

དཀར་མཛེས།

Kartse

Chinese: Ganzi Xian

甘孜县



roll/neg: 5:0a
subject: wide angle view of the town and environs
location: Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་།, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: The configuration of Kartse town is standard in the prefecture which bears its name, but in which it is held to low status by disapproving higher authorities. The profiled edge of Gepheling Gönpa can be seen on the hillside at the right. Below it, spreading up the drainage to the right, is the main Tibetan village. New Kartse's rectangular grid has expanded almost to the river banks. County population was officially claimed to be 55,000 in 1994, a figure which probably understates Tibetans modestly and Chinese significantly. Tibetans are reported to make up 95% of the county.
(Viewed from the north.)

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h. **Kartse Dzong [Ch: Ganzi Xian]**

i. **Brief description and impressions**

Kartse lies 385 kilometers from the prefectural capital Dartsedo (Ch. Kangding), deep in the heart of Kham. Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་། or དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་། (Ch. Ganzi Xian 甘孜县), located in northern Kartse TAP, is one of the prefecture's medium-sized counties, an oddly-shaped area of 7,358 kilometers with a long arm protruding northwards. Population density, 7.7 persons per square kilometer, rises above the prefectural average of 5.7 because it is a partly agricultural county, and because the county seat of Kartse is a relatively large town. It has for centuries been the main town between Dartsedo and Chamdo on the northern route through Kham into Central Tibet. Before the Communist occupation in 1950, when most of Kham lay, nominally at least, under the new Chinese province of Xikang, it was so strong a regional magnet for Tibetan pilgrims that a European visitor referred to it as "the Mecca of Xikang"¹. Trade and transport also enlivened the town. When the Chinese Communists began to organize a new post-1950 colonial administration, they chose Kartse as the capital of the projected Tibetan autonomous region that was to bear its name. But the town's remoteness, lack of modern facilities, and political uncertainty undermined their confidence in their original choice. The planned autonomous region was down-graded to an autonomous prefecture, Dartsedo was selected as the prefectural seat instead of Kartse and Kartse was made an ordinary county. Only its name retained in association with the prefectural administration. Kartse therefore bears comparison with Dartsedo on the basis of its having been considered, and rejected, as the prefectural capital. Kartse's reputation for trouble has not adequately changed in the eyes of the Chinese. Local opinion has it that the town has been deliberately denied public assistance ever since.

Yet in its resolute, defiant spirit, energetic religious activity and cultural strength, Kartse deserves to be considered the capital of Kham far more than Dartsedo. Its streets are thronged with traditionally dressed farmers and nomads who ride into town to sell hides and trade coral, while town residents create Tibetan neighborhoods filled with new houses in the beautiful local style. The Gepheling Gönpa, spreading across an entire hillside overlooking the town, has been restored from complete ruin. Here and at other religious sites in the town

¹ André Migot, *Tibetan Marches*, p. 145

continuous daily pilgrim activity takes place. Dartsedo, although a pleasant town, is gliding easily into the Chinese economic and cultural sphere. Kartse maintains its Tibetan identity with defiant persistence.

The county town, known simply as Ganzizhen 甘孜镇 under the Chinese administration, spreads below a bluff beside the Yalong River, surrounded by cultivated fields and a rugged chain of snow mountains bordering the valley southwest of the river [see photo 5:0a, p. 790]. The local perception that Kartse has been kept in a backward state to teach it a political lesson is certainly borne out by the shabby appearance of the Chinese town sectors [see photos 4:7a and 27:9, p. 821 and 819]. Kartse consists of the dual Chinese-Tibetan configuration seen in so many county towns of Kartse TAP: Chinese administrative grid surrounded by neighborhoods of traditional Tibetan homes. The Chinese sector is a town's public face, the Tibetan suburbs its deeper, more private soul.

Kartse's location, at a minimum three days' journey from the provincial capital Chengdu, already ensures its relative lack of development by the Chinese compared to the closer prefectural capital Dartsedo. Now that the overall Chinese economy has reached take-off velocity and even the most remote areas are feeling the effects of "reform and opening up" policies, Kartse has received slight attention as a potential development center. Many compounds linger on from the early decades of Chinese control, particularly in the government sector along East Street (Ch. Dongdajie 东大街) [see photo 27:9, p. 819]. Public facilities and infrastructure remain conspicuously inadequate and poorly maintained. The bus station, notorious throughout the prefecture for its dilapidation and thievery, encapsulates pointed official neglect. That travellers will avoid overnighting in Kartse in order to avoid a night in the station's primitive facilities is, locals are convinced, the result of official intent. Kartse, depending on the mood of local police, is still a closed or semi-closed area, with tensions smouldering under its appealing exterior. Along East Street, where compound walls rather than shops front the street, slogans illustrate the persistence of uneasy ethnic relations.

The atmosphere and appearance of Kartse is still reminiscent of 1970's China or of Lhasa or Shigatse a decade ago, before the frenzy of "development" began: the grey government compounds, absence of high-rise construction, long sections of unpaved streets. Slogans from an earlier economic era still decorate street walls, urging "*Oppose bourgeois liberalization*" 反对资产阶级自有化, hardly relevant in Kartse in the past or the present. Yet signs of change gradually intrude on the visitor's consciousness, from two directions. On the one hand, emergent commercialism and modernization have begun to infiltrate. On the other, neighborhoods of new

traditional Tibetan houses, existent only as meagre run-down enclaves twenty years ago, now surround and penetrate the core Chinese colonial town. There is a sense in Kartse that, if chaotic social and political conditions ensued, or if Tibetan areas were granted real autonomy, it could revert again to a true Tibetan town.

ii. **Historical background**

Kartse became a dominantly Tibetan region during the Tibetan Empire period, when Tibetan armies invaded Kham and Amdo and absorbed the original Qiang and Tangut inhabitants into their territories. After the fall of the Yarlung Dynasty in Central Tibet, Kartse was an important center for the dissemination and growth of Tibetan Buddhism, and regional figures made notable contributions to the course of religious and political developments particularly up till and including the 13th-Century Mongol overlordship in Tibet. The five Hor principalities of the Kartse region, whose chieftains retained power until the 20th Century, also claim descent from the Mongols of this period². In 1727 the Qing Yongzheng Emperor declared a protectorate over eastern Kham, placing the Hor states and other Tibetan principalities there under the nominal supervision of the viceroy of Sichuan Province, but until the early 20th Century the Chinese Government pursued an essentially non-interventionist policy in the Tibetan borderlands. In 1865 Nyarong and the Hor states came under the supervision of the Lhasa Government until they were again annexed by the Chinese in 1911.

China's forward movement in Kham had began in 1905, resulting in direct Chinese administration in all the Khampa states by 1910. The Republic of China continued to press Chinese claims in Kham after the fall of the Qing Dynasty. Chinese magistrates resided in the major towns, and more conspicuously Chinese soldiers harassed the countryside, causing bitter anti-Chinese sentiments among the Tibetans long before the Communist occupation. In 1950 the PLA reached Dartsedo, establishing a military administration and immediately setting out for the invasion of Central Tibet via Kartse and Chamdo. Kartse was at first chosen as the capital of the new Xikang Province TAR, but with the abolition of Xikang Province in 1955 and the establishment of the Kartse TAP in eastern Kham, Kartse was reduced to county-status within the prefecture bearing its name. In 1956 Kartse joined the Khampa revolt against the Chinese occupation. Repressive political, economic, cultural and religious measures followed once the revolt was quelled in 1958, and Kartse entered on a period of extreme hardship until the reforms of 1978. Even today the relatively backward state of official development of the town

² R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, p. 34

demonstrates that the Chinese have not forgiven Kartse for its opposition. There is an echo of China's modern warnings to other countries that uncooperative behavior will beget unfavorable economic consequences.

iii. **Current demography**

Kartse is one of the more highly populated counties of Kartse TAP, with an officially recorded county total of 55,000 in 1994³. Other official sources identify 95% of these people as Tibetan .⁴ In the countryside the predominance of Tibetans is incontestable, and even the county town has a strongly Tibetan population. But Chinese numbers officially admitted for the county have been significantly under-estimated. Less than 3,000 (5%) are allowed for the whole county⁵, a figure irreconcilable with the visible presence of Chinese unit workers, armed forces and businessmen in the county town alone.

The history of colonization in Kartse already refutes the low Chinese population count. From the 1950's through the 1970's, many Chinese were transferred to Kartse to set up the new administrative, control and exploitation structure. Such older transferees have by and large stayed on, raising families who in turn have begun to raise a third generation of Chinese Kartse residents. Such people refer to themselves as "old West Sichuanese", speak Tibetan and have little inclination or opportunity to return to Chinese regions where they no longer belong. Newer immigrants arrived during the earlier 1980's reform era, mostly opening shops in which they also live, with their children, to form a second stratum of potential permanent Chinese residents.

After 1992 came the latest economic migrants, typical of those seen in the rest of Kham, hoping to capitalize on business opportunities that may exist in what are, to them, "frontier" regions. These latest arrivals may amount to thousands within the whole county but remain invisible in official statistics. Their impact on local society and economy still has definite consequences. A number of Hui, mostly from Linxia in Gansu Province, have also come to Kartse seeking business opportunities in predictable trade areas: textiles, animal hides, and restaurants.

³ *Official Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

⁴ *Tabulation on China's Nationality: 1990 Census Data*

⁵ *Tabulation on China's Nationality: 1990 Census Data*

Only 37 Hui were counted in Kartse during the 1990 Census⁶, a far too modest assessment of actual Hui presence.

Kartse would not be the first choice of Tibetan-area destinations for Chinese immigrants, and the post-1992 immigration wave so destructively sweeping Central Tibetan towns like Lhasa, Tsetang and Shigatse has not reached Kartse in force yet. But putting an infrastructure in place which renders an environment more familiar increases its attraction, especially as population pressures at home intensify and economic opportunities in outlying regions are being proffered. This basic strategy in the TAR is all the more easily applied to Kartse, still lying within a Chinese province from the Chinese point of view. So far, development in Kartse has proceeded slowly. After the economic torpor of the first three decades of Communist administration, some commercial and civic development took place in the 1980's, evidenced particularly in the central sector of the Chinese town around Clear River Street (Ch. Qinghejie 清河街). Typical signifiers of the latest reform and opening-up policies are now appearing. The County NPC houses itself in a red and gold neo-imperial edifice, two banks have built themselves updated premises, and a large strip mall has been constructed in the main commercial street, with upstairs residences for immigrant shopkeepers. There is no doubt that most of these will be Chinese, and some Hui, just as they are in Lhasa, Tsö, Dartsedo and Barkham.

Visual appraisal suggests about half the workers employed in government units are Tibetan, and that some Tibetans have been successful in business ventures, as the fine new houses they have built within the town attest. Steady government employment or business success confer economic and social status. Yet Tibetans are mostly found at the low and mid-levels in these areas, not in the highest positions. Leading cadres are still said to be Chinese, while the largest business operations are Chinese-run. Gradual but increasing Chinese immigration must intensify this imbalance, with consequent economic and social effects.

Additional demographic details for Kartse can be found in Tables 12 and 16 [see pp. 175 and 376] and Charts 24 and 24a [see pp. 431 and 432]

iv. **Administrative and control apparatus**

⁶ *Tabulation on China's Nationality: 1990 Census Data*

(1) **CCP**

Communist Party and Government organs present both the old and new faces of the Chinese colonial administration in Kartse. Compounds of the most powerful units survive from the early occupation era, while the premises of supplementary units have been upgraded to keep pace with the more glamorous 1990's. The dour old red-roofed Party headquarters and its counterpart the County Government stand in close proximity in East Street [see photo 27:9, p. 819], still the power-place directing affairs but gradually being upstaged in appearance by contemporary commercial development elsewhere in town. When it was first erected, the austere grey edifice would have presented a seriously intimidating demeanor. In other county towns, and certainly in prefectural capitals, such socialist dinosaurs of the 1950's and 60's are giving way to the pretentiousness of the 1990's. The CPPCC in Kartse occupies a brand-new block not far from the Court in the northern sector of town, one of several new buildings to employ the mock-Tibetan cum neo-imperial architectural design now popular in TAP towns.

(2) **government**

Like the Party, the County Government still occupies a large old grey 1960's compound in East Street on one side of the NPC. The County NPC has the most prestigious profile of any government unit in town, now housed in a neo-imperial block between the Party and Government [see photo 27:9, p. 819]. The Government Hostel, on the opposite side of the street, contains an old section dating from early occupation times, as well as a pale green multi-story block added more recently.

Kartse contains a standard batch of early occupation-era administrative compounds, as well as some updated support facilities to keep pace with policy development. A Labor Office, Goods and Materials Office, Seed Depot and Grain and Oil Offices all survive from the 1960's. A TV Broadcasting Station and Tax Offices were added in the late 1980's, as well as Agricultural and Construction Bank branches. The banks have already abandoned their old premises and constructed new ones more in keeping with the pace of presumed 1990's development. The newest government compound, containing offices connected to the pastoral industry, has recently been housed in a well-appointed modern complex featuring external Tibetan design, one of the most appealing examples seen of "nationalities characteristics" architecture [see photo 84:28, p. 829]. A new Post Office is also under construction.

(3) **PAP**

There are two large PAP compounds in Kartse town, a testament to the Chinese administration's unease there. In addition, locals claim backup troops from Dawu have occasionally been sent up to Kartse. The main County PAP unit occupies an old grey revolutionary-era complex in East Street, in the main government sector. A wall slogan on the street near this compound reminds the PAP of the purpose of internal security in a Tibetan area: "*Strengthen nationality solidarity, oppose nationality splittism*" 加强民族团结，反对民族分裂. Although it is surrounded by a high wall topped with broken glass, its everyday profile is relatively muted compared to the smaller but more visible PAP unit quartered in another spartan compound adjacent to the PSB Detention Center in Liberation Street. This is most probably the PAP Squadron (zhongdui), who usually perform guard duties in jails. About forty soldiers practise martial arts in the yard daily, in full view of the street. Slogans on the walls flanking the entrance to the compound read "*Consider the garrison as your own village, regard the people as your parents*" 把驻地当古乡，视人民为父母, and "*Safeguard the Motherland, increase vigilance*" 保卫祖国，提高警惕. Locals find the scene ironical.

PAP units are also stationed in many small townships in the county, an armed presence warning of the consequences of opposition.

(4) **PSB**

The County PSB compound is meaningfully located right next to the main Tibetan neighbourhood below Gepheling Gönpa, in Liberation Street. Next to it is the Procuratorate, then the PSB Detention Center, then a PAP compound [see photo 29:35a, p. 823]. The Traffic Police occupy a separate compound in the mid-town area, as does the Court, the newest of the police and judiciary buildings. Uniformed police do not maintain a particularly heavy presence on the streets, but they do not need to as plain-clothes police swell their ranks. In the event of trouble, reinforcements can be summoned from Dawu. Tibetans form a sizeable proportion of police personnel in Kartse.

(5) **known imprisonment and detention facilities**

The Kartse PSB Detention Center is one of the most notorious in Kham. Political protestors have been imprisoned here; their families have been tortured within the jail compound as police extracted information on the protestors' whereabouts⁷. Monks are also known to have been held in the facility. Sandwiched between the Procuratorate and PAP compound, it is a grim old facility, with a round tower resembling a grain silo and very cramped conditions [see photo 29:35a, p. 823]. The PSB stands on the other side of the old white Procuratorate compound in a convenient procession of organs for public security, detention and sentencing.

(6) PLA

About a kilometer east of the county town, the PLA maintain a large base of early occupation vintage. It is comparable in size to the Dawu PLA Base, but may be older in construction. Kartse was an important strategic point for establishing Communist control in Kham, when much of the responsibility for order and consolidation of Chinese authority fell to the PLA. Its internal security role has fallen to the PAP since 1983, but the army still maintains a network for national security, supply and communications in nationality areas.

v. Economy

Kartse's economy appears statistically average for the prefecture. GDP in 1994 was moderate, 92.6 million Yuan.⁸ The primary sector, which should be made up of farming, pastoralism, forestry and mining, led production with a 48% share (44.1 million Yuan in 1994) of GDP. However, if that level of productivity, is divided among the county's 85% rural population⁹, the resultant primary product per capita is about 940 Yuan. That level of production (and income) is too low to include logging and mining.

⁷ *Tibet Information Network*, interviews conducted in 1995; Tsering Dorje, Lobsang Tashi and Lobsang Tenzin were apprehended in Lhasa after having put up pro-independence posters in February 1990 in Kartse town. Relatives of the suspects had been tortured into revealing their probable location. When the suspects were returned to Kartse they were tortured in the local jail themselves. All three were later sentenced and imprisoned in Minyag-area labor camps. Tsering Dorje had a 12 year sentence but escaped, fleeing to India. Lobsang Tenzin was sentenced to 14 years and Lobsang Tashi to 4 years.

⁸ *Statistical Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

⁹ *China County and City Population Statistics 1992*; Kartse TAP's rural population is 85% of the prefectural total

This report could not obtain economic production statistics for natural resource extraction in Tibetan counties. Statistics provided in provincial yearbooks track agricultural and pastoral productivity too closely for figures to be inclusive of a broader range of primary production, especially natural resource extraction. This is consistent with China's constitutional provision that the State owns natural resources¹⁰. This could, in the eyes of the Central Government, excuse it from treating the forests and minerals of Tibet as Tibetan resources, reporting extraction of those resources as Tibetan production, or treating the resultant wealth as Tibetan wealth. Locals in Kartse are known to be particularly resentful of the sustained outward flow of raw materials. There is irony in this. Tibetans, in their own words, view the Chinese as "thieves", unaware that the constitution China has authored has already eliminated Tibetan ownership of Tibetan resources. Having appropriated actual ownership and control of resources, removing them might be seen as a subsidiary grievance.

Tertiary production was the second-largest component of GDP, passing secondary production by a wide margin in 1994 (tertiary 30.5 million Y; secondary 18 million Y).¹¹ Tertiary output was the fourth highest in the prefecture in 1994. There is nothing evident to suggest it is made up of much beside standard government activities in administration, finances, education, medicine, resource extraction and transport. The county town's importance as a transport way station could contribute to tertiary production. A moderate population combined with modest economic output yielded a relatively low per capita GDP in 1994, 1,683 Yuan.¹²

Additional economic details relevant to Kartse can be found in Tables 9, 13 and 17 [see pp. 127, 184 and 439] and Charts 14a, 15-18 and 25-26 [see pp. 122, 123-126 and 433-434].

(1) **agriculture**

Kartse's local economy rests on a more mixed agricultural-pastoral basis than the almost exclusively pastoral areas extending westwards towards the TAR border, like Sershül, Dege and Payül. Along the wider river valleys along the Da Chu and Ngag Chu (Yalong) watersheds that flow through much of the county, substantial land in

¹⁰ *The Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, 4 December 1982, Article 9

¹¹ *Statistical Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

¹² *Statistical Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

Kartse can be cultivated with barley, beans and potatoes. Tibetans-in-exile maintain that poverty among farmers is the norm in Kartse. Probably a hard but not impoverished life is the reality for most, though more poor farmers are in evidence than in areas further east, and some beggars are seen on the town streets. Certainly village families may not have the means to send their children to school or make many cash purchases. Villages dotted throughout the countryside, with their mud-brick houses washed with the distinctive vertical pale-green bands of Kartse, look basic but not degraded. Many cluster near a small gönpa or shrine, newly restored through local funding and labor. Farming methods have remained largely traditional, as scant evidence of mechanization is seen apart from the occasional walking-tractor. Yaks are still used for plowing in most villages. Farmers also graze animals, including yaks, horses and sheep, on the higher ground beyond their fields.

The government maintains a Seed Depot in East Street, and the Grain and Oil Office, one of the Chinese town's original installations, covers a very large area in the central part of the town north of the highway. The largest grain storage facilities have been noted in areas of high Chinese population transference in the early occupation days. A reasonable selection of vegetables, sold by Chinese and Tibetans, is available in the street markets of the county town, some of which are grown locally and some transported from Chengdu. For the Chinese population currently residing in the town, supply of the vegetables they prefer in their diet is probably satisfactory. Rice of course must be imported from Chinese agricultural areas to the east. As Chinese immigration increases, expanded demand will have to be met from further imports or local sources, which would entail acquisition of farm land for market gardening. Where this has occurred in Lhasa, local Tibetan farmers rent their land to Chinese cultivators, with resultant loss of access to their basic land resource in exchange for cash benefits. The same could happen in Kartse and other Tibetan county town districts where Chinese-style market gardening, usually in greenhouses, is possible.

(2) **pastoralism**

Many Tibetans in Kartse live by pastoralism, or semi-pastoralism. In Kartse as elsewhere it tends to confer a higher economic level than farming. Fine herds of yaks, sheep and horses graze in Kartse's high grassland areas, and pastoralists coming into the county town have a relatively prosperous appearance, although this is not reflected in the prefectural per capita rural net income of only 523 Yuan in 1992¹³. The pastoral sector may be receiving increasing government attention, as a fine new office and residential compound for the County Pastoral

¹³ *China Nationalities Economy 1993*

Office, Veterinary Station and Plateau Work Station has been built in town. According to official sources, Kartse is one of the prefecture's main yak production centers¹⁴. There is an older Livestock Exchange Market in town and availability of yak meat on the market is noticeably high, especially compared to Dartsedo where it is scarcely obtainable except in processed, Sichuan-style form. No meat processing facilities were observed in town, however. Plenty of pork is offered on restaurant menus, suggesting that the commercial sector, largely a Chinese concern, will promote Chinese tastes and therefore supply. Indications are that the sheep industry may be marked out for development over yak production¹⁵, due its higher immediate yields of both wool and meat, and its readier conversion to fenced grazing methods. Cashmere has also received recent official approval as a product of high economic value and thus worthwhile development¹⁶. Such trends in pastoral industry development have the potential to bring economic benefits to Kartse's herders, but also future environmental problems from overgrazing and loss of individual economic autonomy, as has been shown in other counties where increased fencing and nomad settlement have been enforced.

Official sources freely admit that some nomads have been forced to settle¹⁷, and their rather dismal new villages, such as Cuo'axiang 错阿乡 near the Kartse-Dege boundary, do not look like a satisfactory alternative to traditional pastoral methods. In 1992 almost 700 nomad families were settled into fixed dwellings throughout the prefecture¹⁸.

(3) **natural resources exploitation**

Unlike Dawu and Draggo, there is not currently a heavy logging industry presence in Kartse, although the county's forests have previously been unsparingly logged. Having largely depleted local forestry reserves, officials are now interested in reforestation. The County Forestry Office occupies a reasonably new building, probably built in the late 1980's economic reform period, but it is not surrounded by lumber processing facilities or large logging truck depots. Much of Kartse consists of open grazing land rather than extensive forest cover,

¹⁴ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 151

¹⁵ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 151

¹⁶ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 151

¹⁷ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, pp. 296-297

¹⁸ *China Nationalities Economy 1993*, essay on Kartse TAP, p. 83

especially in the north, but deforestation is a serious problem, and extended afforestation projects are necessary if environmental degradation is to be checked.

Of more interest to the county authorities at present are Kartse's considerable gold resources. Since the 1980's Kartse TAP has emphasized gold exploitation as a key component of economic development. Good rock deposits exist at Shenla 呻拉, Qiuluo 丘洛, Punongba 普弄巴 and Siyigou 色依沟¹⁹, and an office in East Street has been opened to manage the industry. Apparently the local government carries out most mining activity. Revenue from gold mining therefore flows to local and state government, and is of no benefit to Tibetans other than those who may be privy to the government scheme, another source of local complaint.

Other mineral deposits in the county include turquoise, coal and copper²⁰, but the report has no further information on their current exploitation.

(4) **industrial**

Industrialization has not much affected Kartse, where few industrial compounds were noted. Production statistics confirm that impression, with secondary industry making up slightly less than 20% of GDP in 1994. Vehicle and small machinery repair shops and work units are the nearest equivalent, as well as construction units. An agricultural machine tool factory of some kind may exist somewhere in the town, as these were supposed to be established in all Kartse TAP counties during the early 1970's as part of the agricultural mechanization drive²¹. A hydro-electric power station was built on the Nyag Chu (Yalong River) at Shenla 呻拉, not far from the county town, during the 1950's, and other workshops were also established to form a rudimentary industrial base for the developing Chinese colonial settlement, among them an oil refinery, milk powder factory and sugar refinery²². The subsequent fate of these early plants was not determined during fieldwork. If they still exist, their inconspicuousness indicates they have not developed very far.

¹⁹ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 176

²⁰ *Tibet - A Land of Snows*, p. 16

²¹ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 115

²² *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 115

(5) **commercial and retail activity**

Commercial and retail activity, while slow to develop in Kartse, is gathering momentum, and displaying the same trends as in other Tibetan areas. Some Tibetans run small shops and eateries, but most ventures are Chinese concerns. Kartse's first stratum of commercial development appeared in the 1980's, when some shops were constructed along the highway and Liberation Street, and Chinese shopkeepers moved in, but these earlier low-quality street fronts are gradually giving way to more pretentious 1990's buildings. Among the older shops along the highway a three-storey market building, smaller but reminiscent of the new Tromsikhang market in Lhasa, has recently opened, offering a range of more expensive Chinese manufactures such as cosmetics, cigarettes, watches and packaged foodstuffs. On the opposite side of the highway stands the neo-imperial facade of the Commercial Center, a development of uncertain direction - probably wholesale commercial supplies - but certainly Chinese-inspired and run.

The southern end of Liberation Street shows the most vigorous signs of new commercial development. Many shops with upper-story residences are occupied by Chinese businesses selling clothes, manufactured items, household and electronic goods. The trend will be intensified when the strip-mall of at least fifty new shops, recently constructed halfway along Liberation Street, is filled. This whole sector resembles, on a smaller scale, the kind of development in progress in Lhasa since 1992. While Tibetans may utilize, and welcome, the expanded purchasing possibilities, it is Chinese-style development with Chinese residents and merchants in mind. The strip-malls include upstairs accommodation and are the exact model of small town development in inland county towns near Chengdu in Qionglai, Minshan, etc. Some Chinese pedlars offer cheap wares on the street, but they have not arrived in the overwhelming proportions seen in Lhasa. Several Hui, from mostly from Linxia in Gansu Province, have opened fabric stores dealing in expensive Chinese brocades imported from the East China coast, which cater to flamboyant nomad tastes and indicate a degree of prosperity among some Tibetans in the area. There are also a few small Hui restaurants.

More traditional Tibetan trading activity still exists in Kartse, as knots of nomads, Hui hide dealers and sundry purveyors of Tibetan artefacts loiter at the crossroads in front of the new Kartse "Tromsikhang". Business may be desultory but the participants enjoy themselves. The scene exhibits far more animation than anything happening inside the new market. Along the two main commercial streets some Tibetan shops also deal in Tibetan goods, sometimes of high quality but generally the typical mass-produced items seen in most county

towns. Within the Tibetan town sectors, Tibetans run simple neighborhood shops selling everyday household items. The ever-present Nationalities Trade Company stands in a mid-1980's building in Clear River Street, but shows little sign of activity. As in the past Kartse still draws Tibetan traders, and nowadays workers, from other parts of Kham, especially Dege where economic opportunities are more limited.

vi. **Educational and medical facilities**

Kartse has an impressive number of educational facilities for the size of its population, particularly at primary level, where there are three schools within the town. Schoolchildren in the town look well-dressed and bright, as noticed in most other county towns, and are offered more secular education than was ever the case in the past. Standards are harder to assess. Tibetan classes are scheduled, but locals complain that they are insufficient and not of a high standard. Costs also bar some children, mainly in the neighboring villages, from attending. Fees of 200 Yuan per year for primary education are beyond the means of many families, and some children therefore miss out on even basic education.

The town has one ordinary middle school, as well as a boarding high school aimed at training teachers for the “ethnic education” stream, the Nationalities Teacher Training High School. This large compound dates from the 1980's, and includes a pleasant modern teachers’ residential block. In rural areas it is difficult in most countries to offer as high an educational standard as in the cities, so despite criticisms that can reasonably be levelled at the Chinese Government for their earlier neglect of good educational facilities in Tibetan areas, they have made efforts to upgrade education since the late 1980's, including such facilities as the teacher training school in Kartse. Unfortunately this has its negative side. Early and continuous exposure to a China-oriented education draws children more deeply into the Chinese cultural and economic domain. In Kartse there are strong local cultural influences to combat this tendency, but the emphasis on a high standard of Chinese rather than Tibetan as a means to economic advancement continues to present a serious obstacle to maintaining standards in Tibetan secular education.

A Chinese-Tibetan Literature Department in East Street, an older compound near the Teacher Training High School, presumably helps supply Tibetan educational materials, while the Xinhua Bookshop stocks some Tibetan titles. Street signs in the village sectors are in Tibetan and Chinese, as are some shop signs. As usual, there

appears to be a high level of literacy in the county town, though education seems to be less successful in rural areas.

Kartse has a County Hospital as well as a Tibetan Medicine Hospital. Neither institution appears to be functioning well, suffering from run-down premises and insufficient funding for medical supplies. Activity seen in both hospitals was minimal, although Tibetan patients occasionally tethered their horses outside the shabby Tibetan hospital building and tentatively entered the apparently empty vestibule.

vii. Culture

Much of Kartse broadcasts its Tibetan identity, despite mostly outdated Chinese models evinced in town construction. Not that Tibetans here do not contend with serious obstacles, or that the Chinese have not imposed a permanent presence. Chinese control has been repressive, even brutal, from the earliest days of occupation. Ethnic tensions still smoulder beneath the town's friendly surface, sometimes breaking out and earning Tibetan participants torture and prison sentences. The march of modernization Chinese-style is moving in, less intensively than further east, but with relentless steadiness. Kartse Tibetans have replied with robust assertion of their own cultural values, to the limits that can be managed under the Chinese system.

Kartse town is as much a federation of Tibetan villages as a Chinese administrative, control and nowadays commercial post, filled with newly-built but traditionally designed houses. Substantial sectors, perhaps half the town, are now composed of houses in the distinctive local style which uses stone or compacted earth for ground floor walls with a wooden upper story, elaborately carved and painted window and door frames, and either a traditional flat roof or a gabled, tiled roof. [see photo 4:15a, p. 833] The decorative touches are often very fine, frequently incorporating finely rendered Buddhist symbols. Some of these newly-built houses employ selective Chinese architectural features such as brick walls for the ground floor or even a concrete upper story verandah, but most are wholly traditional in design and materials. Almost all Tibetans retain Tibetan dress, or elements of it. Tibetan clothing and artefacts are readily available in the shops. Most Tibetans speak exclusively the Tibetan language on the streets, not the Sino-Tibetan hybrid often heard in Dartsedo. Religious activity flourishes in monasteries and within daily life.

Given a sufficient demographic basis and not too overwhelming an exposure to Chinese economic and social patterns, cultural strength and vitality proves to be an effective tool of resistance, at least as Kartse's case. Its energy is perceived as threatening by the Chinese, who allow only as much cultural expression as current policy decrees, but with reluctance, and with sternly repressive measures whenever they feel provoked. Kartse has a continuing history of political unrest. Police and armed force units maintain conspicuously well-manned compounds. The town has a local reputation for heavy surveillance. Public facilities - streets, bus station, sports stadium - have, according to locals, been left neglected or derelict to teach Tibetans a lesson. The result, however, has been thinly-concealed defiance. Slogans emblazoned across walls throughout the town only serve to underline ethnic tensions, as samples in the "government" sector of East Street illustrate:

“Strengthen solidarity between the Tibetan and Han nationalities, safeguard the unity of the motherland”
加强藏族汉族人民的团结，卫护祖国统一

“Strengthen nationality solidarity, oppose nationality splittism”
加强民族团结，反对民族分裂

“Resolutely defend a situation of stability and unity in Tibetan areas”
坚决卫护藏区安定团结局面

“Persistently safeguard the four principles, oppose bourgeois liberalization”
坚持卫护四项基本原则，反对资产阶级自有化

The number of such slogans surpasses even those in Dege, but then Kartse is a larger town.

Chinese cultural contributions to Kartse follow a predictable pattern. It has the usual entertainment installations of cinema and sports stadium, the former a 1960's relic and the latter closed because it is derelict [see photo 27:9, p. 819]. For more modern tastes, one karaoke has arrived, and streetside pool tables and indoor pool rooms distract some young men [see photo 84:29, p. 831]. Otherwise Kartse remains a countrified town, as yet spared the decadence found in Lhasa. By early evening street life is diminishing; by 9 o'clock the town has shut down completely. Architecturally some "nationalities characteristics" buildings have appeared, the most successful of which has recently been constructed as offices and residential accommodation for government employees [see

photo 84:28, p. 829]. Tibetans who live there appreciate the attempt to provide them with well-built premises incorporating a Tibetan aesthetic.

viii. **Religion**

Despite the heavy destruction and persecution, religious activity remains an integral part of life in Kartse as in all but the most sinicized Tibetan communities. People of all ages are to be seen involved in daily religious activities, reciting mantras as they walk, performing khorwa at the town's multiple Buddhist sites, and doing prostrations. Famous in the past as a center of Tibetan Buddhism, Kartse still reverberates with as much Buddhist activity as Chinese policy allows, less oppressive since the reformed religious policies of 1978, but still far from openly tolerant. Kartse, with its reputation for resistance, is particularly subject to Chinese surveillance. The Tibetan New Year festival Monlam is no longer held in Kartse, as the Chinese fear a repeat of an incident in 1990, when a Tibetan national flag and pro-independence posters were displayed at Degopo Gönpa.

Kartse's distinguishing feature, the Gepheling Gönpa དགེའཕེལིང་གོང་པ།, covers the whole northern slope of the hill behind the town [see photos 29:33a and 4:15a, p. 825 and 833]. Completely destroyed in 1958-1976, rebuilding began in 1979, and the monastery now houses over 600 monks. Numbers are now limited by government regulations and strictly enforced by the monastery's Democratic Management Committee. The current monastic community represents one fifth of the original 3,000 monks. Many have fled to India in the hope of greater religious freedom. A group of over thirty who made an escape attempt through Nepal in 1995 were caught and returned to Kartse jail, saved from threatened imprisonment in Minyag's labor camps only when relatives paid fines for their release.

Restoration work, of higher quality than generally seen in Central Tibet, has been undertaken by local monks and lay craftsmen. Housing for the monks is built in the half wood, half mud-brick style, the lower earthen story often washed in pale green after the local fashion, and woodwork decorated with colorful paintwork. Excellent timber joinery is executed completely by hand with traditional tools. Further around the hill from the Gepheling Gönpa is a Gelug nunnery, with over one hundred nuns in residence. In the town center stands the Degopo Lhakhang, attached to Gepheling Gönpa [see photo 30:2, p. 835]. Very much a neighborhood center with constant pilgrim

activity, the site dates from the period of the Second Dissemination of Buddhism. The site is associated with a political incident in 1990, when three Tibetans were imprisoned for putting up posters expressing opposition to the Chinese occupation. Another small, enigmatic and virtually unrestored lhakhang, the Margyal Pora Lhakhang, stands in the Tibetan neighborhood below Gepheling Gönpa. The sacred triple peak of Khawa Lungri, the holiest mountain in this part of Kham, thrusts into the sky above the mountain chain south of the town [see photo 75:18, p. 827].

An official contribution to the field of religion lies just outside the town on the eastern approach, a memorial to a local tulku who died in 1986. This personage, whose name was not learned, was presumably a collaborative official apparently of little religious significance. An extensive fenced area surrounds a bulky mausoleum that appears, from a distance, to have been constructed in the neo-imperial style. The site is deserted.

Before the Chinese occupation, 49 gönpas reportedly existed in the county²³, most of which have re-opened after the closures and destruction from 1958 till the late 1970's. In Kartse as in all Tibetan areas, it is said that many more people would become monks and nuns if not for government restrictions and obstacles. Fine restored monasteries may be seen at many locations throughout the countryside. Restoration work of very high quality is in progress at monasteries such as Dargye Gönpa, about twenty kilometers west of Kartse, said to support a community of four hundred monks. While rebuilt quarters could certainly accommodate that number, almost none were seen to be in residence [see photo 100:21, p. 837].

ix. History

Neolithic sites have been found in many parts of Kartse TAP, including Kartse Dzong, proving that humans have inhabited the region for at least five thousand years. Its earliest known historical people, the Qiang, migrated there under pressure from the Chinese states during the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC), so that when the Chinese of the Han Dynasty began to expand further to the west and south from the Central Plain of China, it was these now long-settled Qiang that they encountered. From 135-97 BC the Chinese established a line of commanderies running approximately along the eastern edge of Kham and Amdo from Zungchu (Songpan) to Chagzam (Luding), beyond which lived numerous Qiang tribes, the most important confederations being the

²³ Anna Louise Strong, *Tibetan Interviews*, p. 81

White Wolf Qiang 白狼羌 and a group the Chinese called Fuguo 附国. Fuguo encompassed the territory of northern Kartse TAP, centered on the region of Kartse, Draggio and Dawu, where over 20,000 families lived, practising agriculture as their principal form of economy²⁴. Fuguo was a strong and well-organized society, whose king sent diplomatic missions to the court of the Sui Dynasty in 608 and 609²⁵, and another to the Tang Dynasty in 634. Shortly afterwards, however, Fuguo and many other Qiang entities were to be absorbed into the Tibetan Empire.

The appearance of the Yarlung Dynasty's armies on their borders in the 630's took the Chinese by surprise. With amazing speed Tibetan armies from Central Tibet had swept north and east, forcing the submission of the inhabitants of the southern half of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, then attacking the Chinese border stronghold of Songzhou (Zungchu) in 638. Although they did not cross the Chinese frontier for another century, the Tibetans never withdrew from the region immediately west of Songzhou, settling in the lands of the now-conquered Qiang and Tanguts of southern Amdo and Kham, and sending soldiers to garrison their new border fortifications in these areas. After 667 the Tibetans had also defeated the Tuyuhun in northern Amdo, and now only the Tibetans and Chinese faced each other across the borderlands. Despite two marriage alliances between the Tibetan and Chinese dynasties, constant battles raged along the frontiers until the Tibetans overran the Tang's northern positions in 757, and those of the east by 763. The Tibetan imperial administration lasted until the mid-9th Century, but following the collapse of the Yarlung Dynasty in Central Tibet, the empire's peripheries were left in the hands of local Tibetan leaders. In much of Kham including Kartse the Gar clan, whose famous progenitor Tongtsen Yülsung had led King Songtsan Gampo's armies in their early conquests of the 7th Century, established themselves as the principal rulers²⁶.

Over the long period between the fall of the Yarlung Dynasty in Tibet and the conquest of most of East and Central Asia by the Mongols, a distinctive Tibetan society took shape in Kham. While Buddhism faltered in Central Tibet during and after its persecution by Langdarma, Buddhist activity was kept alive in Kham, and monks of the region played a major role in the Buddhist revival in Central Tibet as well as further north in Amdo.

²⁴ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 3

²⁵ *Suishu (History of the Sui Dynasty)* ch. 83, p. 1859

²⁶ R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, p. 58

In Kham the Dzogchenpa tradition, brought by Vairocana in the 9th Century, soon spread to Amdo²⁷ and eventually back into Central Tibet, while in the 12th Century monks from Kham founded branches of the Kargyu order²⁸. A noble family that was to become highly important politically in Tibet, the Phagmotru, whose connections included both the Lang and Gar clans, also came originally from Kham²⁹. Although the Mongols set up a loose suzerainty over Tibet in the 13th Century, their administration involved leaving real power in the hands of local rulers. Kham formed part of the Tibetan Areas Pacification Commissioners' territories, but the Mongols' most significant influence in Tibet was in their patronage of different Buddhist sects, a situation that led to much bitter fighting among orders contending for politico-religious power³⁰. The Karmapa took firm root in Kham, where with the Sakyapa they occupied a leading position for centuries³¹. The ruling families of the five Hor states of the Kartse region - Hor Kangsar, Hor Mazur, Hor Beri, Hor Draggo, Hor Driwo - trace their ancestry to Mongol chiefs from this period³².

The Ming Dynasty, who succeeded the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in China in 1368, also patronized the Karmapa, though the Chinese interest in their religious leaders was not always welcomed by the Tibetans. In 1515 the Ming Emperor dispatched a mission escorted by 1,000 cavalry from Chengdu, charged with bringing the leader of the Karmapa to China. The Karmapa, however, refused to leave Tibet. His protectors attacked the mission, seized its gifts and valuables, and killed or wounded half the escort. The head of the mission escaped, only reaching Chengdu several years later³³. A Ming administration ran to the eastern edge of Kham, where the Tibetans and Chinese traded horses and tea³⁴, but otherwise Ming relations with the Tibetans were confined to these religious and trading spheres. Further north the Ming had built fortifications along the Sino-Tibetan border to defend their territory, but in Kham the Dadu River formed a sufficiently clear divide between the Chinese and Tibetan worlds, where the nearest Chinese walled town was at Ya'an. Through their relations with political and monastic leaders

²⁷ *Aba tonglan (Overview of Ngawa)*, p. 141

²⁸ R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, p. 76

²⁹ R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, p. 75

³⁰ Snellgrove and Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, p. 149

³¹ R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, p. 79

³² Pedro Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet*, p. 146

³³ *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 7, pp. 417-418

³⁴ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 4

in Central Tibet the Mongols, not the Chinese, deeply affected the course of Tibetan civilization in Kham. Under the 3rd Dalai Lama, Sonam Gyatso (1543-1588), who travelled extensively in Kham and Amdo under the patronage of the Tümit Mongol leader Altan Khan, the Gelug order began to increase its influence in these areas. The Gelugpa's prime position was secured when Gushri Khan, the Qosot Mongol patron of the 5th Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617-1682), invaded Kham as far as Lijiang in Yunnan Province in 1641, breaking the power of the Karmapa and inaugurating a period of Gelug monastic foundation and conversion³⁵.

As in other Tibetan areas, Sino-Tibetan relations in Kham underwent certain changes during the reigns of the earlier Qing Dynasty Emperors. Following Qing intervention in Lhasa against the Dzungar Mongols, the Yongzheng Emperor established Ambans in Lhasa (1728) and Xining (1724), and a Chinese protectorate over the eastern portion of Kham. A Chinese garrisoned office was placed in Dartsedo in 1727, in order to safeguard the diplomatic route which now ran between Chengdu and Lhasa via Lithang, Bathang and Chamdo. All the Tibetan principalities now fell theoretically under the protection of China, including the Hor states of the Kartse area. In 1776 five Chinese colonies were implanted in the Gyarong region³⁶, destroying two small Tibetan kingdoms there in the process. Unprecedented as these developments were, they had little effect on most of Kham, where the Tibetan principalities remained as autonomous states ruled by their traditional leaders. After 1865, however, Lhasa formally took over much of eastern Kham under the prompting of the Qing government.

This situation resulted from the activities of Gönpo Namgyal མགོན་པོ་རྒྱལ་མཚན།, a chief of the Nyarong region,

who between 1835 and 1860 had forged a powerful new amalgamation in Nyarong, and begun to invade other Tibetan states apparently with the aim of creating an independent state in Kham. The leaders of Dege and the Hor states appealed to both the Tibetan and Chinese Governments for assistance, but the Chinese, being occupied with the Taiping Rebellion, could make no response. The Regent of the 12th Dalai Lama, who wasn't yet seven years old, then sent a Tibetan army into Kham in 1863, defeated Gönpo Namgyal and his family, and formally took over the administration of Nyarong by appointing a High Commissioner there, whose duties included superintending Dege and the five Hor states. The Lhasa Government remained in control of these regions until they were forcibly annexed by the Chinese under Zhao Erfeng in 1911³⁷.

³⁵ R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, pp. 81-83

³⁶ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 10

³⁷ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 5

China had no reason to contest the loss of its control in these parts of Kham, since the Lhasa Government's actions had been taken with the approval of the Qing Government³⁸, but in the 1890's Chinese policy towards the region showed signs of shifting to a more interventionist position. Anti-Chinese revolts, emanating from Chatreng Monastery and spreading through Kham, first in 1894 and again, more seriously, in 1904-5, prompted the Qing to renewed action in the Sino-Tibetan borderlands. Compounding their unease was the recent success of the British Expedition to Lhasa under Francis Younghusband. Chinese forces under General Zhao Erfeng suppressed armed resistance in Kham for a time³⁹, and a Chinese Border Commissionership was established, whose powers were soon extended under Zhao Erfeng's influence into the imposition of direct Chinese rule in Xikang, as the Chinese designated the eastern Kham protectorate. Local Tibetan rulers were deposed. In 1910 a Chinese army advanced on Lhasa from Kham, but when revolution broke out in China and toppled the Qing Dynasty in 1911, the army had to withdraw. The Dalai Lama claimed Tibetan independence from China now that ties of vassalage with the Manchu Emperor were no longer valid, drawing the line of Tibetan territory around all the Tibetan states as far east as Dartsedo. The new Republican Government declared that Tibet, inclusive of Kham and Amdo, still formed part of China. The Simla Convention was drawn up between Great Britain and China in 1914 to try to solve the conflicting Tibetan and Chinese claims, but was never ratified by China. A state of war continued until an armistice was finally signed in 1918 at Rongbatsa, near Kartse.

Because of disturbances along the southern route into Tibet via Bathang, the northern route, via Kartse, grew in importance after 1914. The rulers of the five Hor states still resided in their traditional domains, but with Chinese magistrates also installed in the main seats of each principality, as the Republican Government had declared Kartse a county in 1913. Especially since increased trading activity along the northern Kham route on which it was situated, Kartse was an important trading, political and religious center, in practise the capital of the Hor states. The town consisted of the great Gelugpa monastery, Gepheling Gönpa, said to have housed over 3,000 monks, below which lay the huge square castles of the chiefs of Hor Kangsar and Hor Mazur, and the attached town. The Mazur chieftain's castle had been taken over by the Chinese magistrate of Kartse district, but the Kangsar chieftain, who had become a wealthy trader, still occupied his. Since the destruction of the great monastery at Chamdo during the war with China in 1910, Gepheling Gönpa had become the largest monastery in Eastern Tibet, while numerous other small monasteries were dotted about the neighborhood⁴⁰. It was a

³⁸ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 5

³⁹ S.A.M. Adsheed, *Province and Politics in Late Imperial China*, pp. 66-69

⁴⁰ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, pp. 71-72

prosperous region, where the inhabitants engaged in the lucrative China-Tibet tea trade as well as practising agriculture⁴¹. A number of Chinese traders, originally from Shaanxi Province in Northwest China, also roamed Kham, but so Tibetanized they could only be distinguished as Chinese by their language⁴².

By the 1930's, the area considered as Ganzi County, formally within Xikang Province after 1936, had a population of some 32,000 people⁴³, of whom 90% were Tibetan, with a sprinkling of Hui, Qiang, and other unidentified tribesmen, according to one Chinese source⁴⁴. No Chinese were listed, but another contemporary source gives the town population of the seat of Kartse as 20,000, among whom 20% were apparently Chinese⁴⁵, an observation borne out by reports from the 1940's⁴⁶. By then Kartse was still a major trading mart, but even more a religious center, filled with pilgrims and dominated by the Gepheling Gönpa with its expansive community of monks⁴⁷. The Chinese civil administration scarcely penetrated the life of the region and was basically disregarded by the Tibetans, who heeded only their own chiefs⁴⁸, but Chinese troops stationed in Xikang came into constant conflict with the local people⁴⁹. In the mid-1930's internal Chinese power struggles reached into Kham, as the Guomindang forces pursued the Communist Red Army into Tibetan areas. They penetrated the Hor states⁵⁰, requisitioned grain from the Kartse monasteries, and fought a major battle with the Tibetans near Draggo south of Kartse, after which they were forced to turn towards Ngawa⁵¹. Shortly before, in 1934, the Republican Government had sent a diplomatic mission to Lhasa, ostensibly to offer condolences on the death of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1933, but in fact to offer proposals for the resolution of differences between China and

⁴¹ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 75

⁴² Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 77

⁴³ *Xikang jiyao (Summary of Xikang)*, p. 250

⁴⁴ *Xikang jiyao (Summary of Xikang)*, p. 247

⁴⁵ *Xikang wenti (The Problem of Xikang)*, p. 91

⁴⁶ A. Doak Barnett, *China on the Eve of the Communist Takeover*, p. 222

⁴⁷ André Migot, *Tibetan Marches*, p. 144-145

⁴⁸ André Migot, *Tibetan Marches*, p. 98

⁴⁹ A. Doak Barnett, *China on the Eve of the Communist Takeover*, p. 223

⁵⁰ Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, p. 278

⁵¹ Jamyang Norbu, *Warriors of Tibet*, p. 52

Tibet. The Lhasa Government demanded the ratification of the Simla Convention and the return of Tibetan territories in Kham, including the Hor states, but no agreement was reached⁵².

In 1950 the Chinese Communists returned to Kham, this time permanently. Having defeated the Guomindang in 1949, they embarked on the annexation of all Tibetan territories and the imposition of a colonial administration over them. The PLA reached Dartsedo in April 1950, established a military administration, and immediately began making preparations for the invasion of Central Tibet. Having run out of supplies when they reached Kartse, the army requisitioned transport animals from the people and forced the Kangsar chieftain to supply grain, animals, fodder and butter so they could continue their advance towards Chamdo⁵³. Simultaneously a motorable road was forced through Kham to assist the passage of the invading army and its support units. Thousands of Tibetans along the way were organized into road-building corps⁵⁴, many losing their lives during construction.

Kartse functioned briefly as the capital of the Xikang Province Tibetan Autonomous Region, established by the Communists in 1950. They soon passed it over in favor of Dartsedo, finding Kartse too remote, lacking in modern facilities, and too politically restive, but its name was retained for the Kartse (Ganzi) TAP which replaced the Xikang TAR when Xikang Province was abolished in 1955. Kartse became simply Ganzi County under the Chinese administration, its odd shape presumably following the notoriously erratic boundaries of the former local chieftains' domains⁵⁵. Transference of Chinese cadres, soldiers and workers into the Kartse TAP began under the socialist program of land reclamation, establishment of industry, construction of roads and the many facilities needed by the occupiers. Kartse at this time was still a thoroughly Tibetan town in character, despite the imposition of a Chinese administration, its streets thronged with monks who reputedly accounted for two-thirds of the county's male population (12,000 monks)⁵⁶. The 14th Dalai Lama passed through it on his way to Beijing in 1955.

⁵² Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, p. 277

⁵³ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 57

⁵⁴ *Survey of China Mainland Press* No. 460, pp. 27-28, CNA, Changtu, Nov. 25, 1952

⁵⁵ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 76

⁵⁶ Anna Louise Strong, *Tibetan Interviews*, p. 81

“Democratic reforms” had just begun to be implemented in Kartse TAP, causing widespread opposition that erupted into open rebellion throughout Kham in the winter of 1956-56. Khampas attacked PLA camps and garrisons including at Kartse, forcing their retreat. After initial Tibetan successes the Chinese counter-attacked with vastly superior numbers of troops and weapons, easily launching air attacks against villages from the several airfields they commanded in Kham. Between 1956-58 the Chinese may have lost 40,000 soldiers, but the revolt was finally suppressed with severe reprisals against guerillas and the Tibetan populace, and many Tibetans were sent to labor camps in Kham and Amdo⁵⁷.

After 1958 Kartse’s monasteries were closed and largely destroyed, those that escaped damage in the first wave of religious persecution being finally obliterated during the Cultural Revolution. Collectivization, the establishment of communes and the policies of the Great Leap Forward produced economic disaster in eastern Kham, a traditionally prosperous region now haunted by famine until 1963. Another famine struck during the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, lasting until 1973. Although religious and economic reforms after 1978 have alleviated the worst abuses and hardships of Kartse’s Tibetans, they now face the effects of Chinese immigration, exploitation of their natural resources, and a political system which, while less overt in its methods than before, still dictates the shape and direction of their lives. Kartse has paid for its hostility to the Chinese occupation by official neglect and particularly repressive local security forces. Its defiant cultural stance is the strongest, and only, response it can make under current circumstances.

x. **Special emphasis, problems, other factors unique to this site**

Kartse’s reputation for political unrest has provoked heavy-handed administrative treatment. The Chinese have recognized that Kartse is the cultural focus of eastern Kham and deliberately downgraded it, first by deciding against it as the TAP seat, and subsequently by conspicuous neglect of civic facilities. Although the administrative center for Kham has been fixed at Dartsedo by the Chinese, its cultural identity remains in Kartse, a situation the Kartse Tibetans seem determined to preserve.

xi. **Summary comment**

⁵⁷ John F. Avedon, *In Exile from the Land of Snows*, p. 48

Kartse is not yet a place to attract a massive Chinese population influx on the scale seen in the TAR. As in the 1950's, when remote (and politically restless) Kartse was rejected as the prefectural seat, Nature remains a powerful force on the Tibetan side to discourage Chinese immigration. China, however, is a powerful force economically and demographically. Overcrowded inland China cannot help looking at Tibetan areas and seeing empty, resource-rich, unexploited regions. Construction of recognizably Chinese civic environments, and national policies which expand economic opportunities, give sufficient impetus to Chinese migrants to move into nationality autonomous areas like Kham, Amdo and the TAR. State population transfer schemes, evidence for which is difficult to find except in specific instances, are not necessary to encourage Chinese immigration. In Kartse the pace of immigration, and sinicization in general, has been slow, but has gathered speed and intensity in the last few years. The official neglect suffered by the town for decades does not impede commercially-oriented development, as Chinese entrepreneurs take care of their own needs without feeling any obligation to the scene of their mercantile activity. The authorities penalize Tibetans, not incoming Chinese, by their civic negligence.

Insofar as policies allow, Tibetans in Kartse have countered with a show of cultural solidarity and vigor. Chinese immigration and commercial development are infiltrating, resource exploitation continues, but Tibetan resistance is stronger here than in many county towns, in a tangible spirit as well as concrete manifestations in architecture, dress, and religious expression.

Sites tagged on photographic panoramas not accompanying text report

Panorama labels:

Kartse/Ganzi

frames 27:15-22, 8pc

Agricultural and Construction Banks, new *

Agricultural and Construction Banks, buildings

Basketball Stadium

Bus Station *

CCP Headquarters

Chinese Tibetan Literature Department

Commercial Center

County CPPCC

County Government

County Hospital

County NPC Deputies

County Pastoral Office

County Plateau Work Station

County Procuratorate

County PSB

County PSB Detention Center

County Veterinary Station

Court

Degopo Lhakhang

Forestry Office & Forestry PSB

Goods & Materials Co.

Govt Guesthouse

Government Offices

Grain & Oil Office

Grain & Oil Office

Labour Office

Livestock Exchange Market

Local Tax Office

Middle School

Nationalities Teacher Training High School

Nationalities Trading Co.

New PO Bldg

No.2 Primary School

No.3 Primary School

PAP compound

PAP Compound

Post Office *

Seed Depot

Special Government Housing

Sports Stadium

Strip shopping mall (under constr.)

Tax Office

Tibetan Hospital

to Dartsedo/Kangding

to Dege & Sershül

to Kartse Gepheling Gonpa

to Margyal Pora Lhakhang

Traffic Inspection PSB

Tulku Memorial (died 1986)

TV Broadcasting Station

Xinhua Bookshop *



27:9 Kartse: center section of town with government and Party offices

roll/neg: 27:9
subject: section of town center with government and Party
location: Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་།, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: Tibetan residents of Kartse do not always hide their resentment of Chinese rule. They remark that not only is the Chinese face of the town unwelcome, but exceptionally shabby. There is a noticeable lack of 1990's-style high profile construction. The county sports arena is closed; signs warn of danger and structural instability. The Tax Office is across the street from it. At upper left is the County Government. Moving right from the Government are a Labour Office, County NPC, Communist Party and the CCP Discipline Inspection Committee.
(Viewed from the west.)

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roll/neg: 4:7a
subject: town viewed from Gepheling Gönpa
location: Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་།, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: This was once to be the capital of Kartse TAP, hence the prefecture's name. But remoteness and political uncertainty prompted Chinese authorities to keep the name but move the capital to Kangding (Tib: Dartsedo). Despite Kartse's regional importance, public facilities and infrastructure in the town are conspicuously inadequate and poorly maintained. Locals believe this is punishment for their lack of loyalty to the Communist Party and Chinese government. Tibetan identity is strong here. Defiance is only thinly concealed.
(Viewing from the north.)

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roll/neg: 29:35a
subject: PSB Detention Center, PSB and PAP
location: Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་།, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: County PSB is in the background, PAP in the foreground. Kartse has had incidents of protest against Chinese rule during recent years. Political detainees have been badly abused in these cells. The best known case is that of Tsering Dorje and two friends who were detained in October 1990 for protest activities during the previous Tibetan New Year. Members of his family had been tortured in this jail until giving information which led to his capture. The three protestors themselves were then tortured here until sentencing and transfer to prisons in the Xinduqiao area.

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29.33a

Kartse: Gepheling Gömpa

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roll/neg: 29:33a
subject: Gepheling Gönpa
location: Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་ས་རྒྱུ་, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: Kartse Gepheling དཀར་མཚོ་ས་རྒྱུ་འཇིགས་སྤོང་། claims 800 monks, over 200 of whom had fled to India. The monastery is one of the largest in the area and has attracted strong local support. Kartse's County Government is said to be one of the more repressive in the prefecture, with the monastic community suffering particularly. In 1995 about 30 local monks trying to escape into Nepal were caught and returned. They were imprisoned in the local jail and threatened with sentences in labor camps at Bamei or Xinduqiao if relatives could not pay their fines. Relatives paid.

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roll/neg: 75:18
subject: Khawa Lungri from Kartse town's south edge
location: Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་།, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: Khawa Lungri's triple peak is visible to the left of center. One of Kham's sacred mountains, the visual aspect of the massif also formed a symbolic divide between the powerful regional Tibetan centers of Kartse and Nyarong. Not quite a giant by Tibetan standards, the peak reaches 5,992 meters (19,650 feet).
(Viewing to the southeast.)

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roll/neg: 84:28
subject: new governmental forestry and agricultural staff residences
location: Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་།, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1995/1996
comment: Two large, government compounds had just been finished. One, part of which is shown here, had made an unusually convincing effort at 'nationalities characteristics'. The other, a CPPCC office, was more imperial Chinese in aspect. The Tibetan emulation is shared by a Veterinary Medicine Office, Pastoral Office and Grasslands Work Station. Residences, standing behind the offices, are pictured here. Tibetans know, and appreciate, the difference between a sincere effort at maintaining Tibetan characteristics and a shoddy, political pretense. On several occasions locals expressed their verdicts.

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84:29

Kartse: street scene with pool tables

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roll/neg: 84:29
subject: street scene, pool tables
location: Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་།, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: Kartse town, unlike Dartsedo, Chagzam, Dawu and Draggo, is the first county seat reached while travelling northward in Kartse TAP that isn't dominated by timber extraction. It seems poorer and rougher than the others, with beggars and derelicts in evidence. Crime is said to be high. But locals assert, with unusual candor, this is by design. One man, sweeping his arm around the local bus station, declared it is deliberately kept "no better than a toilet" to teach Kartse people a lesson. Not everyone is learning; resentment against Chinese control is palpable.

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4:15a

Kartse: Gepheling Gonpa and traditional Tibetan homes

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roll/neg: 4:15a
subject: Gepheling Gönpa viewed from Tibetan neighborhood
location: Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་།, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: Even in the center of Kartse town, a grid of government, financial and security compounds where very little is visibly Tibetan, a majority of people are Tibetan. The northern and northwestern extensions of Kartse reveal the town's deeper nature. While the level of wealth and timber availability doesn't rival Dawu, homes are determinedly, though modestly, Tibetan. Traditional dress is common. Above the neighborhood, Gepheling Gönpa covers an entire hillside. Kartse's exterior may be rough, but the spirit of the town is strong. There is no doubt that most of the people here know who they are and what they want.

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30:2

Kartse: Degopo Lhakhang roof and mountains

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roll/neg: 30:2
subject: Degopo Lhakang and Kartse mountains
location: Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོ་སྡེ་རྫོང་།, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: Within Kartse town there are four main Buddhist sites: Gepheling Monastery, Margyal Pora Lhakang, a Gelug nunnery and Degopo Lhakang སྡེ་འགོ་ཤོ་ལྷ་ཁང་།. The latter, in the center of Kartse, is said to be 800 years old, dating to early in the Second Dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism. Locals, many of whom are young, attired in modern dress and probably work for government units, visit for prayer and offering. The temple was the site of a postering incident in 1990 for which three men were imprisoned.

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100:21

Dargye: Dargye Gonpa

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roll/neg: 100:21
subject: Dargye Gönpa
location: ~20km north of Kartse Dzong དཀར་མཚོས་རྫོང།, Kartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Ganzi Xian 甘孜县, Ganzi 甘孜 TAP, Sichuan Province]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: About 20km northwest of Kartse, along the road to Dege and Sershül, lies Dargye Gönpa དར་གྲུས་དགོན་པ།. The large, Gelugpa monastery has been undergoing extensive reconstruction. Though ample accommodation exists for hundreds of monks, the monastery was virtually inactive, seemingly abandoned, when visited.

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