we can surmise that when Oirads attempted to travel to central Tibet in sizeable groups (including people, livestock, and materials), they most often favoured the eastern Khökhe-nuur route which connected Zungharia to Tibet via eastern Xinjiang and the Khökhe-nuur region. This eastern route furthermore consisted of two branch lines (see the map in Appendix 2): the first took a more south-western itinerary through the Ili River, the Khünggis River, Jultus, the Khaidu River, Lake Bosten, the Tarim River, Gas, the Tsaidam Basin (from the west side), Bulunggir (south of the Qilian), and Khökhe-nuur. The second took a more north-eastern route via Bortala, Mt. Ereen-khabirga, Ürümchi, Barköl, Hami, the desert south of Hami, Bulunggir (north of the Qilian),

<sup>24</sup> Cheng 1990: 83n182–183.

<sup>25</sup> Radnaabadraa 2009: 144–145/32r–32v.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*: 147–148/33v–34r.

Serteng, the Tsaidam Basin (from the north side), and Khökhe-nuur.<sup>27</sup> The first “south-western” branch line was utilised by Gūūshi Khan in 1636–1637 and then by Zaya Pandita in 1662, while the second “north-eastern” route was used by Zaya Pandita as well as Zaisang Balbaachi in 1650–1651 and the disciples of Zaya Pandita in 1669–1671.

Later, in 1704, a Torghuud prince named Arabjur (d. 1729) made a pilgrimage from the Volga River to Tibet via Zunghar territory.<sup>28</sup> It is evident that he and his entourage also used the north-eastern branch of the Khökhe-nuur route to reach Tibet because, on his way back, Prince Arabjur memorialised the Kangxi Emperor, informing him that he and his companions were stranded outside the Jiayu Pass (Ch. Jiayu guan 嘉峪關)—probably around Lake Serteng (Ch. Se’erteng hai 色爾騰海) where he was later enfeoffed—and unable to go back to their home country due to the Zunghar lord Tsewang Rabdan’s (r. 1694–1727)<sup>29</sup> prohibition of their entry into the Zunghar territory.<sup>30</sup> In other words, Prince Arabjur travelled from Central Asia to central Tibet by way of the route which passed through Hami and the Khökhe-nuur region at the turn of the 18th century.

It is clear that this “eastern Khökhe-nuur route” continued to be the main route from Zungharia to Tibet even after the period of the

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<sup>27</sup> When it comes to the itineraries from Khökhe-nuur to central Tibet (esp. the Ü region), the situation was more complicated, since there were numerous routes connecting the two regions. A Chinese palace memorial composed by Baling’a (巴凌阿) confirms this, stating that there were a variety of routes traversing the Khökhe-nuur region and thus linking Barköl to central Tibet. Baling’a further states that the two most important traffic hubs in the region were Kurlug (Ch. Ku’erluke 庫爾魯克, probably east of the Greater Tsaidam) and Solomu (Ch. Soluomu 索洛木; Tib. Rma chu). These led to Murui-usu (Ch. Mulu wusu 木魯烏素; Tib. ’Bri chu), Yushu (玉樹; Tib. Skyes dgu mdo), and finally to central Tibet (Ch. Xizang 西藏). Therefore, roughly speaking, the route from Barköl to central Tibet was as follows: Barköl—Suzhou (肅州), Chijin (赤金), or Anxi (安西)—Kurlug—the Solomu River—the Murui-usu River—Yushu—central Tibet. For details, refer to *The First Historical Archives of China, Gongzhong zhupi zouzhe* (宮中硃批奏摺; henceforth *Gongzhong zhupi*), doc. no. 04–01–01–0040–002 (Baling’a, Qianlong 4. 6. 3). Baling’a, however, did not mention Khökhe-nuur in his explanation of the various routes across the region. Therefore, Oirad/Zunghar people travelling from their homeland in Central Asia to central Tibet could reach their destination without passing Lake Khökhe-nuur at all. Regarding the itineraries from Khökhe-nuur to central Tibet, Gombozhab Tsybikov’s early 20th century travel journal provides us with much detailed descriptions of the routes between the two regions. For more information, see Tsybikov 2017: 28–53.

<sup>28</sup> Regarding the Torghuud prince Arabjur, see Hummel 1943: 785; Atwood 2004: 7.

<sup>29</sup> Concerning the Zunghar ruler Tsewang Rabdan (Tib. Tshe dbang rab brtan), refer to Atwood 2004: 550.

<sup>30</sup> Zhunga’er shilüe bianxiezu 1985: 218.



Zunghar invasion and occupation of Tibet (1717–1720) that is this paper's main focus. In the 1740s, we again find Oirads—especially Zunghars—actively using these eastern Khökhe-nuur routes when they brought offerings for the “Tea-Offering” (Tib. *manja*; Mo. and Ma. *manja*; Ch. *aocha* 熬茶) religious-cum-trade festival in Tibet. The Zunghars participated in the *manja* three times in total. For the first in 1741, the Zunghar delegation of envoys, monks, and merchants employed the north-eastern branch line of the eastern Khökhe-nuur route, which went through Hami, and then visited Dongkor (Ma. Dongk'or; Tib. Stong 'khor) for trade.<sup>31</sup> For their second and third *manja* pilgrimages, however, they travelled by the south-western branch of the eastern Khökhe-nuur route. In 1743, the Zunghar mission was led by Lama *shangjudba* (Mo. *šangjudba*; Ma. *šangjotba*; Tib. *phyag mdzod pa*; i.e. lama treasurer of a monastery) and Zaisang Choinamkha (Ma. Jaisang Coinam' a) and entered the Khökhe-nuur region via Gas. They then travelled from Gas to Dongkor via Khajir (Ma. Hajir), Khadan-khoshuu (Ma. Hadan hošo), and Urtu-mörün (Ma. Urtu murun).<sup>32</sup> It was reported that the Zunghar pilgrims, after having conducted trade in Dongkor, came back to Khadan-khoshuu and then reached central Tibet via Khara-usu (Ma. Hara usu; Tib. Nag chu).<sup>33</sup> Their entire itinerary therefore was represented thus: the Tarim River—Gas—Khajir—Khadan-khoshuu—Urtu-mörün—Dongkor—Khadan-khoshuu—Khara-usu—Lhasa. On their third visit for the Tea-Offering ceremony in 1747–1748, the Zunghar envoys used almost the same route as in 1743. Reportedly, they travelled from the Tarim River to Lhasa via Gas, Khajir, and Debter.<sup>34</sup> This time, the Zunghars carried out their trade not in Dongkor but in Debter.<sup>35</sup> After having finished their trade in

<sup>31</sup> The First Historical Archives of China, *Junjichu manwen lufu zouzhe* (軍機處滿文錄副奏摺; henceforth *Manwen lufu*), doc. no. 03-0173-1230-006 (Ortai, Qianlong 6.11.27); Perdue 2015: 6–7. From Dongkor, the Zunghar pilgrims were supposed to go to central Tibet via the Solomu River. Regarding the detailed routes of the Zunghars envisioned by the Qing court, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0173-1221-015 (Ortai, Qianlong 4.12.17). This time, however, the Zunghar mission never made it to central Tibet since they left for their homeland—again through Hami—from Dongkor without visiting Lhasa by October 5, 1741 (QL 6. 8.26). For details, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0173-1230-006.

<sup>32</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0173-1244-017 (Ioi Boo, Qianlong 8. 7.20).

<sup>33</sup> For details, see *Qingdai Xinjiang manwen dang'an huibian* (清代新疆滿文檔案匯編; henceforth, *Xinjiang huibian*), vol. 6: 322–332; *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0173-1252-006.1 (Sobai, Qianlong 9.1.20).

<sup>34</sup> Perdue 2015: 15–16; *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0174-1272-015 (Sobai, Qianlong 12.11.4).

<sup>35</sup> *Xinjiang huibian*, vol. 7: 325–329. On the third *manja* pilgrimage, only six people out of the whole Zunghar envoys visited the Dongkor region to present offerings to four monasteries in and around Dongkor. These six Zunghar envoys did not go to

Debter, the Zunghar Tea-Offering pilgrims departed from Debter and then headed for Lhasa through the Khashikha Pass (Ma. Hasiha dabagan), Mt. Bayan-khara (Ma. Bayan kara alin), the Murui-usu River (Mo. Murui usu; Ma. Muru usu; Tib. 'Bri chu), Khara-usu, Tengri-nuur (Mo. Tngri nayur; Ma. Tenggeri noor; Tib. Gnam mtsho), Dam, and Yangpachen.<sup>36</sup>

To conclude, the eastern Khökhe-nuur routes were the most important highways connecting Zungharia to central Tibet throughout the 17th and the 18th centuries, even though these routes were often interrupted in the 18th century by the protracted military conflict between the Qing Empire and the Zunghars. Both of the branch lines of this route were equally important for Oirad travellers to central Tibet, so that one did not eclipse the other in terms of usage.

### 1.1.2. The Western Ngari Route

The second traditional route which linked Zungharia to central Tibet went through Ngari (Tib. Mnga' ris) in the far west of the Tibetan Plateau. Father Ippolito Desideri first made a detailed record of this important path. Desideri travelled from Kashmir to central Tibet via Ladakh and Ngari in 1714–1716. After leaving Kashmir, his route went as follows: Ladakh (Leh)—Tashigang—Gartok (Tib. Sgar thog)—Rutok (Tib. Ru thog)—Saga (Tib. Sa dga' rdzong)—Sakya (Tib. Sa skya)—Shigatsé—Lhasa.<sup>37</sup> As per his account, Tashigang, the first locality under the jurisdiction of Tibet, was a border region and considered sensitive primarily due to its proximity to the Zunghars.<sup>38</sup> Moreover in Gartok, which was two days' journey from Tashigang and the residence of the Tibetan governor of Ngari,

there is always to be found a sizeable army of Tartars and Tibetans subject to the king of the third Tibet. They are there in part to defend Tashigang and the other villages east of this remote region's border but primarily to search for anyone entering the country through that area and to prevent any enemy forces slipping in through secret roads and suddenly and unexpectedly falling upon the kingdom.<sup>39</sup>

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central Tibet from Dongkor. Instead, they just returned to Debter after finishing making offerings. For details, see *ibid.*: 303–310.

<sup>36</sup> For details, see *ibid.*: 325–329; *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1272–010 (Sobai, Qianlong 12.8.10). The itineraries of the Zunghar Tea-Offering pilgrims also confirm that Oirad/Zunghar travellers could reach central Tibet without visiting Khökhe-nuur. They could travel from Gas or Khajir directly to Khara-usu of central Tibet, and *vice versa*, via the route of Maljan-khucha (Ma. Maljan kūca) and Akhayak.

<sup>37</sup> Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 167–176.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*: 167.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*: 168.

These forces at Gartok were quartered there due to the fear of an invasion by the Zunghars.<sup>40</sup> Desideri also stated that Gartok bordered on “the rugged and impenetrable peaks that lead to the kingdom of Yarkand”,<sup>41</sup> which was then under the rule of the Zunghar Principality. He also stated that from Gartok “one enters Independent Tartary, which is also called the country of Dzungar”.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the western Ngari route which connected Zungharia to central Tibet via Yarkand and Ngari was already well-established by the time Desideri travelled to Tibet in the early 18th century.

Contrary to Desideri’s description, however, it is plausible that this western Ngari route did not proceed directly from Ngari to Yarkand, but instead passed through the Kingdom of Ladakh en route, since we know that Ladakh served as a crucial intersection between Ngari and Yarkand during the 18th century. We have, for example, numerous Manchu palace memorials indicating that not inconsiderable numbers of Zunghar and Muslim people went to Ladakh annually from Yarkand to conduct trade.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, from the Tibetan side, many people visited Ladakh for various reasons.<sup>44</sup> For example, when Pholhané (Tib. Pho lha nas Bsod nam stob rgyas; Ma. Polonai; 1689–1747) attempted to dispatch two Mongol noblemen from Ngari to Yarkand to carry out a politico-diplomatic manoeuvre in 1733, he first sent them to Dejung Namjal (Tib. Bde skyong rnam rgyal, r. 1729–1739), the king of the Ladakh Kingdom at the time, who in turn dispatched the two noblemen to Yarkand.<sup>45</sup> This case indicates that travellers from Ngari to Yarkand often went through Ladakh. Therefore, during the 18th century,

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*: 264.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*: 211.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*: 253.

<sup>43</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1295–001 (Namjal, Qianlong 16.3.20). Besides this document, there are a large number of Manchu palace memorials indicating that Zunghar missions—including envoys, lamas, and merchants—travelled to Ladakh from Yarkand almost every year to fulfil diplomatic, religious, and commercial tasks. As examples, see *Manwen lufu* doc. no. 03–0173–1117–005 (Mala, Yongzheng 9.3.3); doc. no. 03–0173–1148–004.1 (Cingboo, Yongzheng 11.10.21); doc. no. 03–0173–1236–006 (Sobai, Qianlong 7.8.21); doc. no. 03–0173–0983–007 (Bandi, Qianlong 16.1.18); doc. no. 03–0173–0985–006 (Bandi, Qianlong 16.9.28); and so on.

<sup>44</sup> For example, Tibetan people frequently visited Ladakh via Ngari for trade. It is interesting to note that Gyurmé Namgyel (Tib. Gyur med rnam rgyal; Ma. Jurmat namjal; d. 1750), the younger son and successor of Pholhané, commissioned his officials going to Ladakh on the pretext of trade to have a covert meeting with Zunghar envoys and deliver a secret personal message to Tsewang Dorji Namjal, the ruler of the Zunghar Principality. For details, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–0983–009 (Bandi, Qianlong 16.1.28).

<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately for the Qing Empire, this attempt by Pholhané failed to achieve its goal because local rulers in Yarkand captured the two Mongol noblemen from

the main itinerary of the western Ngari route was: Yarkand—Ladakh—Tashigang—Gartok—Rutok—Saga—Sakya—Shigatsé—Lhasa.

This western Ngari route functioned as one of the two main paths between Zungharia and central Tibet when the Zunghars conquered and ruled Tibet from 1717 to 1720. According to Desideri, when the Zunghars succeeded in occupying Tibet, a certain Targum Tashi took flight and retreated to Gartok, where he gathered the scattered remnants of the militias that had previously been sent by Lazang Khan to defend this region.<sup>46</sup> “With these forces he took up a position between the mountains and closed the pass between Independent Tatar and Tibet, thus cutting off all communication between them”.<sup>47</sup> By doing so, Targum Tashi significantly inconvenienced the Zunghars, since neither the reinforcements sent from Zungharia to Tibet nor messengers from Tibet to the Zunghar court ever arrived at their destinations.<sup>48</sup> From this description, it is evident that the western route to Zungharia via Gartok of Ngari was a crucial conduit during the period of Zunghar rule in Tibet.

In 1719, a group of Zunghars attempted to go back to their homeland by this Ngari route bringing with them prisoners of war and booty from Tibet. As narrated by Desideri, this mission was sent by Tsering Döndrup, the commander-in-chief of the Zunghar army in central Tibet. When the Zunghar forces conveying this booty arrived in Gartok, Targum Tashi and his soldiers enticed the Zunghars into a fake welcoming feast and then killed all of them after they had become

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Ngari and then sent them to Zungharia. For details, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1148–004.1 (Cingboo, Yongzheng 11.10.21).

<sup>46</sup> Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 253. In the original Italian text, the name “Targum Tashi” is written “Targum-treêscij”. For this name, Michael J. Sweet uses instead the transcription “Targum Tashi” throughout his translation, considering the second part of this name as coming from Tibetan: “Darqan Bkra shis (*ibid.*: 650)”. In contrast, Luciano Petech suggests that the term “Targum-treêscij” might also transcribe the Mongol title *terigün taiji* (“first-class *taiji*”) (Petech 1966: 279). In fact, if the name is taken as deriving from Mongolian, there are three possible interpretations: namely, Targun Taiji (“fat prince”), Darkhan Taiji (“prince free from taxes and official duties”), and Terigün Taiji (“head” or “first-class prince”). Regarding his personage, Desideri’s Targum-treêscij is based at least partially on Lazang Khan’s prime minister, known by several different titles in Tibetan sources but best known as Khangchenné Sönam Gyelpo. Petech argues that in Desideri’s account, this figure is somewhat fictionalised and cannot be directly identified with the historical Khangchenné, who in any event was a Tibetan and not a Khoshuud Mongol. Pomplun opines that Targum-treêscij is a “literary amalgam” of Khangchenné and Pholhané and that Desideri may have exaggerated the extent of his friendship with powerful figures of the court. For details, see Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 684–685 n506; Petech [1950] 1972: 36 n4, 62–63; Pomplun 2010: 176.

<sup>47</sup> Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 253.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

drunk and fallen into a deep sleep.<sup>49</sup> *The Biography of Pholhané* relates a similar story: a group of Zunghars tried to go to Zungharia through the Ngari region along with some of the Mongols who had formerly been subordinate to Lazang Khan. When the Zunghars reached Ngari, Khangchenné (Tib. Khang chen nas, d. 1727) and his Ngari followers killed the Zunghar troops and liberated the former retinue of Lazang Khan.<sup>50</sup> A couple of Manchu palace memorials also provide some information about this event. According to the testimony made by a Zunghar fugitive named Samdan (Ma. Samtan), when a Zunghar *zaisang* named Sanji (Ma. Sanji; Tib. Sangs rgyas) went back to his home country in the third month of the 58th year of Kangxi (1719), he travelled via the Ngari route (Ma. Ari *jugūn*) because he considered the Keriya route (Ma. Keriye *jugūn*) inferior. Samdan also heard from a Zunghar called Sirig that a Tibetan from Ngari had informed Diba Tagtse (Ma. Diba Daqtsa; Tib. Sde pa Stag rtse) that when Sanji arrived

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*: 253–254.

<sup>50</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 190. Here, both Desideri and Tsering Wanggyel apparently exaggerated Khangchenné/Targum Tashi's military success since according to Qing imperial sources the Zunghar forces, led by several *zaisangs* such as Sainchag and Sanji, did in fact successfully arrive in Zungharia during the sixth month of the 58th year of Kangxi (1719) along with some prisoners taken from Tibet. For details, see *Kangxichao manwen zhupi zouzhe* (康熙朝滿文硃批奏摺; henceforth *Kangxi manwen*), the document by Funingga (Kangxi 59. 4.12) [*Kangxichao manwen zhupi zouzhe quanyi* (康熙朝滿文硃批奏摺全譯; henceforth *Kangxi quanyi*), no. 3501]. Therefore, it seems more likely that Khangchenné did not actually achieve a sweeping victory over the Zunghar forces at this time but just succeeded in detaining the Zunghar troops to some degree, at best. The report by Yansin (Ma. Yan sin; Ch. Yanxin 延信) also narrates that in 1719, Khangchenné lured the Zunghars, who were carrying some precious materials of Lazang Khan to Zungharia, and then killed about sixty people. For more information, see Wu 1991: 199. It appears therefore that in 1719 Khangchenné attained only modest military success in Ngari. Also, the reason why Khangchenné and his people disrupted the Zunghar forces at that time might not have been the sublime cause of liberating central Tibet and Lazang Khan's former officials from the evil Zunghars as suggested by Desideri's writing and Tsering Wanggyel's heroically-tinged account (i.e. *The Biography of Pholhané*). According to another Manchu palace memorial, the leader of the Ngari region sent his soldiers and stopped the Zunghar forces, saying that the Zunghar people had pillaged the merchants of Ngari. For details, refer to *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Yinzheng 胤禎) (Kangxi 58. 7. 9) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3436]. Therefore, it is possible to say that this much-vaunted first military resistance of the Tibetans against the Zunghar forces may actually have been motivated not by heroic or patriotic sentiments, but rather by practical, local, and mundane reasons. Despite the relative insignificance of this victory and its actual causes, it was indeed probably the first-ever military success on the part of the anti-Zunghar Tibetan faction. Therefore, Desideri and Tsering Wanggyel both embellished this event as the great starting-point of the Tibetans' military resistance against the Zunghars.

in the Ngari region, a leader of Ngari took soldiers and stopped Sanji.<sup>51</sup> From these accounts, it is possible to make several observations. First, the leader of Ngari who stopped Sanji and his Zunghar soldiers in the Ngari region in 1719 must have been the same Targum Tashi of Desideri's account and Khangchenné of *The Biography of Pholhané*. Next, it was Zaisang Sanji who led the Zunghar forces carrying booty and prisoners from central Tibet to Zungharia. And lastly but most importantly for the present discussion, at least some Zunghar people preferred the Ngari route to the Keriya route when they travelled between central Tibet and Zungharia.<sup>52</sup>

As discussed so far, this western Ngari route was traditionally one of the two principal paths connecting Zungharia to central Tibet and, during the Zunghar rule in central Tibet, was also preferred by some Zunghar travellers as a better way to reach Zungharia. Most sources, however, agree that this route was much less convenient than the eastern Khökhe-nuur route, on account of the harsh environment encountered on this road. Desideri, for example, wrote of the rugged and impenetrable peaks between Gartok and Yarkand, and also said that travellers would have to make a journey of two and a half months through

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<sup>51</sup> *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 7. 9) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3436]. Interestingly enough, another Manchu palace memorial imparts a different version of this event. A lama named Tsetsen Gelüng Dondob Jiamtsu testified that on April 13, 1719 (Kangxi 58. 2.24), Sanji Zaisang, Gomang Lama, Dagba Zangbu, a judge (Ma. *jargūci*), and a scribe (Ma. *bithesi*) went to Zungharia via the Keriya route carrying Daiching Baatur and Baatur Noyan who had previously belonged to Lazang Khan. For details, see *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 8.22) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3453]. This document provides a more detailed list of the Zunghar travellers and the war prisoners they were taking to Zungharia. This deposition, however, presents conflicting information on the itinerary of Sanji Zaisang and his companions (i.e. the Keriya route as opposed to the Ngari route in Samdan's report). Considering the consistency between such various sources as Desideri's writing, *The Biography of Pholhané*, and the Qing palace memorials, it seems clear that Sanji Zaisang did travel from central Tibet to Zungharia in 1719 via the Ngari route. In addition, the informant Samdan was possibly more reliable than Lama Tsetsen Gelüng Dondob Jiamtsu regarding internal information of the Zunghar ruling party in central Tibet because Samdan was an Oirad soldier who had participated in the Zunghar conquest of Tibet. Before he fled to Gashuun via Dung-büreetü, he was stationed in the Dam plain as a member of the Zunghar garrison, whereas Lama Tsetsen Gelüng Dondob Jiamtsu never belonged to the Zunghar side since he reportedly kept wandering around many places in central Tibet to avoid the Zunghar conquerors. Therefore, it seems that Samdan had more accurate information on Sanji Zaisang's trip back to Zungharia, while Lama Tsetsen Gelüng Dondob Jiamtsu probably obtained the news from hearsay.

<sup>52</sup> As will be discussed later, the Keriya route was the new path connecting Zungharia to central Tibet developed by the Zunghar forces in 1716–1717. Considering these Manchu palace memorials, the Ngari route was clearly not the only road between central Tibet and Zungharia. In other words, during the Zunghar rule in Tibet, travellers used both routes.

inhospitable territories to get from Gartok to Saga.<sup>53</sup> According to Desideri, the Zunghar troops who attempted to travel to Zungharia via the Ngari route were also “weary of the discomforts suffered during their long journey, especially through the great desert of Ngari Jungar they had had to cross in order to reach the border”.<sup>54</sup> A Manchu palace memorial concurs that the Ladakh region was distant from central Tibet, and the road from Ladakh to Tibet was so precipitous that it was very difficult for a large army to advance along it. According to this source, on the road between Yarkand and Ngari, the mountains and passes were high, grass and water were scarce, and there were many deserts, making it a highly difficult route to travel.<sup>55</sup>

Due to the inconvenience of the western Ngari route, the size of the Zunghar caravans using this route tended to be much smaller than that of the Oirad and Zunghar travellers along the eastern Khökhe-nuur road. For example, only ten Muslims came to Ladakh from Yarkand to trade in 1733,<sup>56</sup> and in the summer of 1742, fifty Muslims led by Zaisang Bambar and Erkhe Darkhan Beg visited Ladakh from Yarkand to conduct trade.<sup>57</sup> In contrast, the Zunghar missions for the Tea-Offering ceremony and its associated trade mart which utilised the eastern Khökhe-nuur route were typically composed of around three hundred people along with sizeable quantities of merchandise.<sup>58</sup> And when Güüshi Khan had entered Tibet via the eastern Khökhe-nuur route in the 1630s, he was accompanied by some ten thousand Oirad soldiers. This may be contrasted with the observation that when Gyurmé Namgyel requested Zunghar forces to be sent to Ladakh in 1750, his request was for just fifty to one hundred men.<sup>59</sup> In light of these observations, it can be concluded that when compared to the eastern Khökhe-nuur route, the western Ngari route was fit only for small scale pilgrimages, trade, and military expeditions. It follows that the western Ngari route was only of primary strategic significance when the eastern Khökhe-nuur highway was shut-down because of military conflicts between the Qing and the Zunghar. This was the situation during the early 18th century.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 211–212.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*: 254.

<sup>55</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1311–004 (Jao Hūi, Qianlong 18.6.8).

<sup>56</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1148–004.1 (Cingboo, Yongzheng 11.10.21).

<sup>57</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1236–006 (Sobai, Qianlong 7.8.21).

<sup>58</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1221–015 (Ortai, Qianlong 4.12.17); Perdue 2015: 7, 16.

<sup>59</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–0983–009 (Bandi, Qianlong 16.1.28).

<sup>60</sup> With Galdan Boshugtu Khan’s downfall in 1697, the Khökhe-nuur Khoshuud nobility led by Dashi Baatur submitted to the Kangxi Emperor in a personal audience at Xi’an, receiving rich titles and gifts from the Qing emperor. From this point,

### 1.2. *A New Route for the Zunghar Forces*

In 1715, the Zunghar ruler Tsewang Rabdan had dispatched two thousand soldiers north of Hami to attack five fortresses on the pretext that his envoys and merchants had been blocked there. However, this military action failed. The Zunghar soldiers were defeated by the local Hami troops led by Emin Beg and the two hundred Qing soldiers garrisoned in Hami.<sup>61</sup> Later, Tsewang Rabdan also sent forces to Gas and stole some livestock from the Qing garrison troops stationed there.<sup>62</sup> At first glance, it might seem that these two military enterprises conducted by the Zunghars were unrelated. However, given the fact that these two actions took place just before the Zunghar invasion of central Tibet in 1716–1717, it is probable that Tsewang Rabdan had dispatched these forces in an effort to secure the two entries to the eastern Khökhe-nuur route. Hami was the portal to the north-eastern branch of the eastern Khökhe-nuur route, while Gas was the entrance to the south-western branch. The failure of these speculative military forays, however, meant that the entire eastern Khökhe-nuur route to Tibet remained inaccessible to the Zunghar troops at this time, necessitating a new strategy.

The situation on the western Ngari route was similarly difficult. Khangchenné was stationed in Ngari as the governor of this region when the Zunghar forces invaded central Tibet in 1716–1717. It was also Khangchenné who first detected the presence of the Zunghar army in Tibet and reported it to Lazang Khan.<sup>63</sup> Travelling via the western Ngari route would therefore have been hazardous for the Zunghar forces and would not have yielded any element of surprise for an attack on Lazang Khan in central Tibet.

Under these circumstances, the Zunghar forces opened an entirely new route from Zungharia to central Tibet. This route was previously completely unknown so that many informants—Tibetans, Muslims, and even Zunghars—were confused about the exact itinerary at first. For this reason, particularly during the early phase of the Zunghar invasion, some reports erroneously stated that the Zunghar troops had

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most of the Oirad princes in the Khökhe-nuur region became pro-Qing, if not subordinate to the Qing, even though they continued to have marital and diplomatic relationships with the Zunghar princes. For details, see Atwood 2004: 574. Therefore, during the 18th century, it was almost impossible for the Zunghars to use the eastern Khökhe-nuur route without permission from the Qing court.

<sup>61</sup> Zhunga'er shilüe bianxiezu 1985: 166; Enkhsuud 2017: 310, 368.

<sup>62</sup> Kraft 1953: 130, 150; *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088.

<sup>63</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 137.



entered Tibet via the western Ngari route.<sup>64</sup> This information was incorrect. Instead, various pertinent sources on the Zunghar movements reveal some very unlikely and unfamiliar place names, such as Keriya (Ma. Keriye) in southern Xinjiang and Nagtsang (Ma. Naktsang; Tib. Nag tshang) in northern central Tibet.

First, regarding the place name Keriya, Samdan's deposition is noteworthy. It reads:

*Previously, Tsewang Rabdan only said that he would send soldiers to Keriya in the Muslim region after he assigned Tseringdondob and others to the military task. Then, we did not know exactly where we would go to war. The Zunghar commanders propagated that they had six thousand soldiers, but the true number of the soldiers was just five thousand and five hundred. Among these forces, Zunghars comprised one third, while our Torghuuds made up two thirds. To each soldier were assigned four to five horses, a camel, and an adequate amount of sheep and grain. Thereupon, Tsewang Rabdan dispatched us, and we arrived in Keriya. At that time our livestock perished, and we left about five hundred ill soldiers in Keriya. Then we travelled on from Keriya for twenty days, then Tseringdondob informed us that we were going to war in Tibet. Because our horses and other livestock were dying due to the very bad grass and water on the way, we suffered great hardships, and our soldiers travelled for seven to eight months on foot. After that, about five thousand soldiers arrived in Tibet. Some of them were killed while we fought several battles, and others died of diseases. Besides the people whom we sent back to our homeland, now there are only about three thousand soldiers left in Tibet. The route that comes from the Ili River to central Tibet via Keriya is very precipitous, and the grass and water en route are also bad (emphasis by the present author).<sup>65</sup>*

Samdan's testimony reveals several interesting points about the Zunghar campaign. First, the Zunghar army kept such close guard on the intelligence concerning the new route that even the soldiers themselves participating in the invasion did not know where they were heading until they were about to enter the Tibetan Plateau. Second, it was neither Yarkand, Hami, nor Gas but Keriya that functioned as the halting point on the itinerary of the Zunghar expeditionary forces. Third, the conditions on the route between Keriya and central Tibet

<sup>64</sup> For example, see Xizang shehui kexueyuan xizangxue hanwen wenxian bianjishi (ed.), *Pingding Zhunga'er fanglüe* (平定準噶爾方略; henceforth, *Zhunga'er fanglüe*) 1990: 92; Kraft 1953: 128; *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088 and no. 3129; Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 137.

<sup>65</sup> *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (胤禛) (Kangxi 58. 7. 9) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3436].

were extremely arduous. The entire route was very high and steep, and there was little water and grass to sustain livestock.

As such, it is quite understandable that so many people, during the early phase of the Zunghar warfare in Tibet, assumed that the Zunghar army's route to Tibet was via the western Ngari route. The military campaign of the Zunghars to Tibet was so confidential that no one except for the highest echelons of the Zunghar leadership knew even the outlines of the operation, let alone any detailed plans. At that time no one would ever have guessed that so many Zunghar troops could have entered Tibet from Keriya. Before this invasion, the Keriya route was totally unknown and was therefore inconceivable as a route of military action.<sup>66</sup>

The Zunghar army created the Keriya route to infiltrate central Tibet without being noticed by the Qing, the Khökhe-nuur Khoshuuds, or Lazang Khan's Tibetan government. As revealed by Samdan's deposition above, the Zunghar troops appear to have roamed around the vast region that lay between Keriya and central Tibet for an extended period of time in order to pioneer a completely new route. Considering the actual distance between Keriya and Nagtsang, it seems that the duration of seven to eight months mentioned by Samdan was too long a time to travel between the two places. Compared to the eastern Khökhe-nuur and the western Ngari routes, both of which were rather circuitous, Keriya–Nagtsang was as the crow flies a much more direct route, but the conditions made it near impassable, and there appears to have been no established route before this time, thus accounting for the length of time they took.<sup>67</sup> In other words, for the sake of their successful military campaign to central Tibet, the Zunghars attempted to create a whole new route to Tibet, bypassing the other famous and thus well-defended routes. This military venture yielded the Zunghars enormous success. No one foresaw such a bold military move until they had already reached the Nagtsang region.

Concerning Nagtsang, several sources attest to the importance of this location on the new route pioneered by the Zunghar invaders. First of all, Tibetan sources confirm that the Zunghar forces passed

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<sup>66</sup> For this reason, Desideri depicted the regions between Keriya and central Tibet as “the impassable mountains that form a barrier to the kingdom of Independent Taryary”. For details, see Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 212.

<sup>67</sup> The Zunghar forces reportedly needed to spend seven to eight months to go from Keriya up to Nagtsang. The Zunghars were required to travel for such a long time because they were then creating a new route which had hitherto not been used at all and even known to anyone. For this reason, the Zunghars must have gotten lost several times over the course of searching for possible routes. Moreover, since this was a completely new route, the Zunghars must have built some sort of milestones, probably in the form of cairn or *oboo*, along the itinerary for later use.

through Nagtsang on their way to the Dam plain. According to *The Biography of Pholhané*, "six thousand soldiers of the Zunghars advanced through a new desolate route. They claimed that they were escorting the eldest son of Lazang Khan and his wife back to Tibet. Thereupon, the stupid people of Nagtsang were deceived"<sup>68</sup> and provided the Zunghar soldiers with a feast and rest. The same source also relates that when the Zunghar forces began to retreat to their homeland in 1720, a Zunghar soldier fled to the military camp of Pholhané and testified that their troops had come to Tibet from Ngönmokhulung (Tib. Sngon mo khu lung) of Nagtsang.<sup>69</sup> Sumpa Khenpo also wrote that "in the fire-bird year (1717), five military officers, the elder Tshe ring don grub (Ma. *amba* Tseringdondob), Chos 'phel (Ma. Coimpel), Thob chi (Ma. Tobci), Sangs rgyas (Ma. Sanji or Sangji), and Gdugs dkar je'i sang (Ma. Dugar Jaisang), as well as their troops were dispatched from Dzungaria via such places as Dres pa nag tshong and Lā rgan, and arrived in Dam".<sup>70</sup> Manchu palace memorials also provide detailed information on the events which took place in Nagtsang in 1717. According to a document sent by Lazang Khan to several Khoshuud princes in the Khökhe-nuur region and to Qing officials stationed in Xining, on August 10, 1717 (Kangxi 56.7.4) Tsewang Rabdan's forces pillaged a group of people in the Nagtsang region, which bordered Lazang Khan's domain.<sup>71</sup> An envoy of Lazang Khan also imparted interesting information in his oral statement. His testimony attests to the fact that *hiya* Manggut,<sup>72</sup> who was subordinate to the envoy and who had also conducted trade in the Nagtsang region, came back from Nagtsang and then reported that while he was trading there, he had noticed a large horde of camels raising a cloud of dust in the northwest on August 6, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 6.29). At that moment, he figured that this group of people and livestock must have been Tsewang Rabdan's forces because there were no camels in Tibet. Thus, he travelled for four days and nights in haste to report the sighting to Lazang Khan himself. Immediately after receiving this information, Lazang Khan sent Dural Taiji, Wei Zaisang, Darkhan Noyan, and Baatur Noyan along with one hundred soldiers to verify the report made by *hiya* Manggut.<sup>73</sup>

Several important observations can be made from these sources. First, Nagtsang was then considered a border region of Lazang's

<sup>68</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 138.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*: 197.

<sup>70</sup> Sum pa mkhan po (trans. Yang) 1969: 46.

<sup>71</sup> *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088.

<sup>72</sup> The term *hiya* (Ma.), or *kiy-a* (Mo.), is a title meaning "aide, guard, page, adjutant, or chamberlain".

<sup>73</sup> *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088.

Khoshuud Khanate in Tibet. The vast region to the north of Nagtsang was empty land, which no one claimed or defended. Therefore, the Zunghars were able to explore this region freely while travelling from Keriya to Nagtsang. Second, the Zunghar forces approached Nagtsang from the northwest driving a considerable number of camels. This would suggest that the Zunghars travelled from Keriya to Nagtsang through the extensive Jangtang (Tib. Byang thang) plain. Also, by *hiya* Manggut's description, it is apparent that the Zunghars still maintained sufficient livestock when they arrived in Nagtsang, as opposed to Samdan's report that suggests they had lost most of their livestock en route and thus moved on foot. These observations indicate that real reason why the Zunghar troops took so long to travel from Keriya to Nagtsang was not that they lost most of their livestock and then moved on foot, but because they were engaged in creating a new road as a shortcut between Zungharia and central Tibet.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the fact that it was *hiya* Manggut, then trading in Nagtsang, who first reported the arrival of the Zunghars reveals that there were no border guards or sentinels stationed in the Nagtsang region at this time. The lack of security forces in the region again confirms that the Zunghars pioneered this novel and previously unknown route in 1716–1717.

Some scholars might doubt that the Zunghar army took a direct route from Keriya to Nagtsang because each source quoted above mentions these place names—Keriya and Nagtsang—separately. Later Manchu palace memorials, however, clarify that the Zunghar troops indeed passed through Keriya and then Nagtsang consecutively on their expedition to central Tibet. For example, a report by the Tibetan minister *kalön* (Ma. *g'ablon*; Tib. *bka' blon*) Bandida states that according

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<sup>74</sup> However, it is still true that the Zunghar army lost a considerable amount of livestock on the way in view of the testimony by a *rabjamba* (Ma. *ramjamba*; Tib. *rab 'byams pa*; i.e. doctor of Buddhist philosophy), who belonged to Galdan Shireetü Lama and was captured by the Zunghars while he was seeking to obtain offerings from the Nagtsang region. While in custody, he heard from the Zunghars that many horses and camels perished due to the long distance of the journey and heavy snow while the Zunghar soldiers came to Nagtsang. Thus, after the Zunghar troops first reached the region, they publicised that Galdan Danzin, the eldest son of Lazang Khan, came back to Tibet, thereby collecting livestock—i.e. five hundred cows and three thousand sheep in total—from the Nagtsang people. For details, see *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088. Considering the actual number of the Zunghar soldiers who arrived in Nagtsang—i.e. about five thousand—in 1717, however, the amount of livestock that the Zunghars collected from the Nagtsang people was not that large. If they had lost most of their livestock en route, the Zunghars would have needed to collect a far greater number of animals from the people of Nagtsang. Therefore, it is plausible that the Zunghars were still able to keep a sufficient amount of livestock while they were pioneering this new route and that their requisition from the people of Nagtsang only represented a partial supplement to their overall number of animals at the time.

to some Tibetan elders, “previously, when Tseringdondob and others came to Tibet detouring via the Keriya route along with their soldiers, they arrived in Tibet very exhausted and suffered greatly because they had travelled more than a year. Only after they seized, by trickery, food and livestock from the people whom Lazang Khan had sent to the Nagtsang region, did they finally regain their vigour”.<sup>75</sup> This again confirms that the Zunghar troops created a new route which linked Keriya to Nagtsang through the Jangtang region. Putting together all the relevant sources, the entire itinerary of the Zunghar army in 1716–1717 was as follows: the Ili River—the Tekes River—Keriya—the northwest of Nagtsang (i.e. the Jangtang plain)—Nagtsang—Tengri-nuur—the Dam plain—Lhasa.<sup>76</sup>

This Keriya–Nagtsang route continued to function as an alternative route between Zungharia and Tibet throughout the three years of Zunghar rule in central Tibet. For example, according to the deposition by Lama Tsetsen Gelüng Dondob Jiamtsu, some Tibetans of the Nagtsang region told him that when the Zunghars in central Tibet sent *hiya* Sereng—one of the Qing commanders captured by the Zunghars in 1718—to Tsewang Rabdan, he did not eat for more than ten days en route and died after reaching Keriya.<sup>77</sup> This case clearly shows that Sereng was sent to Zungharia via the Nagtsang–Keriya route in 1719. *The Biography of Pholhané* also provides evidence. It narrates an incident in which the Zunghars captured several Mongols, who had been former officials of Lazang Khan, and sent them to Zungharia. On the way, these Mongols fled from Nagtsang to the estate of Pholhané, who received them with good food and hid them in an underground shelter in his house.<sup>78</sup> This again indicates that these captured Mongol officials were also sent to Zungharia via the Nagtsang–Keriya route.

In sum, between 1716 and 1720, the Zunghars used two main routes between central Tibet and Zungharia. One was the western Ngari route, and the other was the new Keriya–Nagtsang route. It was via these two routes that the connection between Tibet and Zungharia was maintained during the Zunghar rule of central Tibet. Although both were less than ideal, steady traffic indeed flowed along them. According to an oral report by a Zunghar envoy, “people who come from Tibet and go from our Taiji’s place (i.e. the Ili region) go back and forth

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<sup>75</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1295–001 (Namjal, Qianlong 16.3.20). A very similar report is also found in *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1311–004 (Jao Hūi, Qianlong 18.6.8).

<sup>76</sup> As for the Tekes River, refer to *Zhunga'er fanglie* 1990: 110.

<sup>77</sup> *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58.8.22) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3453].

<sup>78</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 170.

ceaselessly [between Tibet and Zungharia]".<sup>79</sup> When the Zunghars withdrew from Tibet to their homeland in 1720, they also used both of these routes. *The Biography of Pholhané* relates that a ruler of Nagtsang informed Pholhané that some Zunghar soldiers moved towards Ngari to retreat to their homeland.<sup>80</sup> Next, a report by Yunti (允禔), the commander-in-chief of the Qing army in Xining (i.e. the same person as Yinzhen/In Jeng), states that when a branch of the Qing forces entered central Tibet on September 24, 1720 (Kangxi 59. 8.23) they obtained information that Tseringdondob and others had fled via the Keriya route.<sup>81</sup> The testimonies of two Zunghar fugitives named Tegüs and Jakha on October 2, 1720 (Kangxi 59. 9. 1) also confirm that Tseringdondob and his followers had returned to Zungharia "from Nagtsang through the Keriya route by utilising the same path they had previously used when coming to central Tibet".<sup>82</sup> Since the Zunghar forces returned to Zungharia separately via the two different routes, the Zunghar commanders arrived at their destination at different times. Tseringdondob, for example, came back to the Ili region in the first month of the 60th year of Kangxi, whereas Choimpel Zaisang only arrived back in the fourth month of the same year.<sup>83</sup>

### 1.3. *The Influence of the Zunghars' New Route on Tibet's Defence System*

By the early 18th century, there existed three main routes between Zungharia and central Tibet, viz., the eastern Khökhe-nuur, the western Ngari, and the central Keriya–Nagtsang routes. The first two were the well-known traditional paths, while the Keriya–Nagtsang route was first opened by the Zunghars between 1716 and 1717. This new route enabled the Zunghars' surprise conquest of central Tibet and then also facilitated communication with the Zunghar headquarters on

<sup>79</sup> *Kangxi manwen*, the document by Funingga (Kangxi 59. 4.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3501].

<sup>80</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 196.

<sup>81</sup> *Zhunga'er fanglüe* 1990: 162; *Jun gar i ba be necihiyeme toktobuha bodogon i bithei julergi banjibun* (henceforth *Jun gar bodogon i bithe*), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, doc. no. Mandchou 144, vol. 8: 14–15. Desideri also wrote that Tseringdondob "took the road through the western desert [...] across the impassable mountains that flank the nearly untrodden roads in this region". This description is reminiscent of his portrayal of the regions along the Keriya–Nagtsang route. For details, refer to Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 259.

<sup>82</sup> Wu 1991: 192, 196.

<sup>83</sup> Regarding the other commanders, it was reported that Tobchi Zaisang was killed together with his five hundred soldiers en route, and Dugar Zaisang died of a disease. Only fifteen hundred soldiers, from among the five thousand that Tseringdondob initially took to Tibet, managed to come back to Zungharia in 1721. For details, see Kraft 1953: 158.

the Ili River during their rule in Tibet. From Tibetan and Qing perspectives, however, this unexpected attack by the Zunghars was a disaster that left a traumatic imprint in the minds of future policymakers. Thus, the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet and the new route the Zunghars had created, in particular, exerted a lasting influence on Tibetan military system under Qing rule. Specifically, after the Qing forces ousted the Zunghars from central Tibet in 1720, both the Qing court and the Tibetan government paid close attention to the Nagtsang region by establishing watch posts (Ma. *karun*) and border patrols along this route. This is one of the most visible changes that the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet engendered in Tibetan military institutions, since previously there had been no defence system whatsoever in the Nagtsang region, let alone the vast Jangtang region north of it.

After the Qing forces pacified central Tibet in 1720, Tibetan troops were stationed at the two strategic points of the Zunghars' two principal routes, namely, Ngari and Nagtsang. According to *The Biography of Pholhané*, after the new ruling apparatus backed by the Qing was established in central Tibet, Khangchenné went back to Ngari. A year later, Pholhané reached Nagtsang and the wilderness beyond it with a small number of soldiers.<sup>84</sup> By the time that Pholhané reached Nagtsang, a Tibetan general from Tsang (Tib. Gtsang) as well as a Mongol commander were already stationed there.<sup>85</sup> Evidently, the purpose of stationing Tibetan troops at these two key locations in 1720 was to forestall any possible return of the Zunghars.<sup>86</sup>

During this early period of Qing political and military influence in Tibet, Pholhané and his soldiers often went to Nagtsang and even patrolled the wilderness north of it. As related in his biography, a Qing general said to Pholhané, "beforehand, you were quite good at overcoming the long march [to Nagtsang] and patrolling [the region. Thanks to your service,] we were able to sleep on high pillows without any worries. Now, I ask you Taiji to go with [your] soldiers to Nagtsang which the Zunghar bandits used as their route when they invaded [Tibet]"<sup>87</sup> Following this, Pholhané and his forces advanced to Nagtsang, where he sent out scouts in every direction. Since Pholhané

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<sup>84</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 209.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*: 210.

<sup>86</sup> At this time, with the coming of the winter, Pholhané came back from Nagtsang because the high mountains and plains of the region became covered with snow with all grass withered away. It is interesting that this is precisely the pattern that later watch-posts and border patrols in Tibet followed. In general, they went off-duty and then came back to their headquarters during winter when everything became carpeted with heavy snow. Therefore, this pattern of border defence was already in operation as early as 1720. For details, see *ibid.*: 212.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*: 213.

and his Tibetan troops had a firm knowledge of the region, there was reportedly no need to worry about the Zunghars stealthily re-entering Tibet.<sup>88</sup> Later, the Qing Emperor issued a decree saying “You Khangchenné, go to the Ngari region! I think that the adjacent regions of Ngari, such as Nagtsang and Saga, are the areas where the Zunghar bandits may frequently appear. Therefore, I order you to watch over and patrol these regions diligently”.<sup>89</sup>

Such close attention to the regions that linked Zungharia to central Tibet, especially the Nagtsang region, continued during later periods. For example, when the Qing court detected the rumour that the Zunghar ruler Galdan Tsereng would send Surza (Ma. Surdza), the youngest son of Lazang Khan captured by the Zunghars after the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet, back to Tibet in 1731, the Qing officials in Tibet reported the Yongzheng Emperor that they were maintaining nine watch posts in central Tibet, three each in the Nagtsang (Ma. Nakcan), Tengri-nuur, and Khara-usu regions, and just sent out patrols to all the sentry posts.<sup>90</sup> Soon after, in preparation for the possibility that Surza would come back from Zungharia to Tibet with Zunghar forces, Qing officials investigated possible routes through which the Zunghars could approach Tibet. According to their survey, there were only three routes that the Zunghars could utilise to come to Tibet; that is, the Ngari, Jesken Turu (Ma. Jesken turu; i.e. the south-western branch of the eastern Khöke-nuur route), and Keriya routes.<sup>91</sup> Later, in 1736, when the Qing court obtained intelligence that Galdan Tsereng had sent a person named Namkha Jamba (Ma. Namk’a jamba) to Tibet to invite a doctor, Pholhané, then at the rank of *beile*, dispatched scouts to three routes to verify whether the intelligence was accurate or not. To collect relevant information, Pholhané sent Tsagaan Khashikha, along with nine soldiers, to important mountain passes linking Yarkand with Ngari; Süg Zaisang, also with nine companions, to critical passes, such as Nagtsang and Musu Jegen (Ma. Musu jegen), of which roads came from Keriya; and Nachin Khashikha, together with nine followers, to the Akhayag route that was a crucial path connecting Gas with central Tibet.<sup>92</sup>

In 1747, Fuching (Ma. Fucing; i.e. a Grand Minister Resident of Tibet in 1745–1748 and 1750; Ch. Zhuzang dachen 駐藏大臣)<sup>93</sup> conducted a survey on the routes linking Zungharia with central Tibet in the face

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*: 215.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*: 228.

<sup>90</sup> *Xinjiang huibian*, vol. 1, 66–69.

<sup>91</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1117–010 (Fengšengge, Yongzheng 9.8.19).

<sup>92</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1189–016 (Nasutai, Qianlong 7.9.18).

<sup>93</sup> Concerning Fuching, see Hummel 1943: 249–251; Petech [1950] 1972: 285.



of the imminent third *manja* ceremony and trade by the Zunghars. Fuching's investigation indicates that there existed five routes in total between Zungharia and central Tibet, all equipped with sentry outposts (see table 1). At each sentry post, one hundred soldiers were stationed under a commander.

Name of the routes	Name of the <i>karuns</i> installed
The Akhayag route (Ma. Ahayak <i>jugūn</i> )	Khajir-debter
	Jungga-rimar
	Nomkhon
The Tengri-nuur route (Ma. Tenggeri noor <i>jugūn</i> )	Muskijegen
	Sengge-ojo
The Nagtsang route (Ma. Naktsang <i>jugūn</i> )	Gukstang
	Tebke-tolugai
	Omo-kulum
The Rutok route (Ma. Rutok <i>jugūn</i> )	Tsetang-ritang (in Ngari)
The Nure route (Ma. Nure <i>jugūn</i> )	Nuru (in Ladakh)

Table 1. The routes and karuns between Zungharia and central Tibet in 1747.<sup>94</sup>

In the aftermath of the downfall of Gyurmé Namgyel, Bandi and Namjal (i.e. the *ambans* or Grand Ministers Resident in Tibet in 1751–1752), following the Qianlong Emperor's order, significantly reinforced the defence system of central Tibet by installing additional sentry posts in 1751. As a result, a line of successive sentry posts (or *karuns*) was constructed along the northern frontiers of Tibet, from Ngari in the west up to Akhayag in the northeast (see table 2).

<sup>94</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1272–010 (Sobai, Qianlong 12.8.10). Among the five routes, the Akhayag and the Tengri-nuur routes constituted the eastern Khökhe-nuur route. The Nagtsang route represented the Keriya–Nagtsang route. Lastly, the Rutok and the Nure routes comprised the western Ngari route.

Name of the main regions	Name of the <i>karuns</i> installed
From Yarkand to Rutok (of Ngari)	Kargem
	Belgun
	Nangma
From Rutok to Nagtsang	Duidangjilgar
	Tsunduba
	Tsemaninja
From Nagtsang to Tengri-nuur	Dzalashan (or Tsalashan)
	Labsai-namu (outside Dzalashan/Tsalashan)
	Rag'gajongmar
	Tsamardilbu
	Rajukyakdu
From Tengri-nuur to Khara-usu	Gangsiba
	Sejuk
	Sengga'nojor
From Khara-usu to Akhayag	Musijergen
	Bungga-rimar (or Jungga-rimar)
	Akhayag
	Shuntugur (outside Akhayag)

Table 2. The karuns along the northern frontiers of Tibet in 1751.<sup>95</sup>

Lastly, in 1753, Jao Hūi,<sup>96</sup> then the Grand Minister Resident of Tibet, presented the Qianlong Emperor with a comprehensive plan for the defence of Tibet against the Zunghars:

In total, there are four routes which connect Zungharia to central Tibet. Apart from the four routes of Ngari, Nagtsang, Tengri-nuur, and Akhayag, there is no other route.<sup>97</sup> Previously, when Tseringdondob and others invaded Tibet surreptitiously, they came to Tibet through the Nagtsang route. This route, however, traversed large deserts and was difficult to pass. Beforehand, Tseringdondob and others had travelled for

<sup>95</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0174-1295-001 (Namjal, Qianlong 16.3.20).

<sup>96</sup> Regarding Jao Hūi, see Hummel 1943: 72-74.

<sup>97</sup> The Akhayag and the Tengri-nuur routes constituted the eastern Khökhe-nuur route.

about a year detouring from the Keriya route. [...] On this route, it is a one-month journey from Nagtsang up to the Labsai-namu *karun*, which was installed at the frontier region north of Nagtsang. If we receive any information about a Zunghar advance, *diba* (Tib. *sde pa*) of the Nagtsang region will take soldiers and attack the Zunghar forces [...] From Lhasa, I, Jao Hūi, your servant, will take three hundred imperial soldiers and will also send out a *kalön* and a *daibung* (Tib. *mda' dpon*; i.e. general of the Tibetan army) along with the eighteen hundred Tibetan troops, who are already on stand-by, to important strategic passes on the way to Nagtsang to defend those crucial places. We will also assemble and dispatch the one thousand soldiers who are standing ready in such places as Dam, Khara-usu, and Yangbajin, and with our well-provisioned soldiers, we will kill the Zunghar forces who will be arriving exhausted. Thus, there will be nothing to worry about. Next, although it is quite close from Ladakh to Ngari, the king of Ladakh only admits a small number of merchants from Zungharia. So, how could the Ladakhi king allow many Zunghar people into [Tibet]? Although there is a road that runs from Yarkand of the Zunghar [Principality] directly to Ngari, people say that between Yarkand and Ngari, there are colossal mountains and passes, that water and grass are scarce, and that there are many deserts, making it thus significantly difficult to pass. Furthermore, it is a two-month journey from Ngari to central Tibet. Now, we have installed *karuns* in all the frontier regions of Ngari. Thus, even if Zunghar forces come to Tibet through this route, if the *diba* stationed in Ngari attacks the Zunghars with the three thousand five hundred soldiers he has at his disposal, we can surely repel the Zunghars easily. [...] These two routes of Ngari and Nagtsang are therefore all strong [in terms of defence]. There is nothing to worry about. The two routes of Akhayag and Tengri-nuur are both broad. The Zunghar Tea-Offering envoys visited central Tibet twice using the Akhayag route. [...] Now, on this route, we have installed *karuns* in such places as Musijergen, Bungga-rimar, and Akhayag. Also, at Shuntugur outside Akhayag, we have placed a *karun* to watch over the route. [...] The sentry outposts are densely installed, their inspection of the border regions is strict, and the defence is dependable. Therefore, it is unnecessary to add or amend anything.<sup>98</sup>

To sum up, the Qing court and the Tibetan government both paid close attention to the various routes that connected Zungharia to central Tibet until the collapse of the Zunghar Principality in 1755. More importantly, the Nagtsang–Keriya route which the Zunghars newly created in 1716–1717 continued to remain as a critical target of close observation and defence from the perspectives of the Qing and Tibetan authorities. In other words, the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet, and

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<sup>98</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0174–1311–004 (Jao Hūi, Qianlong 18.6.8).

the opening of the new Nagtsang–Keriya route in particular, indeed left a lasting imprint on the Tibetan defence system of later periods.

## *2. A Military Scheme of the Zunghars and its Impact on Tibetan Military Strategy*

### *2.1. The Battles between the Zunghar Troops and Lazang Khan's Forces*

After having travelled the new route between Keriya and Nagtsang, the Zunghar forces set up their military camps in Nagtsang in the summer of the 56th year of Kangxi (1717). According to the report by a *rabjamba*, a follower of Galdan Shireetü Lama, the Zunghar troops installed a sentry post (Ma. *karun*) of two hundred soldiers near the shore of Lake Tengri-nuur and established two separate headquarters in Nagtsang with three to four thousand soldiers in total.<sup>99</sup> After learning that the Zunghar army had already arrived in the Nagtsang region, Lazang Khan dispatched one hundred soldiers to investigate. Thus, the first skirmish between the two sides broke out close to Lake Tengri-nuur. After that, Lazang Khan also installed sentry outposts at the same lake. In preparation for the imminent battles with the Zunghars, Lazang Khan and his son, Surza Taiji, both then stationed in the nearby Dam plain, assembled a force of some ten thousand soldiers, consisting of about two thousand Oirads (Ma. *Ület*) and around seven thousand Tibetans (Ma. *Tanggūt*).<sup>100</sup>

Soon afterwards several major battles were fought in the Dam plain. On August 25, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 7.19), the Zunghar troops advanced to Dam through the Largin pass (Ch. La'erjin ling 拉尔金岭; probably corresponding to Sumpa Khenpo's *Lā-rgan*, "old pass"). The Zunghars successfully broke through the mountain pass with only a small number of casualties, even though Lazang Khan had dispatched five hundred soldiers to defend it. At this point, the Zunghar army made an interesting move. As soon as they crossed the pass, they struck west and ascended the mountain. In the midst of the mountain, they pillaged the monastery of Kundui Lama (昆堆喇嘛), who was affiliated with the Panchen Lama, and built a stronghold there from which to confront Lazang Khan's military camps. In contrast, Lazang Khan reportedly built his fortress in an open field on the Dam plain as the headquarters of his army.<sup>101</sup> On August 31, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 7.25),

<sup>99</sup> *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088.

<sup>100</sup> *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088, no. 3129.

<sup>101</sup> There is an interesting report regarding Lazang Khan's military deployment. According to the oral testimony by Sonom, a subject of Achi Lobzang Taiji, Lazang

Lazang Khan, Taiji Surza, and Taiji Achi Lobzang commanded fifteen hundred Mongolian and ten thousand Tibetan soldiers in an attack on the Zunghar troops, who were then just about five thousand. Even though Lazang Khan's forces considerably outnumbered the Zunghars, Lazang Khan and his followers were unable to defeat their enemies because the Zunghar troops had occupied a high position on a mountain and built a fortification there as their military camp. Later, Lazang Khan's troops assailed the Zunghars repeatedly on September 2, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 7.27), September 3, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 7.28), and September 23, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 8.19). Over the course of these major battles, Lazang Khan's army, whose headquarters was in an open field, was barely able to inflict any damage on the Zunghar troops, who had the advantage of having their military camp on a high mountain.<sup>102</sup> According to the report by Sonom (Ma. Sonom; Tib. Bsod nam), Lazang Khan's forces led by Taiji Achi Lobzang only killed about one hundred Zunghar soldiers during the four main battles. Considering that the informant Sonom was a subject of Achi Lobzang and thus highly inclined to aggrandise his master's deeds, his statement ironically reveals the extent of Achi Lobzang's, and by extension Lazang Khan's, failure in the battles. The Zunghar soldiers were then able to advance on Lhasa with their entire force almost intact and attack the city on the dawn of October 8, 1717 (Kangxi 56. 9. 4).

A similar description of these battles is also found in *The Biography of Pholhané*. This source narrates that after having received information that a large number of Zunghar forces were approaching the Dam plain from Nagtsang, Lazang Khan dispatched some Mongol scouts to examine the situation. This reconnaissance party encountered some Zunghar patrols at Lake Tengri-nuur where the two sides engaged in their first skirmish. After thus confirming that the Zunghar forces were indeed hostile to him, Lazang Khan sent Pholhané to Lhasa to muster Tibetan soldiers from the Ü and Tsang regions. Having dealt with his task quickly in Lhasa, Pholhané came back to the Dam plain, where,

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Khan rejected Achi Lobzang's useful suggestions three times and finally built a rampart in an open field of Dam to fight the Zunghar army. First, Achi Lobzang suggested Lazang Khan send two to three thousand soldiers to Lake Tengri-nuur to proactively attack the Zunghar forces who were then exhausted after their long journey. After that, Achi Lobzang's second proposal was to attack the Zunghars on the farther side of the Largin pass before the Zunghar forces crossed it. After Lazang Khan decided to wage a battle with the Zunghar forces on the near side of the Largin Pass, Achi Lobzang made his final suggestion that they had better construct a bastion on a high mountain to facilitate their attacks on the Zunghar forces. Denying all these proposals by Achi Lobzang, Lazang Khan finally installed his main military camp in an open plain of the Dam area. For details, see *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3129.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

following Lazang Khan's orders, he constructed palisades and trenches to prepare for the impending battles with the Zunghars. At this juncture, Pholhané reportedly argued that they needed to station musketeers on the Khudü Mountain (Tib. Khu 'dus) for defence.<sup>103</sup> However, Dawa Erkhe Taiji, the father-in-law of Lazang Khan, refuted Pholhané's suggestion saying:

Pholhané Taiji! You are a boy born and raised in Tibet, not a Mongol who is good at war and conquering. You do not know anything. [...] Previously, I went to war and fought for a long time following Ablai, Tsetsen Khan, and Boshugtu Khan. When we notice enemies coming, the only proper way to deal with them is to attack them directly. It is never righteous to defend mountains and cliffs to the death.<sup>104</sup>

As a result, continues the biography, it was the Zunghar forces that encamped on a mountain while Lazang Khan's troops remained on the open field. Soon, several major battles ensued. During these battles, Lazang Khan's troops endeavoured to attack and to occupy the Zunghar camp in its elevated position, but to no avail. Despite the hard efforts of Lazang's soldiers, it was Lazang Khan's side that suffered most casualties. For example, a Tibetan commander named Arongpa (Tib. A rong pa), together with his soldiers, moved stealthily for a night along a ridge of the mountain behind the Zunghar camp. But because a spy informed the Zunghars of this secret operation, the Zunghar forces were able to lay an ambush in advance on the mountaintop. As a result, the Zunghars annihilated the Tibetan troops. In the ensuing *melée*, the renowned Tibetan commander Arongpa was shot and killed by the Zunghars. A few days later, a Tibetan army again moved to a mountainous area to attack the Zunghar stronghold on the mountaintop. Pholhané and his fellow Tibetan commanders assailed the Zunghar camp where Chöpel (Tib. Chos 'phel), one of the five

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<sup>103</sup> According to Sonom's report discussed above, it was not Pholhané but the Mongol Taiji Achi Lobzang who urged Lazang Khan to build a stronghold on a high mountain in the Dam region. For now, it is hard to tell which record is more reliable since both writers had reasons to embellish their own masters—i.e. for Sonom, Taiji Achi Lobzang and for Tsering Wanggyel, Pholhané. It is possible that both Pholhané and Taiji Achi Lobzang made similar proposals to Lazang Khan at that time. In any case, from these accounts, it can be inferred that both Mongols and Tibetans in central Tibet believed in the wake of these defeats that Lazang Khan's failure to defeat the Zunghar forces in the Dam plain was because he had not installed his military camp on a high mountain while the Zunghars did so. Also, one can confidently surmise that the Mountain Khudü mentioned in *The Biography of Pholhané* refers to the western mountain on which the Zunghars had pillaged the monastery of Kundui Lama and installed their military camp with ramparts, as appears in Sonom's report.

<sup>104</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang gyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 139.

Zunghar generals, was in charge of the defence. Despite the bravery of the Tibetan troops, a personal attendant of Pholhané as well as the famous Tibetan commander Bumtangpa (Tib. 'Bum thang pa) were both killed during the battle. Soon after this defeat, the Zunghars descended from the mountain and advanced to Lhasa through the Dam plain.<sup>105</sup>

Lazang Khan's report to the Qing court also corroborates these events with some variation. According to this source, Tseringdondob and his six thousand Zunghar soldiers arrived at a mountain called Jingkorting (Ma. Jingk'orting) and occupied a steep and critical location on the mountain. After that, the Zunghars attacked Lazang Khan's army from the upland. Later, at night, they crossed a mountain pass to come to the Dam plain, where they encamped.<sup>106</sup> Once again, this confirms that the Zunghar forces had occupied a high and strategic position before the main battles with Lazang Khan's troops. Therefore, all the evidence presented so far leads to the conclusion that the Zunghar military success was in large part because of their strategy of occupying an elevated position. In this way, they were able to overcome Lazang Khan's forces despite their numerical inferiority.

## 2.2. *The Battles between the Zunghars and Qing Forces*

After the Zunghars had defeated Lazang Khan and occupied central Tibet by the end of 1717, they continued to employ the same field strategy in their engagements with Qing forces. For instance, when Sereng, a Duty Group Commander (Ma. *idui ejen*) of the Qing troops, assailed Zunghar forces at a place called Tsagaan Obootu (Ma. Cagan obotu) on August 17, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.21), the Zunghar soldiers were reportedly stationed on four different mountains. Specifically, Sereng departed from Khökhe-saya (Ma. Kukusai), north of the Murui-usu River, and headed towards central Tibet on July 8, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 6.11). On August 15, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.19), he and his forces crossed the Khara-usu River and encamped there. On August 17, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.21), Sereng's followers succeeded in capturing a Zunghar soldier named Damba. According to Damba's deposition, some Zunghar forces had encountered the Qing troops led by the General Erentei at a place called Chilun-gol (Ma. Cilun gol), between the Murui-usu and the Khara-usu rivers, and had engaged Erentei's army twice. Since the Zunghars were defeated by the Qing forces in both of these battles,<sup>107</sup>

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*: 138–142, 147.

<sup>106</sup> *Zhunga'er fanglüe* 1990: 105; *Jun gar bodogon i bithe*, vol. 4: 81–82.

<sup>107</sup> Another report provides a more detailed depiction of the Chilun-gol battle. In the first place, the Qing general Erentei left Khökhe-nuur along with his fifty soldiers on June 5, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 5. 7) and caught up with Sereng on the Murui-usu River on July 6, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 6. 9). Thereupon, Sereng again advanced southward

the Zunghar troops were then retreating towards Dam and were expected to arrive in the region, where Sereng's forces were quartered, at the mealtime of the very same day. Having obtained this information, Sereng immediately took fourteen hundred soldiers and advanced towards the Zunghars. When Sereng and his forces reached Tsagaan Obootu, they met the Zunghars. Sereng's troops engaged their enemy and were successful in seizing the three mountain strongholds which the Zunghars had occupied. Thereupon, when the Qing troops arrived at the fourth mountain the Zunghars were occupying, the Zunghar forces immediately fled without fighting. In these battles, the Zunghar troops were reportedly composed of about three thousand soldiers utilising arrows, muskets, and other weapons.<sup>108</sup> Even though the Zunghars failed to defeat the Qing forces on these occasions, it is worth noting that the Zunghar troops had once again set up their military camps on mountains. Furthermore, it seems that the Zunghars, who were then only transiting from Chiluun-gol towards the Dam region, did not anticipate these battles. Thus, it is possible to assume that it had become a routine military procedure for the Zunghars to occupy mountain positions when setting up military camps.

Later, when the Zunghar troops achieved their biggest victory against the Qing army in central Tibet, they also employed this strategy. Specifically, after having gained a major victory at Tsagaan Obootu on August 17, the Qing commander Sereng asked the General Erentei, then encamped at Chiluun-gol, to join him on August 22, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.26). Upon receiving Sereng's request, Erentei crossed the

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with his troops. At that time, Erentei continued to remain to the north of the Murui-usu River—probably at Khökhe-saya—and made about one thousand of his two thousand soldiers cross the river in vessels made of cowhide. Later, Erentei received information that his personnel transporting grain and silver to Sereng failed to catch up with Sereng's troops and returned to his camp. No sooner had Erentei obtained this news than he departed with his twelve hundred soldiers who had already crossed the Murui-usu River to catch up with Sereng. On August 12, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.16), Erentei and his forces arrived at Chiluun-gol. That night, some Zunghar troops stole about one hundred horses from the Qing forces. On the night of August 15, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.19), more than two thousand Zunghar soldiers attacked Erentei's camp. From night until noon the next day, the battle continued, with the Zunghar forces eventually retreating. During these battles, the Zunghars utilised muskets, lances, bows, and arrows but no cannons. For details, see *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 5.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3402]. It is interesting to note that the Zunghar forces had reportedly just *returned* after the prolonged battle. Therefore, it is plausible that the Zunghar troops were not necessarily defeated by Erentei's forces at Chiluun-gol. A more reasonable interpretation would be that the battles between the Zunghars and the Qing forces at Chiluun-gol were indecisive.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*



Khara-usu River along with four hundred soldiers on August 24, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.28) and caught up with Sereng's forces. At that time, the rest of Erenteï's soldiers remained at Chiluun-gol, north of the Khara-usu River. On August 25, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.29), the unified Qing forces led by Erenteï and Sereng harried the Zunghars, but no major battles ensued. Later, on August 30, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 8. 5), after the Zunghars learned that the Qing soldiers who had been left behind at Chiluun-gol were approaching, they set off from a northern mountain and attacked the flank of the Qing forces in an attempt to cut the Qing forces in two. At this time, approximately sixteen to seventeen hundred Zunghar soldiers pillaged more than half of the Qing provisions. From then on, the Zunghar forces assailed the Qing military camps every day. To this end, the Zunghars built a rampart on top of a mountain and fired muskets towards the Qing camps. On September 14, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 8.20), all the Zunghar troops finally withdrew. Later, on September 24, 1718 (Kangxi 57. intercalary 8. 1), the Zunghar forces suddenly descended from two mountains simultaneously and drove away the horses that were grazing outside the Qing camps. At this point, the Qing forces had fallen into dire straits because their livestock had perished, and their grains and provisions were exhausted. On November 20, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 9.28), Erenteï's forces left the camp and again crossed the Khara-usu River in an attempt to re-supply their grain and provisions. The next day, however, Erenteï was shot and killed when a large group of Zunghar soldiers chased and attacked the Qing troops with muskets.<sup>109</sup>

Another report by a lieutenant and a soldier of Erenteï's division offers some more details on these battles. When the Qing forces attacked the Zunghars on August 25, 1718 (Kangxi 57. 7.29), five hundred Zunghar soldiers stood on top of a mountain on the opposite side brandishing a white military standard. Later, when the Qing troops went to obtain provisions from their military camp north of the Khara-usu River, the Zunghars, having learnt that they were in disarray, chased and assailed them. The Zunghars sent out about seven to eight hundred soldiers, who were lying in ambush behind a mountain ridge and then came down from the top of the mountain, to besiege Erenteï and his forces. After realising that he was surrounded, Erenteï summoned Sereng two to three times, but Sereng did not reach Erenteï in time.<sup>110</sup> These descriptions all confirm that a key military strategy of the Zunghar forces in central Tibet was to occupy mountain strong-

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

holds and fight their battles from such vantage points whenever possible. It seems that this tactic served them well, giving them a strategic advantage both defensively and offensively.<sup>111</sup>

### 2.3. *A Zunghar Military Strategy on Battlefields*

As discussed so far, on the battlefields of central Tibet, the Zunghar forces usually established their military camps and strongholds in mountainous terrain. They would then attack their enemies with various weapons, but most prominently with muskets. This Zunghar military strategy bears little resemblance to the traditional tactics of nomadic armies, which usually relied on mounted archery (e.g., the Parthian shot), ambushes, sudden appearance and disappearance, and feigned retreats followed by a volley of arrows and a sudden charge in open grassland.<sup>112</sup> Why did the Zunghars not employ such traditional ways of fighting in central Tibet? Was it because Tibet is a region full of high mountains?

For the Zunghars, the military strategy of installing camps on mountains was not a one-time event customised for the battles in central Tibet. Rather, the Zunghar forces utilised this strategy whenever and wherever possible. One sees an early example of this tactic being employed in *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, which portrays the war between the Khoshuud forces of Ochir Tsetsen Khan and the Zunghar troops of Galdan in 1676.<sup>113</sup> We see another example in 1690, when the

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<sup>111</sup> Unfortunately, there remain no detailed descriptions of the last battles between the Zunghars and Qing troops in 1720. Only Yansin's report provides some glimpses. According to this report, the Zunghar troops attacked the Qing forces three times, all at night, but were seriously defeated because the Qing army had prepared heavy ambushes with cannons and muskets around their military camps in advance. However, it is unknown if the Zunghars installed their military camps on mountains at that time. After these severe defeats, Tseringdondob and his Zunghar soldiers reportedly fled and hid in a mountain valley and dispatched people to high mountains in all directions to keep watch. For details, refer to Wu 1991: 195. From this account, it is possible to see that the Zunghar forces were again using mountains for various strategic military purposes.

<sup>112</sup> Atwood 2004: 348.

<sup>113</sup> According to the brief descriptions found in *The Biography of Zaya Pandita*, the Zunghar troops, led by Makhan (Oir. Maxan) and Kūbūkūi Ui Zaisang (Oir. Kūbūkūi ui jayisang), actively utilised mountains or hills especially when they were attacked by the Khoshuuds, who usually progressed along the lower slope of a mountain or an open field. Specifically, when Makhan found himself in a disadvantageous situation during the battle, he ascended a mountain and probably built a military camp or rampart there. By doing so, Makhan succeeded in gaining an advantage in the battle and then eventually triumphing. Likewise, Kūbūkūi Ui Zaisang, when his opponents surrounded him, defended himself and his soldiers by constructing palisades on a mountain or a hill. As a result, the Zunghars led by

Zunghar troops led by Galdan Boshugtu Khan invaded Khalkha Mongolia and then engaged in battle with Qing forces in Inner Mongolia, again using the strategy of encamping on mountains.<sup>114</sup> Similar strategies can also be observed in the famous battle of Ulaan-butung (Ma. Ulan butung; Mo. Ulayan butung), also in 1690,<sup>115</sup> and during the battle of Zuun-modu (Mo. ʒayun modu) in 1696.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, it is clear that installing military camps on mountains or some other upland areas was already a well-established battle tactic of the Zunghars long before their expedition to central Tibet in 1716–1717. Indeed, such a battlefield strategy had been used in all the major battles the Zunghars fought across Central Asia, Inner Mongolia, and Khalkha Mongolia. Also, at around the same time that Tseringdondob and his followers were fighting their last battles in central Tibet against the Qing, another division of Zunghar army, stationed around Turfan, was using a similar mountain strategy in their battles with Qing forces in the summer of 1720.<sup>117</sup>

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Kübüküi Ui Zaisang were able to earn enough time for Galdan's troops to come to rescue them. For details, see Radnaabadraa 2009: 151–152/35v–36r.

<sup>114</sup> When the Zunghar army won the battle of the Ulkhui River (Ma. Ulhūi bira; Ch. Wu'erhui he 烏爾會河) in eastern Inner Mongolia, they installed at least some of their military camps on a mountain. During the battle, such a military disposition brought substantial benefits to the Zunghars in that the Zunghar soldiers stationed on the top of the mountain served as reinforcements in ambush and successfully made a surprise attack on the Qing forces. For details, see Xizang shehui kexueyuan xizangxue hanwen wenxian bianjishi (ed.), *Qinzheng pingding shuomo fanglüe* (親征平定朔漢方略; henceforth, *Shuomo fanglüe*) 1994: 156.

<sup>115</sup> At the beginning of the battle of Ulaan-butung, the Qing forces led by Prince Fuquan (福全) gradually approached the Zunghars and then arrived at the bottom of a mountain. When the Qing troops looked up, the Zunghars resisted them while encamping in a forest on a high bank on the opposite side of a river and utilising crouched camels as shields. Even though the Zunghars did not occupy a peak of the mountain at that time, they did install their military camp in a more elevated place on the mountain than the Qing forces. For details, see *Shuomo fanglüe* 1994: 181; *Beye dailame wargi amargi babe necihiyeme toktobuha bodogon i bithe* (henceforth *Wargi amargi ba bodogon i bithe*), Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, StaBiKat PPN3346228908, vol. 8: 3.

<sup>116</sup> At the battle of Zuun-modu, the Zunghars, as soon as they encountered Qing troops in Terelji, hurriedly installed their military camp and deployed their soldiers on a small mountain ridge to fight the Qing forces who had already set up their camp on a higher location. Also, the Zunghars fired their muskets down towards the Qing forces from the mountain ridge. For details, see *Gongzhongdang kangxichao zouzhe* (宮中檔康熙朝奏摺; henceforth *Kangxi gongzhongdang*) vol. 8, 1977: 246–249.

<sup>117</sup> Specifically, when the Zunghar troops stationed at the Ilbur-khoshuu (Ma. Ilbur hošo) sentry post were assailed by Qing forces and then lost most of their horses, they took flight upward to a precipitous place of the Ilbur-khoshuu mountain and shot arrows and muskets from there. Afterwards, when the Qing commander Kesitu reached in the middle of the Ilbur-khoshuu mountain, the Zunghar soldiers

The Zunghars continued to employ this military strategy in years following their Tibetan occupation. For example, during the battle of Khotong-nuur (Ma. Hotong noor; Mo. Qotung nayur; located in the midst of the Altai Mountains) in the summer of 1731, the Zunghars installed their military camps on high mountains, and such a battlefield tactic led to one of their biggest military successes.<sup>118</sup> Later in a battle with the Kazakhs in the spring of 1732, the Zunghar troops again utilised strategic mountain encampments.<sup>119</sup> Lastly, at the battle of Erdeni-zuu in the summer of 1732, once the Zunghar forces had arrived at the battlefield, a Zunghar general named Dorjidamba (Ma. Dorjidamba) reportedly rushed to a high ground of a nearby mountain to install his military camp, despite another general, Tseringdondob, firmly opposing this plan and arguing that they needed to encamp together on a flat place.<sup>120</sup>

These examples demonstrate that in almost all their major battles, the Zunghars used this strategy of encamping on mountains or other upland areas, which thus constituted one of their most basic and customary military practices. A departure from the traditional nomadic military customs, this strategy provided the Zunghars with many advantages, as has been seen. It afforded them a superior vantage point on a given battlefield; it gave them excellent opportunities for ambush;

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were standing on a highly steep location of the mountain. For details, see Kraft 1953: 139–140.

<sup>118</sup> During this battle, the Zunghars continuously lay in ambush in the mountains and fired muskets from their shelters. For details, see Zhang 2012: 148; *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1152–007 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.5.4); The National Central Archives of Mongolia, *Khiireend suuj khereg shiitgech manj saidyn yam* (*Küriy-e-dü sayuju kereg sidkegči manju sayid-un yamun*; henceforth *Khiiree manj saidyn yam*), doc. no. M–1–1–2553 (1731), the third document; *Khiiree manj saidyn yam*, doc. no. M–1–1–2553 (1731), the second document.

<sup>119</sup> In this case, the Zunghar forces led by Zaisang Khojimal (Ma. Jaisang Hojimal) installed three military camps each at the foot, on the top, and at the rear of a mountain in preparation for impending battles with the Kazakhs. For details, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1152–010 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.5.22).

<sup>120</sup> Although the Zunghar general Tseringdondob objected to Dorjidamba's tactic of occupying a high mountain as their military camp, Tseringdondob's main point was not that they should install their camp in an open field but that they should concentrate their whole troops in one place or, at least, in close proximity. Given that there are no huge mountains in the region around Erdeni-zuu, when the entire Zunghar forces, of which size reportedly amounted to about thirty thousand at that time, intended to encamp on mountains, they needed to divide their troops onto several separate mountains. Because the Qing side also maintained sizeable troops at that time and mountains in and around the battlefield were not big enough, the Zunghar tactic of making mountain encampments turned out unbeneficial for the Zunghars at that time. For details, see *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0173–1150–014 (Fupeng, Yongzheng 11.11.4); *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03–0172–0440–004.1 (Fupeng, Yongzheng 12.4.13).

it gave them a defensive advantage; and lastly but perhaps most importantly, it made most advantageous use of their firearms. In view of the various descriptions of these battles, it was musket that the Zunghar soldiers used on the battlefields most frequently. By taking high positions, the Zunghar musketeers could secure better sights and had more time to reload. Hence, they were able to improve their accuracy and sometimes even fire more shots than on flat places. Also, shooting muskets from elevated positions considerably enhanced the range of their weapons. The Zunghars' adaptation of their basic military strategy to make best use of the relatively new technology of firearms gave them an advantage over their slower-to-adapt rivals. As such, this new military scheme delivered numerous decisive victories to the Zunghars, even when they were considerably outnumbered by their enemies.<sup>121</sup>

#### 2.4. *Zunghar Influence on Tibetan Warfare Strategy*

This Zunghar strategy likely influenced Tibetan military practices in later periods to a considerable degree. Historians might suppose that the Tibetans, who have lived on the highest plateau of the world for a long time, would have utilised mountains strategically in their warfare long before the Oirads came to Tibet. However, ever since the Khoshuud Oirads came to dominate Tibet militarily from 1637, the Tibetans do not seem to have employed the strategy of installing military camps on mountains at all.<sup>122</sup> In this regard, *The Biography of Pholhané* is a key source since it describes numerous battles which took place in and around Tibet during the 17th and the 18th centuries. First of all, the biography briefly narrates Güüshi Khan's battles against Karma Tenkyong (Tib. Karma bstan skyong, 1606–1642) in Tsang and against the Kagyupa (Tib. Bka' brgyud pa) rulers in the region of Dakpo (Tib.

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<sup>121</sup> The fact that the Zunghars had considerable numbers of firearms on the battlefields was not *per se* the critical factor, since all their opponents, such as the Khoshuuds, the Kazakhs, the Russians, and the Qing, also had various firearms at their disposal by the early 18th century. I argue here that it was the Zunghars' ability to devise strategies and tactics to optimise this weaponry that was the decisive factor in their success.

<sup>122</sup> It is indisputable that many Tibetan fortresses and castles are located on mountain strongholds. Therefore, it is likely that Tibetans had long considered higher positions militarily advantageous, especially when they built defensive apparatuses. At least with the rise of the Khoshuud rule in Tibet in the early 17th century, however, it seems that the Tibetan forces did not prefer to occupy elevated and fortified positions when they launched offensives against their enemies. This tendency might have originated from the Khoshuud military presence in Tibet. After Güüshi and his successors became khans of Tibet, Khoshuud khans or generals functioned as commanders-in-chief in most of the battles that broke out in the whole Tibetan regions.

Dwags po) and Kongpo (Tib. Kong po) soon afterwards. These accounts relate how Dargyé (Tib. Dar rgyas; i.e. the great-uncle of Pholhané) fought courageously in those battles in support of Gūūshi Khan. There is no mention in these descriptions, however, of mountain redoubts being used tactically.<sup>123</sup>

*The Biography of Pholhané* also gives a relatively detailed account of Ganden Tsewang (Tib. Dga' ldan tshe dbang)'s campaigns to Ngari and Ladakh in 1678–1683. When Ganden Tsewang's Mongol troops arrived in Ngari, a reputable general of the Ladakh Kingdom stated that "it is unsuitable to combat the Mongol soldiers in an open field because all of them are good at fighting on horseback. Our troops need to occupy a strategic location on a mountain and a river and defend a solid fortress in order to obtain a victory by employing strategies".<sup>124</sup> The other Ladakhi commanders, however, rejected this opinion arguing that such a plan was unmanly and unheroic. As a result, the two sides clashed on a level plain in Ngari, and the Ladakhi forces were crushed by Ganden Tsewang's Mongol troops. Thereafter, the Ladakhis reportedly no longer dared to fight in the open field, and instead retreated to inside firm ramparts of Taklakhar in Puhreng, Tsahreng Tashigang, and others. Since the Mongol forces were not skilled in laying siege to fortresses on foot, about five thousand Tibetan soldiers were sent to Ngari from the Lhasa region. With the assistance of these Tibetan troops, Ganden Tsewang was able to capture Tsahreng Tashigang smoothly. Finally, the Mongol and the Tibetan armies led by Ganden Tsewang reached Leh, the capital of the Ladakh Kingdom, and installed their military camps and strongholds on the outskirts of the town.<sup>125</sup> These accounts suggest that neither Ganden Tsewang nor his Ladakhi opponents assumed elevated positions for their principal military bases. Only after the Ladakhis suffered a crushing defeat in the open field, were they forced to use several fortresses in the Ngari region as strongholds of last resort.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Regarding the battle in the Tsang region, there is no description of the battle scene. Concerning the combat in Dakpo and Kongpo, the only relevant depiction imparts that Dargyé, at a terrifyingly narrow and difficult part of the route, in a deep defile, joined with the enemy in battle and fought dauntlessly with bows and arrows. Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 13–14; Sperling 2012: 197–198.

<sup>124</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 22.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*: 22–24; Sperling 2012: 202.

<sup>126</sup> According to *The Biography of Pholhané*, when Ganden Tsewang's forces reached the area around Leh, the Ladakhis deployed their forces in the region of Zangla. From the context, the Ladakhis seem to have installed their military camps in an open field again. For details, refer to Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 25.

*The Biography of Pholhané* also provides a detailed record of Lazang Khan's campaign against Bhutan in 1714. It states that Lazang Khan divided his Mongol and Tibetan forces into three wings and then advanced. Lazang Khan himself marched to Padro (Tib. Pa gro/ Spa gro), the western domain of the king of Bhutan. Pholhané, Erkhe Daiching (Tib. Er khe da'i ching; Mo. Erke dayičing; i.e. Khangchenné in Mongolian), and Bumtangpa, along with a large army, advanced on Bumtang in central Bhutan. And Baarin Taiji, Surkhang Guyang Khashakha (Tib. Zur khang Gu yang kha sha kha), and others attacked the eastern territory of the king of Bhutan.<sup>127</sup> During the battles that ensued, the Bhutanese predominantly defended themselves in elevated fortresses, using firearms to shoot down towards their enemies. As a result, the troops led by Pholhané, Khangchenné, and Bumtangpa had to use several defensive apparatuses and various cannons to lay siege to the Bhutanese strongholds.<sup>128</sup> Although the Tibeto-Mongolian forces had won some battles, they were finally compelled to retreat from Bhutan after suffering major losses during the siege of the capital of the Bhutanese Kingdom. The battle descriptions from central Bhutan also indicate that the Tibeto-Mongolian forces led by Pholhané and others did not employ mountain encampments as a battlefield strategy, even when they were at a serious tactical disadvantage (e.g., when they tried to attack a fortress constructed on a high location from below).

As discussed earlier, when the Zunghar troops led by Tseringdondob reached the Dam plain in 1717, Lazang Khan set up his military camps in an open field of Dam, even though some of his officials (e.g., Achi Lobzang Taiji and Pholhané) suggested that he build a stronghold or install a regiment of musketeers on a mountain. *The Biography of Pholhané* provides important insight into the reason why the top echelons of the Khoshuud leaders rejected these proposals. According to the biography, Dawa Erkhe Taiji, the father-in-law of Lazang Khan, rebutted Pholhané's idea by arguing that the only correct and honourable way to deal with enemies was to attack them directly, and that it was never righteous to defend mountains and cliffs to the death. Here, it is worth noting that the Ladakhi commanders had made similar arguments when they encountered Ganden Tsewang's Mongol troops in the Ngari region thirty to forty years prior. One may conclude therefore that the prevailing military orthodoxy among both Mongol and

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*: 122. On Surkhang Guyang Khashakha, see also Alice Travers' article in this volume.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*: 123, 125–127.

Tibetan troops, before the Zunghar invasion of 1717, was to meet their enemy in the open field.<sup>129</sup>

However, after the Zunghar rule from 1717 to 1720, there seems to have been a change in Tibetan basic military strategy. During the Tibetan civil war following the death of Khangchenné in 1727, both sides almost invariably attempted to occupy high mountain positions and fire their cannons from elevated locations. This can be seen in the account of the war provided in *The Biography of Pholhané*. For example, when the Tibetan troops led by Pholhané and Changlo Chenpa (Tib. Lcang lo can pa) of the Tsang region first encountered the troops commanded by Lumpané (Tib. Lum pa nas), the soldiers of the Ü, Dakpo, and Kongpo areas under the command of Lumpané took up a position at the beginning of the battle on a mountain above the Nyangchu (Tib. Nyang chu) River. Later, the troops from Ngari and Tsang led by Pholhané and his allies surrounded and attacked this mountain position. Although Pholhané's side won the battle that day, the result over the ensuing days was indecisive.<sup>130</sup> Soon afterwards, we hear that most of Pholhané's foot soldiers climbed a mountain while he deployed his mounted forces on the open field. At dawn, Pholhané ordered a series of volleys of cannon fire from the mountain position, which had a decisive effect on the opposing troops of Ü, Dakpo, and Kongpo.<sup>131</sup> However, despite this victory, Pholhané and his allies eventually had to retreat to Saga due to the onslaught by the Hor Mongols (i.e. various Mongol groups dispersed in the plains of northern Tibet, such as Dam, Yangpachen, and Nagchu) in support of Lumpané.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Why then did Pholhané argue that Lazang Khan's forces should position their musketeers on the mountain? Regarding the pertinent section in the biography, I argue that in many episodes, the contents of *The Biography of Pholhané* should not be read literally. First, the biography was written in 1733. Thus, most of the chapters of the book were composed retrospectively. Second, the author of the biography often reveals his intention to embellish the protagonist of this writing. Lastly, the author Tsering Wanggyel apparently wrote this biography in an era when the strategy of making military camps on mountains and shooting firearms from above had already become a new standard way of combat in central Tibet. Therefore, it is likely that Tsering Wanggyel made up this astute utterance of Pholhané to glorify the intellectual side of his military capabilities.

<sup>130</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 290–292.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*: 295.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*: 296. Here, it is quite interesting that the Hor Mongol forces still functioned as a crack contingent in Tibet and determined the result of the entire battle, although cannons seemingly predominated the overall battle scenes in central Tibet. Indeed, according to *The Biography of Pholhané*, one of the main reasons why Pholhané finally emerged triumphant in the Tibetan civil war was that he was able to win over the various Mongol forces in Yangpachen, Dam, and Nagchu to his side before his advance on Lhasa. For details, refer to *ibid.*: 311–313. It appears therefore that the Mongol forces in and around the Dam plain continued to serve as a crucial military factor in the military history of Tibet even after the collapse of Oirad sovereignty—



On his way to Saga, however, Pholhané came back to Ngamring (Tib. Ngam ring) with his troops. At the same time, he dispatched a contingent of forces to occupy Gyantsé (Tib. Rgyal rtse) before his enemies reached there. Two days later, the Tibetan troops from Ü, Dakpo, and Kongpo arrived at Gyantsé but failed to capture its fortress. For this reason, they encamped around the small towns called Gyelkhar (Tib. Rgyal mkhar) and Tashigang (Tib. Bkra shis sgang) near Gyantsé. From the tenth month of 1727, skirmishes broke out almost every day in this region, but neither side could win a significant victory.<sup>133</sup> One day, when Pholhané launched an attack, his enemies were stationed on the summit of a southern mountain. Pholhané and his troops successfully assaulted and captured this mountain position, whereupon they fired cannons from there towards the enemy headquarters at Gyelkhar.<sup>134</sup> Later on, the Tibetan troops led by Pholhané maintained a sustained barrage of cannon fire from the Gyantsé stronghold and the neighbouring elevated places, killing many enemy soldiers, horses, and mules. As a result, the soldiers from Ü took refuge in a military camp at the foot of a desolate mountain named Ganden Chöpel (Tib. Dga' ldan chos 'phel). In the face of a sustained artillery assault from Pholhané's forces, the stranded Ü troops soon ran out of provisions and fodder.<sup>135</sup> In an attempt to rescue them, Lumpané then brought artillery reinforcements from Ü, but despite a ferocious cannon-led attack, they failed to gain any meaningful advantage. Finally, Lumpané decided to ask the monks of the Tashilhunpo and the Sakya Monasteries to mediate a ceasefire. This military success, which was reliant on holding the Gyantsé fortress and other mountain positions, eventually led to Pholhané's final victory in the Tibetan civil war.

In the last stage of the Tibetan civil war, both sides tried once again to capture a high mountain for a strategic purpose. When Pholhané marched towards Lhasa, Lumpané reportedly occupied a high mountain called Gamotreng (Tib. Dga' mo 'phreng) with his soldiers fanned out from the summit down to the foot of the mountain. One night, Pholhané dispatched three thousand soldiers carrying cannons to the summit of the same mountain and destroyed the enemy positions on the entire mountain.<sup>136</sup> As a result of this triumph, Pholhané was able to occupy Lhasa and obtain the final victory in the Tibetan civil war. Over the whole course of the civil war, therefore, both sides repeatedly

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—i.e. the Khoshuud Khanate and the Zunghar military government—in central Tibet.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*: 298–299.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*: 300.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*: 306–307.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*: 314–315.

used mountain positions for their artillery.<sup>137</sup> This was unheard of before the Zunghar invasion.

One may conclude therefore that this strategy was adopted from the Zunghars. According to several Manchu palace memorials, Tibetans constituted a major portion of the Zunghar troops in central Tibet during 1718–1720.<sup>138</sup> They would have observed and appreciated the efficiency of the Zunghar military strategy during the period of 1717–1720. It is also possible to assume that at least some of the Tibetan troops were trained by the Zunghars in the use of this scheme. As a result, even after the Zunghars had retreated from Tibet in 1720, the Tibetans continued to use the Zunghar mountain-firearms strategy in their own battles. Quite simply, the Zunghar military scheme was better designed to maximise the impact of firearms and thus left its mark on Tibetan military tactics henceforth.

### *3. Weapons Favoured by the Zunghars and their Influences on Tibetan Weaponry*

#### *3.1. Two Weapons Favoured by the Zunghars*

The Zunghar forces utilised various weapons in central Tibet. *The Biography of Pholhané* states that the Zunghar cavalry who came to the Dam plain in 1717 carried lances (Tib. *mdung ring thogs*), muskets (Tib. *me'i 'khrul 'khor*), bows and arrows, swords, and daggers.<sup>139</sup> A Manchu palace memorial also enumerates the weapons that the Zunghar army used in central Tibet: muskets, lances, bows and arrows (Ma. *miyoočan, gida, beri, sirdan*).<sup>140</sup> Although all these weapons were typical for Zunghar soldiers, the first two (i.e. muskets and lances) were the weapons most frequently alluded to in our sources. Muskets are mentioned repeatedly in the accounts of the Zunghar campaigns in *The Biography of Pholhané* and the Manchu palace memorials. Bows and arrows, by contrast, which had long been the emblematic weapons of

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<sup>137</sup> Between the expulsion of the Zunghars from central Tibet in 1720 and the Tibetan civil war in 1727–1728, there were other military activities involving Tibetan forces led by Pholhané. For example, Pholhané mobilised his forces in 1723 to pacify the Mongols of Nagchu, Sogchu, Yushu, and the neighbouring regions who had joined Lobzang Danzin's rebellion. The biography does not, however, include any battle accounts from this period. For details, *ibid.*: 234–239.

<sup>138</sup> *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 5.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3402]; *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 7.26) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3445]; *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 8.22) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3459]; Wu 1991: 195, 196.

<sup>139</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 139.

<sup>140</sup> *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 5.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3402].

nomadic archers, appear to have become almost obsolete among the Zunghars in the 18th century. In addition to the muskets, lances were also regularly used by the Zunghars, especially in hand-to-hand combat. To sum up, a wide range of pertinent sources indicate that the Zunghar troops normally used muskets—and often cannons as well—when they confronted their enemies at a distance. When they fought their adversaries at close range, the Zunghars usually chose lances as their most preferred weapon.

A couple of Manchu palace memorials are revealing in this regard. First, a Manchu letter sent out to the Khalkha Mongol princes, which includes a description of the battle at Lake Khotong-nuur (located in the midst of the Altai Mountains) in 1731, clearly states that:

At present, what we clearly know about the Zunghar forces is that Zunghar men are incompetent on horseback. [*On horseback,*] they are unable to shoot arrows. [*In the battle of Khotong-nuur,*] they depended entirely on the way that they stirred other people (i.e. enemies) by taking lances and rushing upon them in several squads.<sup>141</sup>

This account reveals that Zunghar mounted soldiers were, in general, clumsy in handling bows and arrows and instead preferred to use lances on horseback when they assailed their foes. Moreover, when Zunghar soldiers engaged in hand-to-hand combat, they were organised into several squads of mounted lancers, who charged their adversaries.

A deposition by a Zunghar petty officer named Boguya (Ma. Bogoya) also demonstrates another important aspect of the use of lances by the Zunghars. In this testimony, Boguya was offering the Qing commanders military advice on how to defeat the Zunghars. In part, it reads:

When it comes to the vanguard forces, musketeers are useless. ... Since your arrows are frightening, if a half [of the vanguard troops] are composed of soldiers using lances and the other half [of them] are archers, it will be good. Previously, there were only a few lances in your troops [i.e. the Qing forces]. *In my view, lances are very important. When using a lance, if [a soldier] holds the shaft of it under his armpit and then places the two thirds of the shaft in front while putting [the remaining] one third behind, he will obtain strength in wielding the lance. If [the part of the shaft which is placed] in front is longer [than the two thirds of the shaft], although [a soldier] wields the lance [intensely], on the one hand, he cannot obtain [enough] might, and, on the other hand, [the movement of the lance] will slow down and be useless.*<sup>142</sup>

<sup>141</sup> *Khiiree manj saïdyn yam*, doc. no. M-1-1-2553 (1731), the third document.

<sup>142</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0173-1147-019 (Jalangga, Yongzheng 11.10.10).

In light of these instructions, it is clear that the Zunghars regarded the lance as one of their crucial weapons, and that among the Zunghars, there was a kind of field manual instructing their horsemen how to wield lances more effectively in battle. These tactics—through which the Zunghar cavalry used muskets and lances more actively than bows, arrows, and swords—seem to have been quite effective, when one considers the significant number of Qing soldiers who were reportedly captured by the Zunghars in the wake of their musket and lance attacks. Preliminary research by the present author on runaway captives who were originally Qing officers and soldiers leads to the conclusion that the Zunghars captured most of their prisoners of war using lance charges. The next largest group of captives were captured after Zunghar soldiers fired muskets at them. In only a few cases were prisoners seized after Zunghar attacks with bows and swords.<sup>143</sup>

A good example of this Zunghar battlefield practice was the battle of Zuun-modu fought in 1696. When the Zunghar forces first engaged the Qing army, they did so from a distance, using firearms from a mountain ridge. Then, only when the Qing soldiers had drawn near to the Zunghar camps and started pillaging their provisions and livestock, did a group of Zunghar forces rush at their enemies with lances and swords.<sup>144</sup> Likewise, at the battle of Khotong-nuur in 1731, the Zunghars employed the same tactic.<sup>145</sup> As witnessed in these cases, the Zunghar soldiers indeed preferred to use muskets (often cannons as well) against their enemies from a distance and then use lances when they needed to fight hand-to-hand.

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<sup>143</sup> *Manwen lufu*, doc. no. 03-0172-0440-003 (Fupeng, Yongzheng 12.3.21); doc. no. 03-0172-0440-004.1 (Fupeng, Yongzheng 12.4.13); doc. no. 03-0173-1134-001 (Siboo, Yongzheng 10.2.9); doc. no. 03-0173-1150-017 (Fupeng, Yongzheng 11.12.13); doc. no. 03-0173-1152-002 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.4.16); doc. no. 03-0173-1152-007 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.5.4); doc. no. 03-0173-1152-008 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.5.14); doc. no. 03-0173-1152-010 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.5.22); doc. no. 03-0173-1152-014 (Siboo, Yongzheng 11.7.17).

<sup>144</sup> *Kangxi gongzhongdang*, 1977: 248–250.

<sup>145</sup> When the Zunghars besieged and attacked the Qing forces led by Dingsio (Ch. Dingshou 丁壽), they first fired muskets towards the Qing army. During this barrage, the Qing general Dingsio was reportedly shot in his knee. Later, the next morning, the Zunghars deliberately made an opening to lure the Qing soldiers into an attempt to escape the siege. When the Qing troops began (as intended) to flee through the gap, the Zunghars chased and slaughtered them using lances. As a result, only forty soldiers out of two thousand managed to reach the headquarters of the Qing army. For details, see *Khiiree manj saidyn yan*, doc. no. M-1-1-2553 (1731), the second document.

### 3.2. *A New Firearm of the Zunghars and its Influence on the Tibetans*

The Zunghar battle tactics used in central Tibet also reflect the same basic pattern (i.e. the active use of firearms and lances), which considerably influenced Tibetan military practices in the following era. First, it is likely that the Zunghars introduced a new type of firearm to the Tibetans. A couple of Manchu palace memorials mention the presence of a particular sort of musket favoured by the Zunghars being used in central Tibet. According to a report by a Qing commander named Shuming, the Zunghar forces he previously confronted in Tibet in 1718 had three to four hundred muskets, and among them were about thirty muskets called *dzamra* (sic. *dzamara*).<sup>146</sup> This *dzamra/dzamara* musket was associated almost exclusively with the Zunghars in Manchu and Chinese sources.<sup>147</sup> For instance, when the Zunghar ruler Tsewang Rabdan dispatched his envoy Dagba Lama to Tsagaan Danzin (i.e. a Khoshuud prince in the Khökhe-nuur region) in 1709, he reportedly sent a *dzanbara* musket as a gift.<sup>148</sup> While confirming that the Zunghars were using this kind of musket from the first decade of the 18th century at the latest,<sup>149</sup> this anecdote also suggests that this *dzanbara* musket was not previously available to the Khoshuuds in the Khökhe-nuur region. This indicates that the Zunghars pioneered the use of *dzanbara* musket in the eastern half of central Eurasian steppe during the early years of the 18th century.

The name of this musket, viz., *dzamara*, *dzanbara*, *dzambarak*, and so on, comes from the Persian words *zambūr*, denoting “a bee or a camel-swivel” and *zambūrak* which means “a cross-bow, a small cannon, or a camel-swivel”.<sup>150</sup> This *zambūrak* or lightweight camel-mounted cannon was first invented by Mamluk soldiers in Egypt in the 16th century. In battle, the *zambūrak* cannon was deployed on camelback alongside the cavalry. After the Ottoman Empire conquered the Mamluk Sultanate in 1517, this novel firearm quickly spread to Safavid Persia, Mughal India, and various regions of Central Asia, such as Afghanistan,

<sup>146</sup> *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 5.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3402].

<sup>147</sup> In Manchu and Chinese sources, one finds several variants of this name, for example, *dzamra*, *dzamara*, *dzamura*, *dzanbara*, *dzanbarat*, *dzanbura*, *dzambarak*, and so on.

<sup>148</sup> *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3446.

<sup>149</sup> According to *Qinbian jiliue* (秦邊紀略), Galdan loaded his cannons on camels. Although there is no further information on Galdan's cannon on camelback, it probably indicates the *dzanbara*. If this conjecture is correct, the Zunghars were already using the *dzanbara* from the time of Galdan Boshugtu Khan, probably from the 1680s. For details, refer to Zhang 2012: 81; Perdue 2005: 305.

<sup>150</sup> Steingass 1892: 624. The Persian word *zambūrak* is a diminutive form of the Arabo-Persian word *zambūr* combined with the Persian diminutive suffix “-ak”.

Transoxiana, and even the Tarim Basin.<sup>151</sup> This *zanbūrak* was particularly suitable for battlefield conditions in Central Asia because it was light, convenient, reliable, and mobile. In general, a *zanbūrak* was bigger than an ordinary musket and smaller than a cannon. Therefore, it had greater destructive power and a longer range than a normal musket, while being easier to transport and manoeuvre than a cannon. Thus, the *zanbūrak* was advantageous in mobile warfare; hence, a perfect match for the battlefield tactics of mounted forces in Central Asia.<sup>152</sup>

Among the nomads of central Eurasia, the Zunghars were among the earliest adopters of the *zanbūrak*. It is therefore likely that it was the Zunghars who introduced the *zanbūrak* to central Tibet for the first time in 1717–1720. We know that the Zunghars used the *zanbūrak* muskets in central Tibet, as demonstrated above. Desideri also provides some interesting information on this. He wrote that the Tibetans “also have some iron cannons that they transport on large wheeled carriages, large double muskets, and large culverins”.<sup>153</sup> These large culverins (Ita. *colubrina*) probably correspond to the *zanbūrak*, since a certain type of Central Asian *zanbūrak* can be classified as culverin.<sup>154</sup> It is notable that during the Tibetan civil war of 1727–1728, the Tibetan forces led by Pholhané reportedly used their cannons not only in conventional artillery combat but also in guerrilla operations.<sup>155</sup> This suggests that the Tibetan soldiers were likely using the *zanbūrak*—or some variant thereof—in their civil war, which broke out in the aftermath of the Zunghar rule in central Tibet. Lastly, LaRocca, in his survey of Tibetan armaments, notes the Tibetan word *dzambur* (Tib. ‘*dzam bur*) meaning “a gun or cannon”.<sup>156</sup> Undoubtedly, this was a loanword derived from the *zanbūr/zanbūrak* of the Zunghars. Therefore, a significant outcome for Tibetan military history of the Zunghar invasion was the adoption of the *zanbūr/zanbūrak* in central Tibet in the early 18th century.

However, it should be noted that the Zunghars did not have a monopoly on the influence on Tibetan firearms. As a matter of fact, firearms such as muskets and cannons were already widespread across all the regions of Tibet well before the Zunghars invaded central Tibet in 1716–1717. For example, *The Biography of Pholhané* states that

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<sup>151</sup> Zhang 2012: 83.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*: 83–87.

<sup>153</sup> Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 264.

<sup>154</sup> Zhang 2012: 83.

<sup>155</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 307.

<sup>156</sup> LaRocca 2006: 282. Dr. Alice Travers has informed me that there is another Tibetan word *dzamdrak* (Tib. ‘*dzam grags*), meaning “an ancient firearm dating from the Zunghar time”. Unquestionably, this word also originated from the *zanbūr/zanbūrak* of the Zunghars.

Pholhané's father, Pema Gyelpo (Tib. Pad ma rgyal po), was adroit at shooting both arrows and muskets from horseback.<sup>157</sup> Dradül (Tib. Dgra 'dul), Pema Gyelpo's younger brother, is also reported to have killed wild animals with muskets.<sup>158</sup> Moreover, according to the same biography, Ganden Tsewang utilised muskets on horseback when he attacked the Ladakhi troops in the Ngari region, while the Ladakhis also seem to have used muskets in the battle.<sup>159</sup> At this point, it is interesting to note that the Tibetans are depicted having used muskets from the generation of Pholhané's father. *The Biography of Pholhané* attests that Dargyé, the great-uncle of Pholhané, had only shot arrows while fighting the Kagyupa rulers in Dakpo and Kongpo in support of Güüshi Khan in 1642.<sup>160</sup> One may surmise therefore that muskets—and probably cannons as well—only became widespread in central Tibet with the advent of the Oirad forces led by Güüshi Khan. In fact, according to a report by a Russian envoy to the Zunghar Principality, some seven hundred out of the twenty thousand Oirad soldiers that marched from Central Asia to Khökhe-nuur and central Tibet under Güüshi Khan carried firearms.<sup>161</sup> *The Biography of Pholhané* also states on numerous occasions that Pema Gyelpo, Ganden Tsewang, Pholhané, and others, who reportedly used muskets in Tibet, were able to fire muskets *on horseback* quite well. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the Oirad nomads contributed considerably to the dissemination of firearms in central Tibet from the mid-17th century. Given the fact that firearms were first introduced to Ladakh and Bhutan in the earliest decades of the 17th century at the latest,<sup>162</sup> firearms probably began to be used in central Tibet before the Oirads advanced to Tibet. Therefore, the Oirads were probably not the first people to introduce firearms to central Tibet. However, the Oirads undeniably popularised the use of muskets in central Tibet once they dominated the region. Consequently, it is only from the 17th century on that realistic depictions of matchlock muskets were sometimes included in paintings of offerings to the guardian deities in central Tibet.<sup>163</sup>

Pholhané is also reported to have had excellent skills in both archery and shooting muskets from horseback since he was very young.<sup>164</sup> Likewise, Lazang Khan's attendants, Mongols and Tibetans alike, are described in the biography as having enjoyed the pastimes

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<sup>157</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 17.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*: 31.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*: 22–23.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*: 14; Sperling 2012: 198.

<sup>161</sup> Gol'man and Slesarchuk 1974: 179.

<sup>162</sup> LaRocca 2006: 199–200.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*: 200.

<sup>164</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 105, 109, 176, 187, 241.

of shooting arrows and muskets from horseback and competing against one another in various military skills on the Dam plain.<sup>165</sup> Furthermore, during Lazang Khan's campaign against Bhutan in 1714, the Mongol, Tibetan, and Bhutanese troops alike frequently used varieties of firearms in their battles.<sup>166</sup> Lastly, during the battles between the Zunghar forces and Lazang Khan's troops in 1717, muskets were the main weapons used by both sides.<sup>167</sup>

The Tibetans also already possessed remarkable expertise in producing various kinds of firearms before the arrival of the Zunghars in central Tibet. In this regard, Desideri wrote that the Tibetan people knew how to make gunpowder and remarked on their expertise in casting statues, vases, and musket barrels.<sup>168</sup> Also, according to *The Biography of Pholhané*, during the siege of the capital of the Bhutanese kingdom in 1714, the Tibetan troops led by Pholhané and his fellow commanders produced various cannons (Tib. *sgyogs kyi 'khrul 'khor*) for eight consecutive days to break through the stalemate of the battle. Among the cannons they built in Bhutan at that time, there were grand cannons (Tib. *rgyal po khri sgyogs*); big cannons supported by six legs (Tib. *sgyogs chen rkang drug*); and shotgun-like cannons which discharged projectiles that spread "like peacock plumage" (Tib. *rma bya 'khrul sgyogs*).<sup>169</sup>

Due to this reputed excellence of the Tibetans in making firearms, it is likely that the Zunghars also employed cannons—and possibly muskets—produced in Tibet by Tibetan craftsmen when they fought the Qing troops in central Tibet. According to the Manchu report by Shuming and Bayantu, the Zunghars had never previously used cannons in their engagements with the Qing forces, until they used them on September 28, 1718 (Kangxi 57. intercalary 8. 5). At that time, the Zunghars reportedly had five to six cannons, and their cannonballs were as heavy as thirty to forty ounces.<sup>170</sup> Interestingly, the Zunghar forces did not use cannons immediately in their war against the Qing army in central Tibet. Instead, they only began employing cannons about three months after the Qing soldiers first entered central Tibet in 1718 and about one and a half months after their first military engagement in mid-August. Presumably, the Zunghar military governors in central Tibet had commissioned their Tibetan subjects to produce cannons for their troops only subsequent to the beginning of the

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<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*: 117.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*: 123–126.

<sup>167</sup> *Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3088, no. 3129; Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 138–142, 145.

<sup>168</sup> Desideri (trans. Sweet) 2010: 279.

<sup>169</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 126.

<sup>170</sup> *Kangxi manwen*, the document by In Jeng (Kangxi 58. 5.12) [*Kangxi quanyi*, no. 3402].



actual combat with the Qing troops. Moreover, considering the hardships that the Zunghars had to overcome in transporting cannons from Zungharia to central Tibet, via either the western Yarkand–Ngari route or the new Keriya–Nagtsang route, it is reasonable to assume that the Zunghars did not bring cannons from their homeland when they first marched to central Tibet in 1716–1717. An intelligence report by Nian Gengyao (年羹堯) appears to confirm this when it notes that the Zunghars obtained iron from the Chamdo (Tib. Chab mdo) region after they first occupied Tibet.<sup>171</sup> One may surmise from this that once they conquered central Tibet, the Zunghars collected iron from the Chamdo area and with this started to produce weapons in Tibet. The weapons that Zunghar or Tibetan artisans would make at that time must have included cannons. Furthermore, according to a deposition by a Zunghar fugitive called Tegüs, the Zunghar troops led by Tseringdondob had nine Tibetan cannons around September 26, 1720 (Kangxi 59. 8.25). When they retreated to Zungharia, however, they reportedly discarded all nine cannons—burying five and dispersing all of their gunpowder and cannonballs. The remaining four cannons were entrusted to the *kalön* Tashi Tsepa (Tib. Bka' blon Bkra shis rtse pa; Ma. G'ablon Jasi dzeba).<sup>172</sup> This indicates quite clearly that the Zunghar forces were using firearms, cannons in particular, made in Tibet by Tibetan artisans. The precise Zunghar influence on Tibetan firearm manufacturing cannot be ascertained with any degree of specificity, but it seems merited to surmise some level of technological impact.<sup>173</sup> The Zunghars also clearly introduced the *zanbūrak* / *dzambur* musket to Tibet.

### 3.3. *The Use of Lances by the Zunghars and its Impact on the Tibetans*

*The Biography of Pholhané* attests that during the battles between the Zunghars and Lazang Khan's forces on the Dam plain, the Zunghar soldiers used lances and swords to great effect, especially in combats at close range.<sup>174</sup> Then, after they had entered Lhasa, Pholhané reportedly witnessed a Zunghar soldier bearing a lance pursuing five hundred frightened Tibetan forces at Lubuk (Tib. Klu sbugs; i.e. a meadow

<sup>171</sup> *Gongzhong zhupi*, doc. no. 04–01–30–0105–002 (Nian Gengyao, Kangxi 58.3.13).

<sup>172</sup> Wu 1991: 196.

<sup>173</sup> According to Dr. Alice Travers, Tibetan firearms were mostly imported from Mongol areas and described as being “sog (Mongol)” in the 18th century. Such Mongol influence on Tibetan firearms was still remembered in Tibet of the early 20th century.

<sup>174</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 140.

south of the Potala) of Lhasa.<sup>175</sup> According to a Qing palace memorial by the General Yansin, a Tibetan fugitive also stated that:

When the Zunghar forces reached the region of Chinu-a Gol (Ch. Qi'nuan guo'er 齊暖郭爾) [in the early autumn of 1720], Tseringdondob and others said: "For the past few days, it has snowed every day. The Qing forces must be exhausted because they have defended themselves for a long time. If it snows again tonight, we will attack their military camp. *Due to snow, we will not use muskets. [Instead,] every soldier will carry a lance.* We will take only twenty of the Dalai Lama's people captive. Also, we will capture their commander alive".<sup>176</sup>

This once again corroborates the fact that muskets and lances were the two crucial weapons on which the Zunghars relied. The reported remark of Tseringdondob also indicates that the Zunghar muskets were rendered less reliable when it snowed or, one can infer, when it rained. In such weather conditions, the Zunghar forces preferred to use lances.

The Zunghar inclination towards the use of lances possibly influenced Tibetan battlefield tactics in the following years. *The Biography of Pholhané* illustrates the military competence of Pholhané throughout his lifetime. Both before and during the period of the Zunghar rule in Tibet, Pholhané is depicted as having had exceptional military talent and capability regarding archery, shooting muskets, using swords, and horse riding, but there is no mention of his proficiency in wielding lances.<sup>177</sup> Moreover, in the sections describing the combat scenes in which Pholhané was involved before the Zunghar conquest, Pholhané only used a sword or a dagger when he needed to fight hand-to-hand. For instance, in the middle of the campaign to Bhutan, Pholhané, in solid armour, is said to have assailed his enemies wielding a sharp-edged sword, and along with his soldiers killed thirty Bhutanese.<sup>178</sup> Later, during the war with the Zunghars in 1717, when Pholhané observed a Zunghar lancer chasing five hundred Tibetan soldiers at Lubuk, he was infuriated and snatched a dagger from the hand of his attendant. When he was about to stab the Zunghar soldier in the stomach with the dagger, his friends and aides restrained him.<sup>179</sup>

Following the eviction of the Zunghars from central Tibet in 1720, however, Pholhané is depicted having actively employed lances on the

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<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*: 151.

<sup>176</sup> Wu 1991: 195.

<sup>177</sup> Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 105, 109, 124, 151, 176, 186–187.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*: 124.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*: 151. Moreover, in 1718, when Pholhané was preparing for defence against a possible assault from the Zunghars, he again equipped himself and twenty of his bodyguards with armour and swords. For details, see *ibid.*: 181–182.

battlefields. First, in 1723, when he advanced to the Nagtsang region to serve as sentinels in the frontier area, his soldiers are said to have practised a variety of military skills on a daily basis, namely archery, artillery, and shooting arrows, firing muskets, and wielding lances on horseback.<sup>180</sup> Second, during the Tibetan civil war in 1727, when the Tibetan troops led by Pholhané were seriously defeated near the Nyangchu River by the Hor Mongol troops in support of Lumpané, Pholhané, resolving to fight to the end, then snatched a lance from the hand of his attendant, and holding it firmly, galloped on horseback towards the military camp of his enemies. As a result, Pholhané, with his twenty aides, reportedly killed forty enemies.<sup>181</sup> In the ensuing battle, Pholhané's soldiers were once again routed by the Hor Mongol forces, abandoning their military camps and fleeing towards the mountains. Thereupon, Pholhané was about to charge the enemy wielding a lance on horseback, but was restrained by his attendants who grabbed his hands and the reins of his horse.<sup>182</sup> These anecdotes illustrate that sometime between 1718 and 1723 Pholhané and his soldiers changed their principal weapon for hand-to-hand mounted combat from swords to lances. This change can be credited to the influence of the Zunghars, given the fact that the Zunghars preferred to use lances on horseback in hand-to-hand fights.

However, it should be clarified that the argument being made here is not that the Zunghars were the first to *introduce* spears, lances, and the like to central Tibet in 1717–1720. There is no doubt that spears had existed in Tibet since ancient times and were still widely used by Tibetan soldiers in the 17th century.<sup>183</sup> When Pholhané himself was fighting in Bhutan, he reportedly made a makeshift bridge by binding ten spears to ford a rushing stream, attesting to the ubiquity of spears among his troops.<sup>184</sup> The main Tibetan word for a spear in *The Biography of Pholhané*, especially in the sections dealing with events before the Zunghar conquest, is *tsöntsé* (Tib. *mtshon rtse*), which means simply “spearhead” or “weapon tip”.<sup>185</sup> In contrast, when the biography describes the military events after the Zunghar advance of 1716–1717, the

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*: 215.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*: 292.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*: 296.

<sup>183</sup> For instance, *The Biography of Pholhané* attests that Ganden Tsewang carried a musket, a bow, arrows, a sword, and a spear on horseback when he attacked the Ladakhi forces in the Ngari region. According to the account, when he rushed the enemies, some of them were trampled to death by horses, others were killed by swords, and the others were stabbed to death with spears. For details, see *ibid.*: 22–23.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*: 123.

<sup>185</sup> LaRocca 2006: 275.

Tibetan word for a spear tends to be *dungring* (Tib. *mdung ring*) meaning “a long spear”.<sup>186</sup> Considering that the Zunghars, and the Tibetan soldiers who had experienced the Zunghar rule in central Tibet, frequently utilised lances on horseback on the battlefields, this change of term from *tsöntsé* to *dungring* probably reflects an actual transition of weapon usage in Tibet. That is to say, the long spear referred to here as *dungring* was likely different in design from the traditional pre-Zunghar Tibetan spear referred to as *tsöntsé*. According to depictions in *The Biography of Pholhané*, a *dungring* was elongated and was usually used on horseback. One may surmise therefore that *dungring* actually referred to a Zunghar-style lance. In conclusion, as with the case of the *zanbūrak* / *dzambur* musket, the Zunghar forces, in all probability, introduced a new type of spear to central Tibet in 1716–1720 in the form of a lance, which was well-suited to hand-to-hand horseback combat.

*Conclusion: The Zunghar Influence on Tibetan Military History*

This article has investigated various aspects of the Zunghar military activities in central Tibet which had lasting impacts on the military practices of the Tibetans in the 18th century. First, the Zunghars created a completely new route connecting Zungharia to central Tibet through the vast wilderness of the Jangtang region. The Zunghar opening of this Keriya–Nagtsang route, which served as a crucial path between Zungharia and central Tibet in 1716–1720, left a lasting impact on Tibetan military institutions under Qing rule. Specifically, after the Zunghars withdrew to their homeland in 1720, the Qing court and the Tibetan government paid close attention to Nagtsang and the surrounding areas by constantly installing sentry posts. Along with the Ngari, Tengri-nuur, and Khara-usu areas, the Nagtsang region continued to be one of the most important defence points in Tibet until the fall of the Zunghar Principality. Thus, the influence of the Keriya–Nagtsang route on the Tibetan defence system is undoubtedly the best-documented example among the Zunghar impacts on Tibetan military institutions.

Second, the Zunghars preferred to install their military camps on mountains or other upland areas when they engaged in battle during the 17th and the 18th centuries, in contrast to the typical military strategies of Mongol nomads which had long favoured the deployment of mounted archers, feigned retreats, volleys of arrows, and sudden charges in an open field. The principal reason for the Zunghars chang-

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<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*: 273; Cerenwangjie [Tshe ring dbang rgyal] (trans. Tang) 1988: 139, 215.

ing this basic battlefield strategy was the desire to maximise the efficacy of their firearms. This new military orthodoxy influenced Tibetan military practices in the following years to a substantial degree.

Third, it is highly likely that the Zunghars introduced a couple of novel weapons to central Tibet. The first was a kind of heavy musket (or lightweight cannon) called *dzanbara* (and variants), a weapon adopted by the Zunghars from Central Asian Muslims who had adopted its use from the gunpowder empires of Asia, such as the Ottoman, the Safavid, and the Mughal Empires. The Zunghars employed this new weapon in numerous places including central Tibet. During the Tibetan civil war in 1727–1728, some guerrilla forces led by Pholhané reportedly used cannons to cut off supply routes of their enemies. Moreover, there is a Tibetan word *dzambur* (Tib. 'dzam bur) meaning “a gun or cannon”. These observations indicate that the mobile *zanbūrak* muskets of the Zunghars were likely adopted by the Tibetans during the period of the Zunghar rule in central Tibet. In addition to firearms, the Zunghars also preferred lances to swords and bows as their weapon of choice for close-quarters mounted combat. Their reliance on the lance influenced the military practices in the post-Zunghar central Tibet because the Zunghars introduced the lance (Tib. *mdung ring*) and the way it was used on horseback to central Tibet in 1717–1720.

Although Zunghar rule in central Tibet was short-lived, its impacts on Tibetan military history were considerable. The Zunghar conquerors of the time probably did not intend to transmit their military know-how and novel weapons to the Tibetans. The Tibetan people, however, were able to adopt various military skills and tools from the Zunghars because, first, they had observed the military success of the Zunghars in central Tibet first-hand; second, because native Tibetan troops had constituted a considerable portion of the Tibeto-Zunghar joint forces when the Zunghars fought the Qing in central Tibet; and third, because Tibetans had often been commissioned by the Zunghars to produce a variety of weapons, including firearms. Thus, the Zunghars inadvertently stimulated the Tibetans to a considerable advancement in their military technology and tactics. In conclusion, the Zunghar conquest of central Tibet in 1716–1720 exerted substantial influence on Tibetan military institutions of the ensuing era.



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