# Tibetan Tea Road: Trade and Transport of Sichuan Frontier Tea from the Early Qing Dynasty to the Republican China Period (1700-1950)

**Liu Zhiyang**
**Sun Yat-Sen University**

*Counties located between the west edge of the Sichuan Basin and the east edge of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, such as Ya'an, Mingshan, Tianquan, Yingjing, Qionglai, Guanxian, Chongqing and Pingwu, are important producing areas of tea sold to Tibet. Since tea-horse trade was refocused from northwestern China to Sichuan in the Song dynasty, the output of Sichuan frontier tea kept rising. However, due to the steep and remote roads between Sichuan and Tibet, and the galloping Dadu River, Sichuan frontier tea trade was always confined to Yazhiou, Lizhou, Diaomen and Yanzhou. After the Xilu Battle in Year 39 of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign (1700), the Qing government put the area in the east of the Yalong River under its direct control. In particular, the Luding Bridge completed in 1702 provided a passage from Ya'an to Dajianlu, and Dajianlu began to flourish since then as an important distributing center of Sichuan frontier tea trade. From the occupation of Dajianlu by the Qing army in 1700 to the opening of the Ya'an-Kangding Highway in 1950, the Tibetan tea road running from Ya'an via Dajianlu to Tibet existed for 250 years.*

*Keywords: Tibetan tea, south-route frontier tea, west-route frontier tea, Kangding, Tibet*

## INTRODUCTION

Road construction and extension not only meets people's demand for material transport and economic activities, but it is also an indication of the presence of state power, and changes of local society and the international geopolitical situation in a certain historical period. A smooth road from inland China to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau not only facilitates economic and trade relations between the Han people and Tibetans, but also ensures effective control of the central government over Tibetan areas. Since the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has high mountains, deep valleys, torrential rivers, and long, desolate and steep roads, so most parts of the plateau were no-wheel areas in the history (Richardson 2006, 5), and transport was done by human and animal power. As Yu Xiangwen (1947) who conducted fieldwork in the junction area of Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan provinces in the early 1930s summarized: "It is very difficult to travel in Tibetan areas due to traffic obstruction. There is often no sign of human habitation in tens of miles, and all means of living (cattle, horses, tents, food, kitchenware, etc.) have to be self-prepared; since Tibetans are tough, few people go deep into these areas." Therefore, in the past, central governments controlled southwestern Tibetan, Yi, Miao, Yao and other frontier minority areas by controlling roads and trading posts mainly, and occupying towns and natural trading posts on traffic arteries to form a network of "dots and lines" as proposed by Mr. Fei Xiaotong (1989, 29). The Han-Tibetan trading corridor in the history had economic, trading, political and military functions. In particular, tea-horse trade between Tibet and inland China was one of the main purposes of opening of the Sichuan-Tibet Road.

Although the tea was called "Tibetan tea", it was not produced in Tibet, but originated mainly from Ya'an, Guanxian and surrounding counties in Sichuan Province, Pu'er, Fohai and Mianning in Yunnan Province, and Hanzhong south of the Qinling Mountains in Shaanxi Province in inland China. In particular, Ya'an, Tianquan, Yingjing, Mingshan, Qionglai, Guanxian, etc. in Sichuan were the most important producing areas of Tibetan tea. Two bureaus were established in Sichuan in the North Song dynasty to manage tea-horse trade with Tibet. After the founding of the South Song dynasty, with the fall of Shaanxi, the Shaanxi bureau no longer remained functional, and it was merged into the Sichuan Tea-Horse Bureau, and tea tax became a main source of income of the South Song dynasty. In the Ming dynasty, tea was already being planted on a large scale in Sichuan and Shaanxi. In Year 1 of Emperor Hongwu's reign, there were over 864,000 tea trees in Hanzhou, Jinzhou, Shiquan, Hanyin, Pingli, Xixiang, etc. in Shaanxi, and 2.387 million in Sichuan (Wang 1988, 1985). At that time, the output of Sichuan tea was much higher than that of Shaanxi tea, and Sichuan became the main source of frontier tea sold to Tibet. In Year 3 of Emperor Longqing's reign (1569), the Ming government increased the number of tea coupons for sale to frontier areas, such as 4,000 coupons per annum for Songpan. It can be inferred that frontier tea trade had already become the main task of Sichuan tea. In the Qing dynasty, the position of Sichuan tea in frontier tea trade kept going up; among the 166,000 tea coupons issued during Emperor Shunzhi's reign, 80,000 were for frontier tea (Xu 1944, 25), and this number kept rising later.

Tea records found in Tibetan literatures of the Tang dynasty show that tea became popular in the western edge of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in the Song dynasty.[1] Literatures of the Ming and Qing dynasties clearly indicate that tea became a necessity for all Tibetans, and an important tie between inland China and Tibet. Tea-horse trade exchanging horses for tea was practiced in the Song and Ming dynasties. In the Qing dynasty, especially after the Qing government had controlled the Mongolian region north of the Great Wall, the importance of horses lessened greatly, and local specialties like musk, wool, leather, alluvial gold, sodium borate and medicinal materials other than horses became important products of Tibet in exchange for tea, cloth, silk, metallic products, miscellaneous goods, etc. in inland China (Chen 1986, 221). Since the Tibetans loved tea, tea was regarded by the past central governments as a tool to control ethnic minorities that was more effective than military actions (Qing 1719, 768), where the amount of tea supplied to Tibet was adjusted to control Tibet relying heavily on tea (Wang 1988, 1988). Accordingly, tea not only had a commodity attribute, but it also had important political significance and cultural value. For the past central governments, the political attribute of Tibetan tea was much greater than its commodity attribute, and it played a critical role in maintaining connections between the central government and the Tibetan local government.

Since the ancient times, Sichuan has been one of the most important tea producing regions of China. According to an expert study, the Sichuan wild tea tree is a native plant, other than a secondary one like Yunnan large leaf tea.[2] The Sichuan wild tea tree is distributed in two areas – along the Yangtze River and the upstream Jinshan River within north latitude 27-30° and east longitude 103-109°, and Ya'an (today's Yuchegn District, Ya'an City), Mingshan (today's Mingshan District, Ya'an City), Tianquan, Yingjing, Chongqing (today's Chongzhou City), Dayi, Qionglai, Guanxian (today's Dujiangyan City), Pengxian (today's Pengzhou City), etc. on the west and northwest edges of the Sichuan Basin within north latitude 30-31° and east longitude 103-104° - a historically important producing area of Tibetan tea (Zhong 1980). The common characteristics of tea trees are that they prefer acid soil, moisture and light, and are shade tolerant. The Sichuan Basin is surrounded by high mountains. In the history, old tea areas in Sichuan were located mainly in hilly areas around the basin with a better ecological environment due to economic and technical restraints. These areas are warm, wet and cloudy, with less sunshine (1,000-2,000 hours per annum) and a short frost period, and mostly the soil is slightly acid sandy or gravel soil (pH between 4.5-6), which is ideal for tea tree growth (Zhuang 1981).

Tibetan tea sold to Tibet (also known as Sichuan frontier tea) is produced mainly in the west edge of the Sichuan Basin. The black tea was given different names in different periods and areas, such as Xifan tea, Fan tea, black tea, South Road frontier tea, tea sold to frontier areas, frontier tea, brick tea, strip tea, large tea, table tea, square bag tea, and Tibetan tea. Sichuan frontier tea is divided into South Road and West Road frontier tea, where South Road frontier tea is produced mainly in Ya'an, Yingjing, Tianquan,

Mingshan, Qionglai, etc., and sold mainly to Xikang (via Kangding) and Tibet (via the Jinsha River); West Road frontier tea is produced mainly in Guanxian, Dayi, Shifang, Anxian, Pingwu, Beichuan, Wenchuan, etc. (Yu 2011, 7973), and is sold mainly to northwestern China, southern Gansu, Qinghai, etc. via Songpan. A huge tea industry chain has been created around tea-horse trade. Local governments, officials and major tea traders of the past central feudal dynasties, tea producing areas and trading posts gained huge profits by monopolizing tea trade and levying tea taxes. Since the Song and Yuan dynasties, tea monopoly income remained a major source of fiscal revenue of the past central dynasties, and an important source for tea management officials at all levels to make profits. Edward Colborne Barber (1882, 196), a British living in the 19th century, once described the greediness of the Resident Minister in Tibet and other officials in tea trade by quoting Tibetans' statement, "They have no trousers when coming, but their luggage can fill up 1,000 yaks when leaving." Officials of the Tibetan local government, nobles, monasteries, major merchants, and chieftains and headmen in Xikang and the Anduo Tibetan area also maintained their privileges, and political and economic status in Tibetan areas by monopolizing tea transport and marketing. Many related organizations and families also lived on this, such as tea growers, tea merchants, tea houses, porters, packers, mule and horse leasers, tea makers, and packaging workers; some of them even take this as their occupation, and some do related jobs in the slack season to support their families.

At the end of the 19th century, with the dumping of Indian tea in Tibet and the rise of Yunnan tea, the volume of Sichuan tea sold to Tibet dropped significantly. After the Xinhai Revolution in 1911, the road from Tachienlu (Kangding) to Tibet was obstructed, causing the volume of Sichuan tea sold to Tibet decline disastrously, and many organizations, individuals and families living on tea were affected considerably. Tea growers encountered livelihood difficulties, numerous porters lost living allowances, tea houses selling Tibetan tea went bankrupt, and the central and local governments lost taxes on Tibetan tea. Frontier tea trade that had continued for over 200 years shrank greatly.

## CULTIVATION, PROCESSING AND GRADES OF FRONTIER TEA

Frontier tea was very rough in cultivation, sorting and processing, and much poorer in quality than the tea sold to inland China. At the end of the 19th century, Edward Colborne Barber（1882, 193）observed while passing through a Tibetan tea producing area that Sichuan farmers grew tea trees beside farmland and houses, and did not take care of them intentionally, resultantly making them look like wild trees. In places like Ya'an, Sichuan tea was picked three times a year. At the first time, tea was picked before Tomb-sweeping Day making it Grade-1 tea; at the second time, tender leaves were picked making it medium-grade tea; and at the third/last time, branches and leaves were picked together after autumn making a low-grade tea. Frontier tea was inferior in quality, and its low grade had almost no leave, and it "tasted bitter and coarse" (Ren 2010, 4).

An investigation report on South Road frontier tea in 1942 reveals that tea cultivation and management in this period was still extensive. "In the local producing area of South Road frontier tea, trees are mostly scattered in clusters on slopes or at farmland edges, about 0.6-1m high. Tea growers always regard tea trees as wild without intentional cultivation, weeding and fertilization."(Zheng 1942) At that time, tea cultivation was not centralized, and tea trees were mostly considered wild without management.

The picking period of South Road frontier tea spanned from Tomb-sweeping Day to the beginning of summer. Tea growers cut tender twigs of several inches from trees using a special knife, and each grower could cut about 50kg per day (Zheng 1942). The production and processing of Tibetan tea included cultivation, picking, processing and packing. The traditional cultivation mode used big clusters and large number of individuals, with 800-1,000 individuals per mu. New tea in spring, summer and autumn was picked with hands, while old tea was cut with a knife.

Tea picked by tea growers had to be given preliminary treatment before being sold to tea merchants, including stir fixation, kneading, sun drying, stacking and re-drying. Stir fixation was to expose fresh tea to sunlight or drying it in a frying pan. Kneading was curling tea with hand. The stir fixation (re-drying)

and kneading steps were then repeated again. Preliminary treatment can be drying directly without further processing, etc., or subjecting to stir fixation, kneading, stacking, drying, sorting, steaming, pressing and packaging (Du 1991, 453). Preliminarily processed tea collected by tea merchants was further processed through sun drying, sorting, stacking, steaming, processing, packaging, etc. In particular, pile fermentation, air drying and drying are essential for the unique quality of South Road frontier tea (Du, Chen and Wang 2018). After tea processing, it was wrapped in large waterproof butter paper bearing a Tibetan trademark, then put in a bag made of thin bamboo strips, and sealed.

Sichuan tea varieties were mostly Chinese large tea, and green tea made from them was not as good as that produced in Fujian and Anhui Provinces, but suitable for making frontier tea with harsh quality and a bitter taste. South Road frontier tea was mostly made from thick and old tea branches and leaves, and could be roughly divided into five grades – Maojian, brick, Jinjian, Jinyu and Jincang – based on tenderness, the proportion of branches and leaves, and processing fineness. Fine tea included Maojian, brick tea and Jinjian, while coarse tea included Jinyu and Jincang. "Fine tea is sold to Lhasa, coarse tea sold to Xikang east of the Jinsha River, and inferior coarse tea sold to herdsmen along with coarse tea "(Anonymous 2011, 884-885) . During the Republican China period, in the tea producing area, a pack of Maojian tea was worth 11.66 silver collars, and a pack of Jincang tea about 2 silver collars, differing by six times (Ji 2011, 183). In 1904, in the late Qing dynasty and early Republican China period, British diplomat in China, Sir Alexander Hosie recorded the quantities, grades and values of South Road frontier tea sold to Tibetan areas, and divided tea in the five South Road frontier tea producing areas (Ya'an, Yingjing, Tianquan, Mingshan and Qiongzhou) into four grades when traveling from Chengdu to Tachienlu (Hosie 2001, 79).

| Origin | Grade | Qty. (jin = 500g) | Value (silver dollar) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ya'an | 1 | 177,000 | 37,037 |
| | 2 | 2,745,500 | 323,000 |
| | 3 | 510,000 | 30,000 |
| | 4 | 340,000 | 21,052 |
| Yingjing | 1 | 91,000 | 17,500 |
| | 2 | 1,350,000 | 166,666 |
| | 3 | 821,500 | 51,456 |
| | 4 | 260,000 | 17,391 |
| Tianming, Quanshan | 1 | 290,000 | 32,258 |
| | 2 | 120,000 | 12,500 |
| | 3 | 1, 320,000 | 95,650 |
| Qiongzhou | 1 | 375,000 | 115,384 |
| | 2 | 140,000 | 8,695 |

It can be seen that frontier tea sold to Tibet was mostly of Grades 2 and 3, and Ya'an and Yingjing were the main producing areas. Qionglai tea was of the highest quality, and at the early stage of large-scale cultivation as compared to other tea producing areas. "Tea trees are arranged orderly and managed normatively."(Zhang and Sun 1942) Grade-1 Qionglai tea had the largest output, and accounted for 40% of the total output of Grade-1 tea in the five counties, and its consumers were mostly officials, nobles, rich merchants and eminent monks in Tibetan areas. Prices varied greatly due to quality differences. The prices of Grades 1 and 4 of Ya'an tea differed by four times, while the prices of Grade-1 Qiongzhou tea and Grade-4 Ya'an tea differed by five times; it is largely consistent with the records of the domestic investigators.[3]

In the Republican China period, Tibetan tea was still made manually. "Frontier tea was made entirely manually from picking to packaging."(Chen 2018) The process was complex, and could not assure quality. Tea merchants competed fiercely, and generally adulterated tea was sold to Tibet to reduce costs, greatly affecting the reputation of

Sichuan tea in Tibetan areas. Compared to South Road frontier tea, West Road frontier tea produced in Guanxian and small road tea produced in Tianquan were of the lowest quality among that of all tea producing areas. "Tea has been crudely made, so that alder leaves are mixed in, and tea is very cheap."(Ren 2009, 116) Such tea was usually supplied to poor residents in Tibetan areas. In the Republican China period, since tea growers and merchants omitted many steps in production, and produced tea crudely, Sichuan tea sold to Tibet was much worse than the worst tea sold in inland China.

The price of Tibetan tea rose dramatically after the tea was transported from Tachienlu to Tibet. This was because of long transport distances, high transport costs, difficult transport through rugged and dangerous roads, varying weather, high tea losses, frequent banditries, and unauthorized passes set up by chieftains and headmen. During Qing Emperor Guangxu's reign, Deputy Resident Minister in Tibet Zhang Mengtang was surprised by the great price disparity of tea before and after transport to Tibet, "Tea is worth 0.26 silver dollar per kilogram in Tachienlu, and 5.0-5.2 silver dollars in Tibet, differing by about 20 times."(Zhang 1938) Lu Xingqi in the late Qing dynasty also made a detailed tea price analysis in Tibet. He found that tea was worth 0.26 silver dollar per kilogram in the origin, and its price rose to 5.0 silver dollars in Lhasa, and 7.4 silver dollars in more remote Shigatse and Gyantse, an increase of nearly 30 times (Lu 2016, 111-112). Therefore, before Indian tea was dumped in Tibet in large quantities, tea was a luxury for the Tibetans.

## CHANGE OF TRADING POSTS AND TRANSPORT ROUTES FOR FRONTIER TEA SOLD TO TIBET

### "Big" and "Small Roads" of South Road Frontier Tea

"If tea in the Kham Tibetan area is to be supplied to Qionglai and Ya'an, it has to be carried manually across the Daxiang and Feiyue Ridges." (Ren 2009, 65) From the Ming dynasty, there were two tea roads from Sichuan to Tibet – the South and West Roads. Along the South Road, tea produced in Ya'an, Tianquan, Yingjing, Mingshan, Hongya, Emei and Qingxi (Hanyuan) was sold to Xikang and Tibet via Tachienlu (Kangding); along the West Road, tea produced in Guanxian, Shifang, Pingwu,etc. was transported to along the Minjiang River, via Mao County, Songpan and Nuoergai to the south Gansu and Qinghai Tibetan areas.

"South Road frontier tea was transported from tea producing areas to Tachienlu along two further roads: the big road tea for Ya'an and Yingjing tea, and small road tea for Tianquan tea."(Ren 2009, 116) Big road tea was transported from Ya'an via Yingjing, the Daxiang Ridge (Mud Mountain), Lizhou (the border of Chieftain Datian), Lengqi, Hualinping, northward along the Dadu River, past the Luding Bridge and Luding to Tachienlu; this road was called the "big road" because it was broad, and had been there since the Qin and Han dynasties; it took about 16-18 days to pass through this road. The "big road" was rugged and steep. For example, the Chenxiang Ridge was "steep, winding and twisting toward the sky", and the Xiangling Ridge was "covered by snow deposits all the year round."(Chen 1986, 122-133) However, this road was the main road in Sichuan and Xikang because it was relatively flat, safe, dry and convenient for walking. During Ming Emperor Hongwu's reign, a fortress was set up in Yanzhou (today's Anlan Xiang, Luding County) on the east bank of the Dadu River; since Tianquan was on the road between Yazhou and Tibet, a tea road from Tianquan to Luding and Lan'an was opened, and was called the "small road" because it was narrow and steep, and tea transported to Tachienlu along this road was called "small road tea". Since it was a shortcut, it took just 8-9 days to travel from Ya'an to Kangding, half the time taken through the big road. However, since this road was dangerous, labor-consuming and affected greatly by weather, there were limited porters on this road. The tea-carrying road from Ya'an and Tianquan to Kangding was formed during Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign, and was difficult to pass through due to the Dadu River in the way.

**Luding Bridge and the Westward Movement of Frontier Tea Trading Posts**

From the Song dynasty to Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign, trading posts of South Road frontier tea kept changing, and gradually moved towards west in general. This was accompanied by the process that the power of the central feudal dynasties gradually shifted towards the west of Ya'an and ultimately controlled it directly.

In the early North Song dynasty, after founding emperor Zhao Kuangyin conquered Sichuan, he designated the Dadu River as the national border on the map because the area in the west of Dadu River could hardly be controlled (Cao 1993). In the Ming dynasty, Ya'an, Tianquan and other Tibetan tea producing areas in Sichuan were close to Tibetan areas, and Tianquan County was under the jurisdiction of a local chieftain in the Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties, so the tea was traded in Lizhou and Diaomen mainly, where Tibetans bought tea and transported it to Tibetan areas for sale (Chen 1934). In the late Ming dynasty, the Khoshut tribe of the Eleut Mongols entered the Kham Tibetan area from Qinghai as the Ming government was too weak to manage the western region, and controlled Tibet and the Kham Tibetan area with assistance of the Gelugpa sect. After the establishment of Manchu's reign in China, "the chieftains of Tianquan Liufan, Dbus-gtsang, Dongbu, Lizhou, Changhexi, Yutong, Ningyuan, Nixi, Mankou, Shencun, Ningrong, etc. turned in their former seals to surrender." (Qing 1652) In the Qing dynasty, the practice of not supplying tea to minority areas was followed. In the 35$^{th}$ year of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign (1696), Sichuan Governor Yu Yangzhi found during his visit with the Dbus-gtsang battalion commander that Tachienlu was still under the jurisdiction of a chieftain, and was not directly controlled by the Qing government (Qing 1696, 898). In the 39$^{th}$ year of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign (1700), Tachienlu battalion commander Dieba killed Mingzheng Chieftain Shela Zhaba, and occupied his area. Qing Emperor Kangxi then assigned Sichuan Commander-in-chief Tang Xishun to attack Tachienlu (Qing 1700, 62) , and expelled the force of the Khoshut Mongols. This was the Xilu Battle that greatly affected the political situation of the Kham Tibetan area. After the battle, the area in the east of the Yalong River was brought into the direct control of the Qing government (Qing 1699, 1050). In the following year, the Qing government reinstated the Mingzheng chieftain, and made his wife Gongka inherit the chieftain position (Huang, Chang and Yang 1733) . Tachienlu was opened as a Sichuan-Tibet trading post, and official passes were set up to levy taxes. The Mingzheng chieftain became a strong supporter of the central dynasty while executing all commands of the Qing government effectively, and was praised by Emperor Yongzheng (Qing 1733, 681). He played an important role in the past actions for stabilizing the Kham Tibetan area, so a large piece of land and over 2,000 households were included in the jurisdiction, and the Xilu path became smooth (Tibetan Studies Editorial Board 1982, 133).

To go to Kangding from Ya'an, one has to pass through the Dadu River having no bridge over it before Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign. This torrential river between the cliffs became the greatest obstacle to Tachienlu, and pedestrians had to cross the river by sliding cable or skin raft. Sichuan Governor Tai Neng suggested that a bridge be built in Anle, over 40 kilometers away from the Hualiny Barracks. In the 44$^{th}$ year of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign (1704), working on a chain bridge was started, which completed in the following year. Emperor Kangxi attached great importance to this bridge, wrote its inscription personally, named it the Luding Bridge, and garrisoned it. The Luding Bridge on the Dadu River was "103 meters long and 3 meters wide, with nine cables covered by planks" (Tibetan Studies Editorial Board 1982, 133). There were wooden boats on both sides, so that one could cross the river by boat when water flew slowly. In 1902, when traveling from Chengdu to Tachienlu via the Luding Bridge, British explorer Cooper saw that the nine iron cables connecting the both banks were not as thick as the tow line and spaced by about 1.2 meters, so people could not stand stably on them. The cables of the Luding Bridge would sometimes break, causing heavy casualties (Cooper 2018, 162). From the noon to 4:00 p.m. every day, pedestrians were not allowed to cross the bridge due to strong winds in the valley, and the planks on the deck were halved to avoid being blown away (Yun 1985, 85).

After the completion of the Luding Bridge, the area where Han and Tibetan people lived together extended westward to Tachienlu. After the change of the tribal chieftainship system to the standard Chinese bureaucratic system in such places as Tianquan and Luding during Qing Emperor Yongzheng's reign, Han people kept migrating to the area east of Tachienlu for reclamation and cultivation, gradually

making this area a Han habitat.[4] During his visit to Luding County during 1929-1930, Mr. Ren Naiqiang saw that the residents here were mostly Han people. "The county has over 10,000 households, half in the valley plain, and half on hills and mountains, half migrating from northwest and south Sichuan, and half aboriginals. The aboriginals have been assimilated by the Han people."(Ren 2009, 64) While the Han-Tibetan boundary kept moving westward, such places as Luding and Kangding became trading centers of South Road frontier tea successively. The transport of South Road frontier tea was divided into two parts, in which Luding and Tachienlu were the most important transfer points. The trading post of Sichuan tea sold to Tibet before Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign was not Kangding but Luding, where Lengqi[5] was the number one market west of the Daxiang Ridge (Ren 2009, 29). After the completion of the Luding Bridge, Lengqi declined quickly, and was replaced by Tachienlu (Kangding).

**Rise of Tachienlu and Frontier Tea Trade in Tibetan Areas**

When traveling from Tachienlu westward across the Zheduo Mountain, one would enter Tibetan areas. Tachienlu became a critical node of Han-Tibetan contacts in history.

Tachienlu was just a small village in the Yuan dynasty, a barren land before the Song dynasty, and sparsely populated and just a resting place for Tibetan merchants in the Ming dynasty, when there was only a temple and over 30 households (Ren 1933, 71). It was sparsely populated because it produced no food crops, and there were only highland barleys, cattle and sheep here (Wang 1985, 62). Therefore, the rise of Tachienlu was a trading post benefiting completely from Han-Tibetan trade.

In the 45th year of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign (1706), after the completion of the Luding Bridge, Tachienlu became a Han-Tibetan trading post, and was garrisoned by the Qing government; the Yazhou Sub-prefect Government was moved here in the 7th year of Qing Emperor Yongzheng's reign (1729). In the 12th year of Qing Emperor Yongzheng's reign (1734), when Duke Yunli passed through Tachienlu, he saw that Tachienlu was densely populated and full of shops (Yun 1985, 86). Owing to booming commerce, merchants from different places came here to trade Sichuan tea and minority goods (Wang 1985, 62). Tachienlu became the most important trading post and transfer station of frontier tea.

*An Illustrated Treatise on Tibet* written during Qing Emperor Guangxu's reign compared the three Tibet-going routes, "There are three Tibet-going routes from Shaanxi, Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces, in which the route from Yunnan is steep and obstructed, the route from Shaanxi takes a long detour, and the route via Tachienlu is most convenient and safe."(Huang 1982, 78) Therefore, Tachienlu became a strategic place for trade, troop dispatch, provisions reservation and tribute delivery in southwestern China, and the hub of the South and North Sichuan-Tibet Roads (Huang 1985, 288). After the completion of the Luding Bridge, the number of Sichuan frontier tea coupons kept rising from 80,429 during Qing Emperor Shunzhi's reign, and most frontier tea entered Tibet after transferring via Tachienlu (.Xu 1944, 25).

**North and South Roads out of the Pass**

The Tibetan area out of the pass was to the west of the Zheduo Mountain, where the cultural and natural landscapes differed greatly from the area to the east of the pass and west of Tachienlu. After the Qing government unified the country, ensuring traffic between inland China and Tibet became an important measure to strengthen the political and military control over Tibet and the Kham Tibetan area, so the Qing government set up garrisoned grain supply stations along the Sichuan-Tibet, Sichuan-Qinghai and Qinghai-Tibet roads (Zou 2009).

There were two post roads running from Tachienlu to Tibet, namely the South and North Roads. Mr. Ren Naiqiang (2010, 100) described those routes in detail: "The North Road runs from Kangding via the Haizi and Geda Ridges, Taining City, the Songlin Pass, the Daofu county town, the Jiangjun Ridge, Drakgo, Garze, Derge and Changdu to Tibet." It was symmetric with the South Road running from Jiulong via Daocheng, Litang and Batang to Tibet. In the Qing dynasty, the Qing government took many measures to keep the Tachienlu-Lhasa road smooth. In the 57th year of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign (1718), ten posts were set up in the Tachienlu-Litang segment, with six horses each (Qing 1718, 736); two years later (1720), Qing Emperor Kangxi brought the strategic places of Batang and Litang into the jurisdiction of Sichuan for military purposes (Qing 1720, 801). In the 61st year of Qing Emperor Kangxi's

reign (1722), government and Tibetan soldiers were stationed at 66 stations from Tachienlu to Lali (Qing 1722, 892). In the late stage of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign, the Qing government appointed over 50 chieftains in the east of the Yalong River; in Qing Emperor Yongzheng's reign, 50 chieftains were appointed in the west of the Yalong River gradually. In the 10th year of Qing Emperor Yongzheng's reign (1732), the Qing government largely completed its chieftain appointment program in the Western Sichuan Plateau, strengthening the control over the Kham Tibetan area, and keeping the Kham-Tibet Road unobstructed (Zhao 2018).

It took over three months to travel from Tachienlu to Lhasa over thousands of miles. This road was difficult, and affected by changeful weather and banditries (Ji 2008, 223). In the 35th year of Qing Emperor Qianlong's reign (1770), "Bandits in Sa'an (Sanyan) robbed mules and horses of Batang Deputy Cheiftain Tema where the Resident Minister in Tibet often stayed."(Qing 1770, 469) In the 44th year of Qing Emperor Qianlong's reign (1780), over 70 Batang bandits robbed tea bags and other goods worth over 1,000 silver dollars presented by Qing Emperor Qianlong to the Dalai Lama in the Lishu Ditch (Qing 1779, 684). According to local records, on October 16, 1946, when the four members, four horses and 36 mules of the Tianxinglong caravan traveled to the Luoguozi Mountain in Garze, they were robbed by Zhanhua bandits, where all the four members were killed, and goods worth 39,690 Tibetan dollars robbed (Luo 2015, 27). Owing to frequent banditries, a considerable part of tea transported from Tachienlu to Tibet was transported and sold segment by segment. Since there was no trading market or shop in many counties and towns out of the pass, goods were traded in home courtyards (Xie 1951, 54). Thus, some trading posts were established along the road. For example, Garze was one of the largest commercial hubs out of the pass during the Republican China period, and some merchants sold tea from Tachienlu in Garze, which was mostly sold to other merchants for transport to Tibet except that a small part was supplied to the local market. This also applied to other trading posts going to Tibet, such as Batang, Derge and Changdu.

During Qing Emperor Qianlong's reign, post management was further strengthened by setting up passes on the Kham-Tibet Road and assigning soldiers to protect merchants and officials. However, in the last Qing dynasty, these measures were not implemented, and the posts and passes became useless. After the Xinhai Revolution, since Batang was in constant unrest, merchants evaded this road gradually, and took the North Road instead, which became the main Tibet-going route in the Republican China period.

Except Changdu, South Road frontier tea was also transported to Tibet via Yushu, Qinghai, and Jiegu was also an important place through which tea merchants went to Tibet in the Republican China period (Ma 2003, 290).

**Transport Route and Trade of West Road Frontier Tea**

West Road frontier tea was produced in Guanxian (Dujiang Weir), Shifang, Anxian, Pingwu, Dayi, Mianzhu, etc. It was made from 1-2 years old mature shoots by direct sun drying. Crude tea was pre-treated by cutting, sieving, dispensing, steaming and fermentation, then weighed, fried and packed, and finally pressed into square bags made of thin bamboo strips. It was made in Guanxian mainly, and sold to Songpan, Lifan, Mao County, etc., or transferred from Songpan to south Gansu, Qinghai, northwest Xikang and other Amdo Tibetan areas.

According to *Annals of Guanxian* complied in Republican China period, frontier tea was picked in early summer in Guanxian – an important producing area of West Road frontier tea. "It is also known as knife tea, with over 1,000 packs produced locally, and over 20,000 packs made with raw materials purchased from other places, and sold to Songpan, Lifan, Maogong, Mao County, etc."(Ye 1933) Guanxian tea was divided into fine and coarse tea, where fine tea was picked from February to April, and sold in market towns in exchange for daily necessities, such as food grains, salt and fabrics, and coarse tea was made of old branches and leaves, and cut every 2-3 years. In each coarse tea harvesting period, the tea firm in the county town paid part of the down payment to the tea merchant, who purchased sun-dried coarse tea from tea growers, then hired workers to cut and pack tea, and then transported tea to the tea firm for sale to the Amdo and Gyalrong Tibetan areas. Yu Xiangwen saw when investigating nomadic Tibetan areas in Gansu and Qinghai in the 1930s, "Tibetan herdsmen drink only one Songpan tea

transported from Sichuan, and this has become their habit and cannot be replaced by any other tea." (Yu 1947, 70)

The trading hub of West Road frontier tea was Songpan, which played a very important political, economic and military role in northwestern Sichuan (Chen 1934). "Its northwest exit is Xining and Mongolia, its southwest exit Zhandui and Derge, and its west exit Yushu, Qinghai, so it is strategically positioned."(Zhang 2007a) Songpan in western Sichuan frontier tea trade was equivalent to Tachienlu in South Road frontier tea, being a node from inland China to the Amdo Tibetan area, Yushu in Qinghai, and Inner Mongolia. There were three transport routes for West Road frontier tea from producing areas to Songpan. The first was from Guanxian via the Minjiang River, Weizhou (Wenchuan) and Mao County to Songpan; the second was from Pingwu via Yetang and Xiaohe to Songpan; the third was from Beichuan and Anxian via Tumen and Mao County to Songpan (Songpan County 1999, 597). After frontier tea was transported from such producing areas as Guanxian and Dayi to Songpan, it entered the east gate of the county town, and then sold by merchants to the Nuoergai Grassland, south Gansu, Qinghai, Inner Mongolia, etc (Zhang 2007b, 185).

In the late Qing dynasty, black tea produced in Hubei and Hunan Provinces also began to be sold to the Amdo Tibetan area, impacting West Road frontier tea. In history, Hankou in Hubei was always the distributing center of Hu tea (the general term of black tea produced in Hubei and Hunan), and it played a significant role in domestic and international tea trade. The Mongolians in the north of the Great Wall had been main consumers of Hu tea. In the 17th century, while Hu tea was sold to the southern and northern parts of the Great Desert, it was also sold to the Asian part of Russia from Hankou along the Hanjiang River to Hanzhong in south Shaanxi Province, across the Qinling Mountains by land to Gansu and Qinghai Provinces, and then via the Mongolian Grassland to Siberia. Owing to inefficient transport and long distance, tea was transported along this route in small quantities. After the Hankou Port was opened in 1861, tea for Russia was transported from Hankou to Shanghai along the Yangtze River, and then loaded on ships for direct transport to Vladivostok (Chen, Zhu and Peng 1980, 12). With the opening of the Beijing-Hankou Railway and the sea route in 1906, Hu tea could be transported to Beijing and Shanghai conveniently, so Hu tea that was traditionally sold to Xinjiang was sold to the Amdo Tibetan area in large quantity due to traffic, quantity and price advantages in exchange for fur and other Tibetan specialties. According to the investigation of official Ma Hetian of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission in the border area of Gansu, Qinghai and Tibet in 1935, the sales volume of West Road frontier tea in the Amdo Tibetan area already shrank greatly due to the impact of Hu tea (Ma 2003, 57).

## TRANSPORTERS ON THE TIBETAN TEA ROAD: PORTERS AND PACKERS

### Tea Porters from Ya'an to Kangding

In the Song and Ming dynasties, tea-horse trade between Tibet and inland China involved no Han tea porter. Tibetan tea trade was conducted at the Lizhou and Diaomen bureaus, and tea was sold and transported completely by Tibetans. Before the 39th year of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign (1700), the area in the west of the Dadu River was inhabited by Tibetans (Zhang 2011, 1613). Since the Dadu River was torrential, with high cliffs on both sides, it was difficult to transport goods between both banks by boat, so goods were mostly transported by sliding cable or skin raft. However, these two modes of transport had limited capacity and were dangerous, so frontier tea trade usually occurred in the east of the Dadu River.

In 1700, after Qing Emperor Kangxi dispatched troops to conquer the Mingzheng Chieftain, the area in the west of Kangding was brought directly into the jurisdiction of the central government. In April of the 45th year of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign (1706), the Luding Bridge was completed on the Dadu River, making it possible to transport tea and other goods directly from Ya'an to Tachienlu, and Tibetan tea porters between Ya'an and Kangding emerged.

In Ya'an, South Road frontier tea was mostly transported by nearby farmers, mostly in the slack season around October in the lunar calendar. The transport period of West Road frontier tea was from September to February in the lunar calendar, mostly in October. The road from Ya'an to Kangding was very difficult and dangerous, where only one person could pass through many cliff paths sideways, and

could drop into the valley inadvertently. Since these paths were unsuitable for mules and horses, and several big rivers had to be crossed, tea transport along this route was entirely made by porters manually from Ya'an, Tianquan and Yingjing Counties on the border of Sichuan to Kangding. In this journey, tea porters had to withstand sunshine and rain, and guard against bandits. Porters carrying tea to Tibet were all residents in the producing areas of Ya'an and Tianquan. Some of them did this on a full-time basis, but most of them did this in the slack season only, usually after the autumn harvest. Frontier tea was difficult to transport. The journey from Ya'an to Kangding was over 200 kilometers long and very rugged. Each porter carried a weight of over 50 kilograms, and traveled 15-20 kilometers per day, so it took about 20 days for them to finish the journey. However, they had to do this difficult and dangerous job year after year to make a living.

It was already very difficult to walk on a level ground bearing 50 kilograms of tea, so it was unimaginable for porters to walk on steep mountain roads with the same load. When Liu Manqing, envoy of the Republican China government, passed through Ya'an in his mission to Tibet in 1929, he (1934, 17) described this in detail. "From Ya'an to Tachienlu, there is an endless stream of porters, where a strong one can bear 13 or 14 packs of tea, while an old or weak one can only bear 4 or 5 packs. This job is very tough, and one can travel 10-15 kilometers per day only." Some packers put tea packs directly on a bracket, while others stacked tea packs layer by layer, connected them using bamboo sticks, and carried them on the shoulders; each porter held a T-shaped iron stick. Once tea packs were carried on the body, they could not be laid down easily. Porters had to use a stick for support to walk on rugged mountain paths, and female porters would prepare a tool for urinating in order to not unload tea packs halfway. Porters usually walked in groups of up to hundreds. Since tea carrying was labor-consuming, and porters were malnourished, most of them would take opium to stay energetic.

When they entered a completely strange cultural and geographic environment across the Luding Bridge, they would feel helpless. Therefore, they would return home as soon as possible after arriving at the destination and receiving the pay.

Interestingly, numerous officials, merchants, scholars and poets who went to Tibet via this road rarely recorded tea transport along this road; instead, American diplomat William Woodville Rockhill recorded this in great detail when traveling from Yushu to Tachienlu in 1892. So we can know how flourishing tea trade was at that time. In a 15-mile journey from the Wasi Gully to the Luding Bridge, he saw 481 tea porters of varying ages (there were many women, and even some children aged 7 or 8 years among them), and only over 40 porters of other goods (Rockhill 1891, 301), showing the important position of tea in Sichuan-Tibet trade.

The quota of Ya'an frontier tea supplied to Tibetan areas was mostly 110,000 *dan* (1 *dan* = 50kg), requiring about 100,000 men-times of porters. A longstanding tea road bearing Tibetan-Han friendship was created, and porters did not disappear gradually until the completion of the Sichuan-Tibet Highway in 1950.

The transport of West Road frontier tea was also very difficult, where tea packs were carried completely manually through steep paths. The big road stretched from Guanxian via Weizhou and Mao County to Songpan, with a full length of 240 kilometers, the small road stretched from Guanxian via Wolong, the Bashen Hill and the Niutou Mountain to Maogong (today's Xiaojin County), and another road stretched from Weizhou via Lifan (today's Li County), the Zhegu Mountain and Shuajingsi (today's Hongyuan County, or Songpan County in the Republican China period) to the pastoral area. Each small tea pack weighed 35 kilograms, and each large tea pack weighed 61 kilograms. An ordinary porter could only carry one small pack, and a strong one could carry two (Zhang 2007b, 185).

The Songguan Post Road for West Road frontier tea was an important passage in the Amdo Tibetan area, and mule and horse transport was utilized mainly in Songpan, Lifan (today's Lixian County), Maogong, Jinghua (today's Jinchuan County), Guanxian, etc. For a long time, manual and animal carrying was the main mode of transport due to absence of highways. Every household in Songpan Town raised mules and horses. According to *Songpan Records* during Qing Emperor Tongzhi's reign, the Han and Hui people living in Songpan could communicate with the Tibetans in Tibetan for convenience of trading; some people even sold tea out of the Huangsheng Pass in exchange for musk, hairy antler, fur, etc.

annually, and could make a lot of profits (He 1873). Major merchants in Songpan were very rich, and the mosque out of the north gate of the county town was built by tea merchant Ma Jian in the 22nd year of Qing Emperor Guangxu's reign (1896) (Zhang 2007c, 521). Among tea merchants, rich Tibetan families of several tribes[6] governed by Han officials also often bought tea, and transported it out of the pass using pack animals in exchange for fur and other goods (Zhang 2007d, 430). The road of Han and Tibetan merchants selling tea to the grassland out of the Huangsheng Pass was full of risks, so they had to gather in large groups to ensure safety. In the Republican China period, there were over 12,000 pack animals all the year round in the Songpan, Lifan and Maogong area (Local Traffic Annals Editorial Board 1984, 118).

**Packers and Tibet-going Caravans**

After tea was transported from Ya'an to Tachienlu, it was first taxed and registered, stored in tea shops, and then resold to merchants (Tibetan merchants mainly) traveling between Kham and Tibet. These Tibetan merchants usually dwelled in their familiar post houses in Tachienlu, and this tradition lasted for generations. Owners of post houses would offer accommodation, goods storage, pack animal feeding, trade brokering and translation services for a reward of 4% of the trading amount. Tea, cloth, rice, cigarettes, liquors and general cargos from inside the pass, and fur, musk, hairy antler, fritillaria, Cordyceps, sodium borate, etc. from out of the pass had to be traded through post houses. Therefore, post houses were service facilities integrating trade brokering, accommodation and goods storage unique to Tachienlu. Post houses rose during Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign. There were four post houses at the beginning, and this number rose to 48 in the mid of the Qing dynasty.

Tea packs transported from producing areas to Tachienlu had to be subjected to secondary packing at post stations run by Tibetans, namely making 12 tea bricks into one pack, and wrapping the pack with thin bamboo strips and cowhide. Mr. Ren Naiqiang (1987, 27) described this vividly, "When tea packs are carried to Kangding, they are rewrapped with cowhide softened by soaking for sale to various places. Many people in Kangding dealt with this." Cowhide was used to prevent pack animals (yaks, mules, horses and cattle) from being stabbed by bamboo strips. In addition, since it took over two months to travel tea from Tachienlu to Tibet, cowhide was both air-permeable and weatherproof to prevent mildew growth.

Many Tibetan herdsmen transporting tea out of the pass were called packers, who were responsible for transporting tea and other goods for merchants, temples and government agencies. They highly adapted to the plateau environment because they had been living on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau since childhood; they used goods to resist cold when resting, drank tea and ate tsampa. Even if their beard and hair were covered by ice when they woke up in the morning, they could continue going on the way as if nothing had happened. Packers traveled 15-20 kilograms per day, and did not follow a regular schedule. They would let pack animals eat grasses and drink water where possible, so they and their animals could receive sufficient rest and supplies on the way (Ren 1987, 20-21). Only Tibetan herdsmen could adapt to this special mode of transport, while farmers of other ethnic groups could not.

Since there were often bandits on the way from Tachienlu to Tibet, packers had to travel in groups, where each group usually had 30-40 pack animals, and some groups even had over 1,000 pack animals. When leaving Tachienlu, Rockhill (1891, 284) saw a large caravan with 3,000 pack animals heading for Shigatse, he estimated that at least 100-200 fully loaded yaks left Tachienlu for Tibet per day. Packers carried guns and fierce dogs for protection. Pack groups included several types: groups formed by rich herdsmen, private groups of herd owners, major merchants and temples, who hired packers (packers would receive 20% of income), and groups of chieftains and headmen, who also hired packers (supplying them with grain, butter, beef, etc., and granting a head of cattle as reward (Local Traffic Annals Editorial Board 1984, 145).

Road conditions in Kangding and Tibet varied with season. Roads were covered with snow during January-March, permeated with water during April-June, easy to walk during July-September, and hard to walk during October-December in the lunar calendar (Zhang 2005, 397). Therefore, pack groups usually set out in early autumn, and traveled throughout winter, because roads would be muddy in spring, and summer (June and July) was rainy. It took one year to finish a round trip between Tachienlu and Lhasa.

## CONCLUSION

All Tibetans and Mongolians drink tea, whether they are rich or not. In Chinese history, tea was the only commodity to help maintain relationship between the central government and northern nomads permanently in the farming-stockbreeding exchange system. Since the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau was short of vegetables, rice and flour, tea became an important food supplement for the Tibetans living here. In the 1860s, British explorer Cooper (1871, 225) said after visiting Tibetan areas: "It seems all Tibetans' lives are focused on how to acquire tea." Although his comment was somewhat aggravated, it reflected the Tibetans' demand and preference for tea to some extent. As tea was essential part of daily lives of all Tibetans, the central feudal dynasties in the past regarded tea as a tool to control Tibet. From the Song dynasty to the early Qing dynasty, Han-Tibet tea-horse trade was a mutually beneficial and complementary form of trade between the Han people and the Tibetans, because the Tibetans could live better with tea, and the Han people could strengthen military power with horses. After the Qing government unified the country, tea-horse trade changed to the exchange of Han tea for Tibetan fur, medicinal materials and other specialties. This interdependent friendship lasted for a millennium. Since the mid of 19th century, with the expansion of British colonists to the Himalayas region, tea even affected the international geopolitical landscape of South Asia significantly. In 1888 and 1903, British imperialists forced the Qing government and the Tibetan local government to sign unequal treaties through the two invasions of Tibet, opening up the gate of Tibet, dumping tea from Assam in Tibet in large quantities, and starting political, economic and military penetration into Tibet, which led to a crisis on China's southwest frontier. In the first half of the 20th century, tea became an important tool of China and Britain to compete for controlling over Tibet.

Such counties as Ya'an, Mingshan, Tianquan, Yingjing, Qionglai, Guanxian, Chongqing and Pingwu between the west part of the Sichuan Basin and the east edge of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau were important producing areas of Tibetan tea, which was picked after Tomb-sweeping Day, and tasted strong and bitter. This coarse tea scorned by the Han people was very suitable for making butter tea favored by the Tibetans. Since tea-horse trade was refocused from northwestern China in the Song dynasty southward to Sichuan, the output of Sichuan frontier tea kept rising. However, due to the long and difficult road across the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and the turbulent Dadu River, Sichuan frontier tea was always traded in Ya'an, Lizhou, Diaomen and Yanzhou, and mostly bought by Tibetans for sale in Tibetan areas, and Han merchants rarely crossed the Dadu River.

After the Xilu Battle in the 39th year of Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign (1700), the Qing government put the area east of the Yalong River under its direct control (Zhao 2017), and then built the Luding Bridge across the Dadu River, opening up the passage from Ya'an to Tachienlu. The 250-year history of the Tibetan tea road from Ya'an via Tachienlu to Tibet spanned from the occupation of Tachienlu by the Qing army in 1700 to the opening of the Ya'an-Kangding Highway in 1950.

Sichuan frontier tea trade did not end in Tibet, and part of tea was further transported to Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and the northwest plateau of India, and integrated into the round-the-Himalayas trading network. In the late Qing dynasty and early Republican China period, "Chinese tea has actually prevailed, and is favored by Tibetans everywhere, including Bhutan, the Himalayas, Sikkim, Nepal, Lahore and Ladakh."(Bell 1936, 286)

After the Xinhai Revolution, the volume of Sichuan tea sold to Tibet was reduced greatly because the road of South Road frontier tea sold to Tibet was obstructed, and Indian tea was dumped in Tibet. In the 1930s-40s, Sichuan tea was mostly sold in the Kham and Amdo Tibetan areas only, and only a small amount of high-grade tea was supplied specially to eminent monks, nobles and rich merchants in Lhasa. This affected tea growers, tea merchants, porters and packers who lived on tea greatly. "Not only 50,000-60,000 porters in Ya'an and Kangding were unemployed, but also over 100,000 packers lost their livelihoods."(Jin 2011, 4967) Since then, the Tibetan tea road that rose in Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign declined gradually. After the People's Liberation Army entered Tibet in 1951, with the opening of the Sichuan-Tibet Highway, the Tibetan tea road was reborn, and frontier tea from Ya'an, etc. was transported

to Tibet continuously again, playing a crucial role in maintaining frontier stability and ethnic unity (Ya'an Tea Factory 1961).

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**ENDNOTES**

1. There was no record of prevalent tea drinking in Tibetan areas in Tibetan literatures of this period.
2. Japanese scholar Hashimoto inferred from his fieldwork in 15 tea producing areas in China, Myanmar, India, Japan, etc. that the area between southeastern China and Assam in India was the global origin of tea. In addition, Macfarlane from the University of Cambridge thought that tea originated in the east forests of the Himalayas, namely the area between Yunnan, China and Myanmar, northern Thailand and Assam in India. See [British] Alan Macfarlane, Iris Macfarlane: *Green Gold: The Empire of Tea*, translated by Hu Xilin, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2016, p.61-64.
3. Due to different times, origins and supplies, prices recorded by different researchers differed.
4. In the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, Tianquan was under chieftain jurisdiction, and brought into the bureaucratic system in Year 6 of Qing Emperor Yongzheng's reign (1728). The Tianquan chieftain was relocated to Jiangxi Province.
5. Today's Lengqi Town, Luding, Garze Tibetan Prefecture, Sichuan.
6. These tribes were governed by the Songpan Sub-prefecture Government in the late Qing dynasty.

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