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The Kingdom of Sumpa in the Light of Tibetan Sources

Království Sumpa ve světle tibetských pramenů

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Prohlášení

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Klíčová slova (česky)

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Abstrakt

Tato práce se zabývá termínem Sumpa v celé jeho šíři jako jméno kmene, klanu a oblasti, kterou obýval. Sumpa je vykreslována jako konfederace nomádských kmenů, které se pohybovali v oblasti dnešního severovýchodního Tibetu od raně historického období až po 7. století n. l., kdy se jejich území stalo součástí Tibetského císařství. Práce je dělena na dvě části, z nichž první nastiňuje historii Sumpy a zabývá se původem a dějinami tohoto kmene a jeho území. Zároveň se snaží informace zasadit do dobového a geografického kontextu, zejména do kontextu neklidné doby provázející vzestup Tibetského císařství a jeho konflikty s Čínou a jinými politickými celky v oblasti v 7. století. Druhá část předkládá anglický překlad relevantní pasáže z tibetského díla ‘Velké dějiny Domé’ Domé logyü chenmo (*mDo smad lo rgyus chen mo*) a jeho transkripci z tibetského písma do latinky.

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the term Sumpa in all its connotations, as a name of the tribe, clan name, and name of the area inhabited by them. Sumpa is portrayed as a confederation of nomadic tribes that inhabited the areas in present-day northeastern Tibet from early historical times to the seventh century when their territory was annexed by the rising Tibetan Empire and they were assimilated. The thesis is divided into two parts. The first part aims to present a brief overview of the history of these people, their origin, defeat, and assimilation, as well as the possible extent of their territory and traces they left in the area. In the second part, the English translation of the relevant section from a Tibetan work named The Great History of Domé, Domé logyü chenmo (*mDo smad lo rgyus chen mo*), along with its transcription in the appendix, will be presented.

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Note on transcription and transliteration

For Tibetan, the Tibetan and Himalayan Library (THL)'s Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan will be used throughout the work, with the exception of well-known names such as Tibet, China, Ü Tsang, etc. In addition, standard Wylie transliteration (Wylie 1959) will be used where necessary in round brackets after the phonetic rendering. The Wylie transliteration will be used for the entire appendix as well. In the appendix, proper names will be transcribed with the relevant capital letter at the root syllable and will be underlined for easier orientation in the text. Chinese will be transcribed in pinyin (without tonal markings) and Chinese characters will be provided where possible. For the names and terms in Sanskrit and related languages, the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) is used. In the translation, words absent in the original text are added for better understanding or as an interpretation of the Tibetan original will be provided in square brackets.

1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to present a concise overview of the usage of the term Sumpa across different sources available. The term Sumpa in most sources probably refers to a confederation of nomadic tribes that inhabited the areas in present-day northeastern Tibet from early historical times to the seventh century when their territory was annexed by the rising Tibetan Empire and they were assimilated. These people, very likely of Qiang origin, have been attested in both Tibetan and Chinese sources (in Chinese sources known as Supi 蘇毗 or Sunbo 孫波), as well as in Kharoṣṭhī documents of Turkestan (attested as Supiya). This term is, however, also used for other entities apart from the said tribe or tribes. The term could also denote a specific clan or even the area inhabited by the people. The use of a single term for different, albeit almost certainly connected, entities makes it difficult to establish a clear framework and provides no shortage of confusion in both modern and historical scholarship. Another issue is the scarcity of usable sources. The principal Tibetan primary sources are the Old Tibetan Chronicle, found in Dunhuang at the beginning of the 20th century, and written by the end of the 9th century, and The Old Tibetan Annals, basically a bureaucratic registrar of events, the records of which begin 650s AD. As for the Chinese sources, the New Book of Tang, Xin Tangshu (新唐書), compiled during the Song dynasty in the eleventh century, and the Book of Sui, Suishu (隋書), compiled in the seventh century are the most relevant. In addition to these, there are, of course, other Tibetan and Chinese sources, that are, however, of a later date and had to be taken with a grain of salt.

In the following chapters, the mentions of Sumpa in the available sources will be examined and presented in the broader context of the political history of Tibet and China, as well as in the context of the geography of the region. This thesis in no way aims to offer a complete overview of all instances where the Sumpa is mentioned in both primary and secondary sources. There is still an abundance of sources, unused in this work for various reasons, including the primary Tibetan and Chinese sources, cited by Beckwith and Dotson for example, or other sources, mentioned directly in this work. The limited scope of this work, however, did not permit a deeper delving into the subject.

1.1 Tibetan sources used in the work

The present work employed two types of sources, the standard Western academic sources and the Tibetan source, *The Great History of Amdo*, *Domé logyü chenmo* (mDo smad lo rgyus chen mo), the first volume, edited by Jigme Hortsang (‘Jig med Hor gtsang), from 2009. This monumental project of writing the history of Amdo began in 1999 when Jigme Hortsang was granted an audience with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Hortsang was tasked with the compilation of the known sources into a concise body of work concerning all aspects of Amdo’s history, that would take over nine years to write and result in six volumes. His Holiness instructed Hortsang to adopt the approach of Western scholars and as the completion of this task required not only high-degree fluency in Tibetan, Chinese, and English but also a tremendous amount of time and work, Hortsang opted for employing some of his fellow Tibetans to help with this project¹. The long striving of Hortsang and his associates resulted in the creation of a unique work, a concise overview of the area’s history that proves useful in many respects. This work is, however, not without flaws. As is the case with many Tibetan works, there is no clear reference management and it is very difficult to trace back sources quoted (if quoted at all), and if the source is stated, the relevant section or pages are usually not provided. Another issue is with the critical evaluation of some aspects of the Tibetan tradition. Such is the case with the legendary first Tibetan emperor, Nyatri Tsenpo, whose actual existence is not proven, for example. Without critically assessing the historicity of Nyatri Tsenpo, the work takes his existence as a fact and builds a narrative around his contact with Ayong bonpo of Sumpa. Substantial issues such as these, unfortunately, prevent Western scholarship from accepting the data presented uncritically. This, however, in no way means that *The Great History of Amdo* is not valuable as a source, as it has other merits. As the work was written by native Tibetans with excellent knowledge of spoken Tibetan, Classical Literary Tibetan, and Chinese, and moreover with an intimate knowledge of the region and local sources, *The Great History of Amdo* provides a unique and invaluable insight into the Tibetan tradition and narration. If properly handled and critically examined, the work might prove as a great asset in expanding our knowledge of Tibetan history and culture, as the present work, *The Kingdom of Sumpa in the Light of Tibetan Sources*, aims to.

¹ (2008, October 30). *The genesis of The Greater History of Amdo*. ལུ་རོལ་པོ་འཁོར་ལོ་མཛོད་ཁང་། - European Tibetan Cultural Library. Retrieved July 15, 2023, from <https://europeantibetancul.wixsite.com/home/the-genesis-of-the-greater-history-of-am>

2 The History of Sumpa

The following section will present a chronological overview of the information regarding the Sumpa as a tribe, clan, and the area inhabited by them. Section 2.1 investigates the origin and association of the Sumpa with the Qiang, Serbi, and Tibetan clans as well as Sumpa's place in the Tibetan tradition. The following section, 2.2 discusses the so-called Land of Women and their possible connection to the Sumpa. Section 2.3 concerns the first Tibetan emperor Nyatri Tsenpo and his reported conflict with the king Ayong of Sumpa as viewed by the Tibetan sources. Sections 2.4 and 2.5 deal with the conquest of Sumpa by the Yarlung dynasty and Sumpa's role in the conflict and its incorporation into the administrative system of the Tibetan Empire as well as with Sumpa's legacy in the area. The last section presents theories of the location of the core area inhabited by the Sumpa.

2.1 Northeastern Tibet in ancient times

The ethnopolitical situation of the northeastern Tibetan plateau is complicated as it is fairly difficult to establish the relative chronology of the migration waves and movements of populations in the area or their ethnic affiliation. The earliest attested sources concerning populations of the region are the Chinese Oracle bones (jiaguwen 甲骨文) of the Shang dynasty found in the area of present-day Anyang, Henan. These ancient engravings on turtle shells and animal bones that began to appear from the second millennium BC onwards, frequently mention Shangs' adversaries, the Qiang (羌), whom they often enslaved and used for sacrificial rites as the advanced metallurgy of bronze provided the edge (Ślupski and Lomová 2006, 12-13). The ethnonym Qiang appears not only on the Oracle bones but also in the Book of Odes (Shi jing 詩經), the earliest existing collection of Chinese songs dating from the 10th to 6th century BC, and genuine parts of the Book of Document (Shu jing 書經, also known as Shang shu 尚書). There are, however, some issues with the identification of the earlier, Shang, and later, Han, uses of the term. The first issue is the scarcity of the use of the ethnonym in Zhou dynasty sources and the second is the wide geographical separation between the Qiang areas of Han times and any place within the range of Shang military power (Pulleybank 1983, 419).

Nevertheless, it seems likely that these two temporarily separated terms have the same usage. The study of Shima Kunio, which places the Qiang of the Shang times to the northwest of China supports this placement, as does the fact that in the Book of Odes, the

name Qiang of Shang times is associated with another ethnonym Di (氐), who are, in turn, associated with Qiang of Han times and this ethnonym is found only scarcely in earlier texts. The combination of these two names, Di Qiang is also found in a passage in Xunzi (荀子), referring to an unspecified kind of barbarian (Pulleybank 1983, 419).

According to the illustrious Eastern Han dictionary *Shuowen Jiezi* (說文解字), presumably compiled at the beginning of the second century AD (Ślupski and Lomová 2009, 168), the Qiang belonged to the Xirong (西戎) and albeit this is a later account, it makes sense as Xirong was probably something of an umbrella term for the non-Chinese populations, presumably Tibeto-Burman populations to the West, which would include both the Qiang and the Di. It was noted that they spoke a distinctly different language and had different customs (Pulleybank 1983, 419).

During the Han dynasty, the Qiang prominently figure in the records as troublemakers on the northwest frontier. The Chinese described them as non-Chinese nomadic people living in the areas south and west of Dunhuang, in the area of today's Northwest China, approximately at the borders of present-day Qinghai and Xinjiang (Beckwith 1987, 5 and Pulleybank 1983, 417) and although they likely spoke Tibeto-Burman languages, it is difficult to connect them with particular tribes of the later Tibetan tradition with any certainty, even though the Chinese later identified them with the Tibetans. Their name and presence in the same general area can be continuously attested down to the present.

By the time the Yarlung dynasty rose to power, there were Qiang populations known as the eastern 'Land of Women' and the Land of Fu. Further to the northeast, in present-day Amdo, they've encountered other people, the Sumpa (Sum pa) or Supi (蘇毗) in Chinese and the Azha (*A'-zha* in Tibetan and Tuyuhun 吐谷渾 in Chinese), Turco-Mongol population that came from Manchuria (Stein 1972, 28). The Azha established a kingdom also known as Henanguo (河南國) in Chinese sources, in the Kokenur area, present-day Qinghai, in the third century AD when Murong Tuyuhun of clan Murong (慕容) of the Serbi people of Liadong peninsula split off from his half brother Ruoluowei (若洛魔) and moved to the west. The ethnonym itself is an extension of the name of this first ruler as stated explicitly in Chinese sources. In Old Tibetan sources it is also transcribed as *togön* (*tho gon*) (Shimunek 2017: 169). Rolf Stein states that the Qiang

mingled with the Azha and a kind of mixed race came to be, called Minyak (*Mi nyag*) by the Tibetans. They also lived in the Kokenur area and northwest China and later emerged as the Great or Western Xia (西夏), also known as Tangut, who ruled from 1038 to 1227 (Stein 1972, 28) and as such, the Tanguts are considered to have Qiang origin (Pulleybank 1983, 418). As mentioned before, these people, the Qiang and the Serbi were most likely nomads, and the hostility between the nomads and the valley-dwellers, the agriculturally based Central Tibetan clans, and the former's subjugation by the Yarlung dynasty in the seventh century might be preserved in the long folk sagas about the hostility between the horse and the yak (Stein 1972, 30). Regular marriage arrangements existed between different populations in the region, the Qiang and the Azha exchanged brides with each other as were the Sumpa with the Qiang of the eastern Land of Women (Stein 1972, 30).

As Rolf Stein further mentions, the earliest tribes are in Tibetan tradition referred to as Miu (*Mi'u*), a name which in present form means 'dwarf' or 'little man', and are, according to myths, denoting the monkeys from which the ancient people sprang. These tribes were six in number, the Sumpa among them, and descended from the six children of the monkey and a demoness, which was according to tradition from Amdo, Amdo as a land, itself. The six 'original clans', descendants of the monkey and the demoness, maybe all placed within generally the same area in the east. What is interesting, however, is that although the Tibetans consider them their ancestors, they always describe them as 'wild' people or non-Tibetan aboriginals (Stein 1972, 28), which corresponds to the high level of heterogeneity of ethnicities within the region. Nonetheless, some of the above-mentioned tribes are, associated with certain Tibetan clans. As Hortsang mentions, in *Bö miu dong druk gi rüdzö* (*Bod mi'u gdong drug gi rus mdzod*), The clan histories of the six great tribes of Tibet, and other sources, it is stated that members of the Dri (*'Bri*) clan were the kings of Sumpa and were always independent. It is explained that Sumpa came from the Dri clan (Hor gTsang 2009, 134). This is however likely a misspelling of Dru (*'Bru*), a clan associated with the Tong (*sTong*) of Sumpa since, as Stein (1961, 45) notes, the orthographical form Dru (*'Bru*) seems rather unstable, poorly classified, or easily associated with other tribes. Moreover, the clan Dru (*'Bru*), associated with the Kyura (*sKyu ra*) family, descended from the Dru gyel (*'Dru rgyal*), kings of Dru, and was located on the Drichu river (*'Bri chu*, 犁牛河 Liniuhe, the Yak River), upper Jinshajiang (金沙江) in Kham (Stein: 1961, 46).

Clan Tong is, therefore, clearly associated with Sumpa, whose name corresponds, as we know, to that of Supi (蘇毗) of the Tang chronicles. This population was located in northeastern Tibet and was absorbed by the Tibetans as early as the seventh century (Stein: 1961, 42). Clan Tong (*sTong*, *gTong*, *Dong*) is, however, in turn often phonetically and graphically confused with clan Dong (*lDong* or *gDong*), associated with the Minyak (*Minyag*). The confusion between the Tong and the Dong was undoubtedly facilitated by the geographical proximity and probable association of the two populations. The two clan names, Tong and Tang, which can be compared to the ethnic names *lDong* and *sTong* of the Tibetans, are constantly being found in Chinese sources. (Stein: 1961, 44) In any case, we see the Sumpa settled in the Minyak region, and this might well explain the perpetual mixing of the names of the two clans that are already phonetically and graphically similar (Stein 1961, 43).

The Sumpa were also said, to have carried raids as far as Khotan (*Li yul* in Tibetan), which is quite a distance from northeastern Tibet. (Stein 1972, 30). These rather confusing statements might give us the impression that there were two Sumpas – Sumpa, alias Supiya of Turkestan, mentioned in the Kharoṣṭhī documents which F. W. Thomas wrongly viewed as Turcs, and Sumpa of the Tibetan northeast. But whatever the character of the Sumpa we see intervening in Khotan, those of Tibet are expressly said to be Qiang in Chinese sources as they lived to the west or southwest of another clan, Tomi (多彌), that was well located on the Drichu (*'Bri chu*, 犁牛河 Liniuhe, the Yak River), the upper Jinshajiang (金沙江), hence their wealth of gold. The Tomi as ‘gold producers’ are mentioned in the *Xin Tangshu* (新唐書), compiled during the Song dynasty, and associated with the Nüguo (女國), the ‘Land of Women’, by Paul Pelliot (Molè 1970, 98). This is therefore the same positioning as of the Dru, mentioned above. The Supi of this period, living to the west of the Tomi, must therefore be placed in the Nakchukha (*Nag chu kha*) region (Stein 1972, 30). Giuseppe Tucci mentions that the Sumpa were famous for their swords and in a classification of tributes from the later imperial period, the Sumpa were known for the iron they offered as a tribute (Stein 1961, 43-44).

Khagang Trashi Tséring (Kha sgang bkra shis tshe ring), however, based on his reading of the Dunhuang manuscripts, claims that before the arrival of Songtsen Gampo, the Sumpa originally came from Khotan and only at a later stage it spread into Tibetan territory (Hor gTsang 2009, 130). The *Tangshu*, however, also mentions that as they were

the largest group, they may have spread quite far west. Placed on the edge of the Jangthang (*Byang thang*), they could well have marauded all the way to the Khotan and Badakshan regions. So there's no need to separate them from the Sumpa who came to Khotan and the Supiya, as Thomas intended (Stein 1961, 42). Pelliot also suggests that the Supi originally occupied a larger territory from south of Kokenur to the mountain passes leading to the Khotan area and only the later conquests of the rising Yarlung dynasty restricted their territory known to Tang (Molè 1970, 99).

The exceptional importance of the Dong (*IDong*) and Tong (*sTong*) in Tibetan sources is perhaps reflected in a series of names preserved in Chinese annals. The link between these two ethnic groups and populations such as the Sumpa, whose Chinese equivalent we know, enables us to limit our research to the domain of these populations.

2.2 The Land(s) of Women

We already encountered the Land of Women, Nüguo,(女國) as a Qiang tribe in eastern Tibet. The situation is, however, complicated by the fact that there most likely were two different Lands of Women, the Eastern and the Western one. As Rolf Stein states, the eastern Land of Women is of Qiang origin and they exchanged brides with the Sumpa. The western Land of Women, known also as the Golden Clan (Suvāṇagotra in Sanskrit and *gSer rigs* in Tibetan) or Kingdom of Women (Strīrājya), was probably located in Western Tibet roughly in Upper Ladakh and Hunza-Nagar, present-day India and Afghanistan (Stein: 1961, 42-43, Zeisler 2009, 27). The Sumpa or Supi was heavily associated with the eastern Land of Women and sometimes confused with (or possibly even related to) the Western Women's Kingdom. The two are, however, not identical, as some suggest (Stein: 1961, 42). In 1912 Pelliot cautiously stated that ‘...a kingdom of women in eastern Tibet, which may not even be the ancient Supi of the Sui.’ In the Book of Sui, Suishu (隋書), compiled in the seventh century during the succeeding Tang dynasty, however, there is only one passage linking Supi and Nüguo (Stein: 1961, 42). As it happens, it's in relation to this kingdom or kingdoms, that the Chinese have left us a list of names of queens and their entourages and one of the queens bore the name Supi. Suishu, unfortunately, confuses the two Lands of Women, the Western and the Eastern, but despite the obvious confusion, there were likely existing links between the two, as Sumpa apparently did venture all the way to the Khotan area.

Therefore, the Sumpa must have been in touch with the Western Land of Women (Stein 1972, 30). Hortsang adds that in Chinese sources, probably Suishu, it is said that there was a queendom in the east, ruled by the Queen. And in the vicinity of the Queen's palace, a river called Ju (*'Ju*) flowed to the south. Just the area around the Queen's palace was said to have about forty thousand households and from this it is possible to judge how big it was. Gédün Chöpel, one of the most famous modern Tibetan thinkers, (*dGe 'dun chos 'phel*) also mentioned the Land of Women in the east and it being a part of Sumpa (Hor gTsang 2009, 131). From these accounts, it seems quite clear that some connection between Sumpa and at least the eastern Land of Women existed. At the present state of knowledge, it is, however, difficult to identify any reliable links.

2.3 The first emperor and the Sumpa

In Tibetan sources, the Sumpa is portrayed as either a tribe confederation or a state structure and is said to have existed since before the times of the legendary first emperor Nyatri Tsenpo (*gNya' khri btsan po*) (Hor gTsang 2009, 126). It is stated in the thirteenth century's *Deü chöjung* (*Lde'u'i chos 'byung*), that Nyatri built the castle of Yumbulakhang (*Yum bu bla khang*) and defeated King Sumpashang (*Sum pa shang*). The eponymous *Khépe gatön* (*Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*), written between 1545 and 1565 by Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa (*dPa' bo Gtsug lag 'preng ba*), known for preserving many authentic reports from the history of Tibet before the 10th century (Uray 1967, 498), also mention in passing that 'he [Nyatri Tsenpo] built the first castle of his body and king Ayong bönpö of Sumpa was subdued' (Hor gTsang 2009, 126).

This line, in different wordings, implies the same thing. The first king built his castle and he went on to defeat a bonpo of the Sumpa called Ayong gyelwa (*A yong rgyal ba*). If we set aside the very likely legendary nature of Nyatri Tsenpo and try to interpret this as a historical reminiscence, superficially, this line indeed implies some sort of conflict. Nyatri Tsenpo, who ruled Yarlung, almost certainly knew of his north-eastern neighbors, the Sumpa and since both Yarlung and the Sumpa most likely practiced bon religious traditions, there could be either a political conflict or religious disputes. Either way, the account ends with the statement that the Ayong bonpo of Sumpa was defeated. As Samten Karmay (Karmay 1998, 174) states, this line first appears in *Butön chöjung* (*Bu ston chos 'byung*) and was later repeated in several other *chöjung* ('Origin of Buddhism',

one of the Tibetan historiographical genres). Charles Rable elaborates that a form of this problematic line does indeed occur in the Lhasa block print edition of Butön, of which two published versions are known: Butön H1 and Butön H2. Janoš Szerb (Szerb 1990, 32) notes in his critical edition of Butön's chöjung that the line in question occurs in only one version of the six that were available to him, namely the Lhasa block print H1 which was prepared as late as 1921 under the supervision of the Thirteen Dalai Lama. This implies that the line was adopted from some other source, possibly even earlier than Butön (Ramble 2007, 686). In Rambles' opinion, the likeliest candidate are the Red Annals, *Depter marpo* (*Deb ther dmar po*), where the relevant episode in the story of the first king in Rambles' translation reads:

‘Known as the Lord Nyatri Tsenpo, he was the first king of Tibet. As [one of his] acts he built a castle *Ünbulagang* (*Un bu bla sgang*). The shen (*gshen*) Tsémi (*Tshe mi*) promulgated Mugyel böñ (*dMu rgyal bon*). [-] subjugated Ayong gyelwa (*A yongs rgyal ba*), a bonpo of Sumpa.’

Even though this line remains obscure, the important point is that there is some context provided, albeit elsewhere. The phrase adopted in Butön is preceded by another phrase in *Depter marpo* concerning the priestly attendants of Nyatri Tsenpo. In this regard, Ramble is suggesting that the line is a product of the conflation of two distinct issues. The identity and activities of the king's priests, on the one hand, are omitted completely in *Deü chöjung*, and his military conquests. In most accounts of Nyatri Tsenpo the attendant priests are Tsémi (*Tshe mi* or *mTshe mi*) and Chou (*gCo'u* and other various spellings.). It may be the case that *Depter marpo* has preserved another tradition according to which the first priests included Tsémi and another named Ayong (Ramble 2007, 687).

This sounds like a satisfying explanation for the issue at hand and thus refutes Hortsang's, at first glance, obvious interpretation of the nature of Ayong Bonpo. He infers that Nyatri Tsenpo was having disputes of religious and political nature as the bonpos of Nyatri's retinue of those of Sumpa disagreed about religious practices and Yarlung and Sumpa fought over political power in the region (Hor gTsang 2009, 126). He goes on to speculate that the king (of) Sumpashang and Ayong were the same person, and therefore it is possible that he would be king and a bonpo at the same time. This approach is however somehow problematic since Hortsang, as is the case with many Tibetan authors, often

uncritically adopts information from Tibetan historiographical, namely Buddhist religious works as is the case with presently discussed information concerning Nyatri Tsenpo.

Nyatri Tsenpo is generally regarded as the progenitor king of the Yarlung dynasty. According to Buddhist tradition, the Tibetan kings traced their ancestry to the noble family of Magadha in present-day Bihar, India. He was said to have been born with long blue eyebrows, a full set of teeth, and webbed fingers. His father hid him out of shame and when he grew up, he wandered into Tibet, into Yarlung Valley. When he encountered the local people, adherents to Bon. Since the sky was regarded as sacred, when the boy was asked where he came from, the boy, not understanding their language, pointed to the sky. The locals thinking he was very holy to come from the sky, made him their leader and named him Nyatri Tsenpo (Shakabpa 1973, 23). As Erik Haarh neatly puts it, the Buddhist tradition maintained a descent of the progenitor of the Yarlung kings from an Indian dynasty, incorporated the already established and firm pre-Buddhist traditions of the progenitor descent from a high mountain and his connection with Lha. Lha, the principal divine celestial exponents of the Bon religion were accepted by the Buddhists by turning their universal importance into an identity within the Indo-Buddhist tradition (Haarh 1969, 17).

Mentions relating to Nyatri Tsenpo are indeed a valuable insight into Tibetan traditions, especially earlier, beliefs and their stratifications, but at the same time cannot be presented or taken as a historical fact.

Nevertheless, even without being considered historically reliable, the mentions of Nyatri Tsenpo's rule could still give us a hazy timeframe. Since Sumpa was subdued by Namri Songtsen (*gNam ri srong btsan*), a person considered historical, stating that Sumpa existed already by the time of the first emperor could give us an idea of how ancient this tribe was considered to be.

2.4 The conquest of Namri Songtsen and Songtsen Gampo

The first quarter of the 7th century proved to be a turning point in the history of Tibet and all of Central Asia. The chieftain, tsenpo (*btsan po*), of the Yarlung Pogyel (*Yar klung spu rgyal*) clan of the Yarlung Valley in present-day Central Tibet, Namri Songtsen (*gNam ri srong tsen or slong tsen*) rose in power and laid the foundations of a new monarchy by bringing neighboring clans of Central Tibet under his rule (Mu and Wang 1996, 360). The origin of this dynasty, however, is still not clear. The Old Tibetan Chronicle, one of the most important Tibetan manuscripts, found in Dunhuang at the

beginning of the 20th century, and written by the end of the 9th century (Berounský 2013, 36), does not clearly state when the kings of the Yarlung dynasty began to rule or where did they come from and also does not offer hints of any possible foreign ancestry (Beckwith 1987, 11). As Beckwith further notes, even though there is a possibility, albeit unattested in written sources, of foreign influence of the nomads in the mid-classical antiquity, there is no direct evidence of any nomadic structures, deep in the heart of the agricultural south, as even the Chinese were well aware that the Tibetans are not primarily nomadic (Beckwith 1987, 11). This, again, is supported by the above-mentioned tradition of the folk sagas and the hostility between the horse and the yak. (Stein 1972, 30).

According to the Old Tibetan Chronicle, clan Pugyel's rise to power began in the mid-sixth century when Takbu Nyazik² (*Stag bu snya gzigs*), grandfather of Songtsen Gampo, was just one of the many rulers on the Tibetan plateau (Dotson 2009, 16-17). It is said that Lord Takbu Nyazik resided in a castle called Taktsé (*sTag rtse*) in Chingba (*Phying ba*), a small side valley of the Yarlung River, in Chonggyé district (*'Phyongs rgyas*) and maintained extensive contacts with neighboring clans, especially with clans Khyung and Nyang (*Myang*) and their chiefs. These clan chiefs, in Old Tibetan and later sources are known as 'ministers', were subjects to a powerful feudal lord called Gudri Zingpoje (*dGu gri zing po rje*), ruler of Ngépo (*Ngas po*), who was, in turn, a vassal of the Liknyi (*Lig myi*) dynasty of Zhangzhung (Beckwith 1987, 13-14). Zinpngpoje's aristocratic subjects, however, became disillusioned by his rule and a group of conspirators convinced Tagri Nyenzik to mount a rebellion to oppose him. Nonetheless, before any action could be taken, Tagri Nyenzik died, and the negotiations had to begin anew with his son and successor Namri Songtsen. Namri Songtsen, in turn for spearheading the rebellion, asked for and got sworn oaths of allegiance from the perpetrators. According to the Old Tibetan Chronicle, in Christopher Beckwith's words:

'...from now on, they would renounce Zingpoje forever, they would always cherish Pugyel, they would never be disloyal to tsenpo Pugyel, they would never consider power, they would always wish to cope with his directions, they would never conspire, they would never doubt, they would always be brave, they would never want to abandon the life (of the tsenpo), whatever tsenpo Namri Songtsen ordered they would always listen, and although someone else enticed them they would never listen.' (Beckwith 1987, 15).

² Also known as Tagri Nyenzik (*Stag ri gnyan gzigs*) (Beckwith 1987, 13).

As Tibetan sources tell us, these alliances were facilitated mainly by Pung sétsé (*Spungs sad tse*) of clan Khyung, old allies of Namri's father (Hor gTsang 2009, 127). There were said to have been eighteen noble clans a list of which is found in the Katang dénga (*bKa' thang sde lnga*) (Mu and Wang 1996, 360). Namri Songtsen at the helm of the rebellion managed to overthrow and kill Zingpojé and frighten his son into fleeing. This victory against Zingpojé and the subsequent successful conquest of Dakpo (*Dwags po*) enabled him to push immediately to the west, to the region called Ttsangbö (*Rtsang bod*), and defeat its lord, Marmün (*Mar mun*). Even though these initial victories are often credited to the politico-military genius of Khyung Pung sétsé (Beckwith 1987, 16), Namri Songtsen allied with the Sumpa (Dotson 2009, 17), and through conquest and marriage alliances subjugated the neighboring clans ruling Kongpo and Penyül (*'Phan yul*) (Hor gTsang 2009, 127), integrating their territories under a larger and rather centralized political organization, even though the feudal customs of the tribal chieftains and the noble clans remained semiautonomous (Mu and Wang 1996, 360 and Ryavec 2015, 48).

This new political organization, the nascent Tibetan Empire, now bordered very close to China and contact was inevitable. There was, however, another powerful state in the northeast, the Azha. In China, the new Sui dynasty (ruled 581-618) arose at the end of the sixth century, and after the enthronement of the second emperor, Yang of Sui (Sui Yang Di 隋煬帝) in 604, the Chinese set their sights to the northwestern frontier in hopes of territorial expansion. The Kokenur region and southeastern portion of the Tarim basin, and therefore routes to the West, were, however, under the control of the Azha, and the Sui decided to take action (Beckwith 1987, 16). Emperor Yang of Sui, wanting to seize control of the western routes, sent Pei Ju (裴矩), diplomat and cartographer, author of the *Maps of and Notes About the Western Regions* (西域圖記), to persuade the Tiele (鐵勒), a Turkic tribe, and the enemies of Azha, to attack the Azha (Liščák 2008, 145 and Beckwith 1987, 17). The Tiele attacked in 608 and inflicted a severe defeat. The following year, the Chinese armies, under the personal leadership of Sui Yang Di, pushed into Azha territories and crushed them on July 5th 609. As a result, the great majority of the people surrendered and the Azha court fled to seek refuge among the Tanguts (Beckwith 1987, 17). With this triumph, the Sui effectively destroyed the 'buffer zone' between them and the Tibetans. This event prompted Tibetans to attempt to contact Sui two times. Both attempts, however, seemed unsuccessful (Beckwith 1987, 17).

The death of Namri Songtsen provoked wider rebellion which caused previously conquered or allied clans and their respective territories, including the Sumpa, to revolt (Hor gTsang 2009, 127). In the wake of this crisis, Namri Songtsen's son, Tri Songtsen (*Khri srong btsan*), widely known as Songtsen Gampo (*Srong btsan sgam po*), was enthroned as the new tsenpo.

The enthronement of Sontsen Gampo as the thirty-third king in 630 (Shakabpa 1973, 25) marked the ascension of Tibet as a formidable political and military power, and, as its power grew, the neighboring states, including China, had no choice but to treat Tibet as an equal (Beckwith 1987, 20). Songtsen Gampo quickly reconquered the lost regions and put out any sparks of rebellion in the controlled territories, following the coup resulting in his father's death by poisoning, and began systematic reduction of all opposition on the Tibetan plateau (Beckwith 1987, 20). The Old Tibetan Chronicle states, that the minister Nyang mangpo jé zhangnang (*Myang mang po rje zhang snang*) of klan Nyang, one of the original allies of the Pugyel clan, who the tsenpo inherited from his father, Namri Songtsen, led the attack that subjugated the Sumpa, former allies from the northeast who had revolted (Beckwith 1987, 20).

In 633, Songtsen Gampo moved the royal residence from Lhoka to Lhasa, which seemed to be a very strategic move in the wake of the expansion that followed (Mu and Wang 1996, 360), and as the power of the Yarlung dynasty spread rapidly and the warlike Tibetans, tempered by an austere life in the wilderness were directed to military expansion, the territories of fractured tribes and political entities on the Tibetan plateau were annexed in quick succession and absorbed, ending up as no more than Tibetan clans and districts (Mu and Wang 1996, 360). The wit and ruthlessness of the new emperor, through marriage alliances, murders of convenience, and brute military force brought almost the entire Tibetan plateau under his control, following the deciding victory over the Liknyi (*Lig myi*) dynasty of Zhangzhung (Beckwith 1987, 20).

The conquest and subsequent assimilation of the neighboring clans, tribes, and political structures by the Tibetan empire, without doubt, had both political and economic dimensions. As Stein mentions, Sumpa specifically, was known for its iron ore and swords and iron or leather breastplates of excellent quality, as they were the specialties of the Qiang of Amdo. Even the Chinese sources marveled at the quality of Tibetan equipment and mentioned that their armor is excellent for they clothe their entire body in it and even powerful bows and keen blades can do them little harm (Stein 1972, 62). The region of

northeastern Tibet also, due to its nomadic heritage, bred horses of high repute, that were even offered as the intended, albeit unsuccessful, tribute to the Sui court in 608 (Beckwith 1987, 18).

This quick and, by all accounts, a rather aggressive conquest by the Yarlung dynasty might, apart from favorable conditions on the Tibetan plateau (for the Yarlung dynasty), also be motivated by the pressing concerns about China. At the beginning of the seventh century, the once again centralized imperial China, after centuries of inner political crisis, returned to its expansionistic ambitions and once set its sights on the Sino-Tibetan borderland. The military conflict with Azha during Sui Yan Di was a clear sign of the looming danger for the newly risen Tibetan state and the Yarlung dynasty might have intentionally sped up their own conquest in preparations for the potential war with China. Meanwhile, in the Chinese Northwest, the once trampled Azha, managed to free themselves from the Chinese yoke and regain much of their lost power during the period of internal political turmoil following the deaths of Namri Songtsen in Tibet and Sui Yang Di in China, was posed again as a considerable threat (Beckwith 1987, 18).

The Sui dynasty fell in 618 after the murder of Sui Yangdi and the new, Tang, dynasty rose. The founder of the new dynasty, emperor Gaozu of Tang (唐高祖) successfully stabilized the political and economic situation in China and by 625 restored firm control of much of Sui's territory, hence preparing ground for his successor, the illustrious emperor Taizong (Lišćák 2008, 146-147). After securing Tang control in China, emperor Taizong (唐太宗), as his predecessor, the Sui, too, cast his sights westwards. Azha, recovered from the Sui defeat and once again independent, offered nominal submission to the Tang but after several raids of Chinese border towns, the Tang decided to organize a punitive expedition in 634. On October 29th the Chinese attacked and crushed Azha (Beckwith 1987, 21).

Immediately after this attack, the Tibetans once again attempted to establish a line of communication with China. Songtsen Gampo sent an embassy to the Tang in 634, however since no details are known, there is no way to tell if this affected the Tang's policy towards the Azha (Beckwith 1987, 21). The Chinese, sent an ambassador with the Tibetan envoy in reply, though. The same year the Tang ordered a massive attack on the Azha and, perhaps in response to the Chinese threat, the Tanguts joined forces with Azha, which only escalated the already tense situation. On May 29th, 635, the Chinese armies defeated the Azha and after several following Chinese victories, the Azha were completely

crushed. The Azha's status as a buffer zone was now effectively destroyed and the Chinese, in virtually the same manner as sixteen years later, during the Sui, found themselves again at the Tibetan borders (Beckwith 1987, 22).

Following the defeat of Azha, the Tibetans sent another embassy to the Tang court, which accompanied the Chinese ambassador on his return home, this time with a marriage proposal between Tibet and China. Songtsen Gampo had learned that both the Azha and the Turks had received Chinese princesses in marriage alliances (Beckwith 1987, 22) and he sought one for himself too, as the marriage alliances proved to be a reliable instrument during his and his father's conquests (Shakabpa 1973, 25). He therefore sent an embassy carrying gold and other presents for Taizong. The Tibetan ambassador was, however, angered at the way the embassy was treated. He claimed that when he first arrived, he was well received in court, but when the Azha mission arrived, he was treated with disrespect, and the marriage proposal was turned down (Beckwith 1987, 22). Tsepon Shakabpa adds that this was due to the conflict between the marriage proposals of Azha ruler Thokiki and Tibet. Either way, as this was considered a great offense, Songtsen Gampo sent his troops to Azha and easily defeated them in 637 or 638 and also, probably before doing so, he subdued other Qiang tribes in the area, including so-called Pailan (Shakabpa 1973, 26). Christopher Beckwith elaborates that the Tibetans conquered territories of Tanguts, Sumpa of Rgyarong, the vassal-state through which the Tibetans had probably entered the Azha territory, and Polan (same as Pailan), who were located in the area between the Azha and Central Tibet. Curiously, the Tibetans definitely did not attack the Azha from the west or north or even from the southwest as the Tibetan state originated in the agricultural south and, at the time of this war, its strength still lay largely in the southern and eastern regions (Beckwith 1987, 23). Establishing themselves as a powerful force to be reckoned with, the Tibetans attacked and captured the city of Suzhou (宋州) in present-day Sichuan in 638, and after a few brief skirmishes, the Chinese were forced to accept Tibet as an equal. To save face, emperor Taizong finally granted the Chinese princess, Wencheng (文成公主), as a marriage alliance to the Yarlung dynasty (Shakabpa 1973, 26).

As the Tibetans proved to be a formidable military force and the Chinese did not succeed in claiming the Azha's territory for themselves, they reached a marriage agreement with the Tibetans and effectively accepted the Tibetan claim of the territory, except for the Gansu corridor which the Chinese needed as a way to maintain connection with the Tarim basin and their military operations there (Beckwith 2009, 128). The

subsequent peace was honored quite well by both sides, resulting in rich cultural exchange, and lasted until the deaths of both emperor Taizong and Songtsen Gampo in 649. During the last decade of his reign, Songtsen Gampo, with the exception of a conquest of a minor Indian kingdom, concerned himself mainly with the consolidation and administration of his considerable conquest (Beckwith 1987, 24-25).

As we can see, there is not much information on Sumpa in the Tibetan sources, and, accordingly, in the works of the Western academia. It is mentioned as one of the twenty-two ‘ancient principalities’ (*rgyal ’phran*) in the preamble of the Old Tibetan Chronicle (PT 1286) (Ryavec 2015, 39) and, in later sources it is, if at all, mentioned mainly as just one of the territories conquered by the early Yarlung dynasty in their quest for power in the seventh century. Nevertheless, from the sources presented, we can still infer a few interesting points.

Although not a direct participant in the conquests of the early Yarlung dynasty, Sumpa was counted among the allies of Namri Songtsen, and, as Beckwith (explicitly) and Dotson (implicitly) state, Namri Songtsen had a marriage alliance with them. This means, that the Sumpa were very likely not one of the original perpetrators of Zingpojé’s fall. And even though the details of the marriage alliance are not known, this fact suggests that the Sumpas were well respected and considered powerful enough to be counted as a valuable ally during the initial stages of the conquest. Hortsang (2009, 127), however, mentions only that it was conquered along with Dakpo (Dwags po), Kongpo, Penyül (’Phan yul), and Tsang (gTsang) and does not go into any details regarding the exact situation and manner of absorption. Nonetheless, something on which both Hortsang and the Western sources agree is that it is quite clear that whatever the manner of asserting control, Sumpa along with other, possibly fringe, regions attempted to regain independence after the coup resulting in Namri Songtsen’s death and were reconquered and placated by his son Songtsen Gampo. The defeat and submission of Azha was most likely the last in a series of wars as albeit once again independent but also weakened by constant turmoil Azha, was no match for Tibetans, hardened by long conquests. Christopher Beckwith goes, however, into detail in his reading of the Old Tibetan Chronicle and states that the Tibetans entered Azha territory from the Tibetan northeast, though by then subjugated Sumpa and Pailan (Beckwith 1987, 23).

Bailan (白蘭 or other spellings like Pailan, Polan, or Pelan, Pelen) is mentioned quite often but its exact identity is problematic. It is most likely a Chinese name for the mountains located in the Jishishan range (積石山) in present-day Gansu, however, there was also a Qiang tribe of the same name, presumably named after the area they resided in (Molè 1970, 71). According to Beckwith, the illustrious *Zizhi Tongjian* (資治通鑑), a pioneering reference work of Chinese historiography, compiled during the Song dynasty in the eleventh century CE, places the Bailan to the area between the Azha and Central Tibet (Beckwith 1987, 23), which is a rather vague placement that fits the location of Bailan mountains provided by Molè and, in fact, corresponds with that of Sumpa. There is, however, a disagreement between different authors as some view the Pailan as a tribe and a different and independent entity from Sumpa (for example Beckwith and Shakabpa) and some identify them with the Sumpa themselves (Pelliot, Molè, and Hor gTsang).

Gabriella Molè supports Pelliot's view that the Pailan are identical with Palangwa Sumpa (*Pa lang ba Sum pa*) mentioned in the Tibetan version of Inquiry of Vimalaprabha. The Inquiry speaks of a Tibetan king Vijayakīrti, who was killed by 'wild men' and Palangwa Sumpa. This Palangwa Sumpa would, therefore, be an equivalent with the Western Qiang Supi (蘇毗) with an additional suffix of appertenance -ba. In Pelliot's view, this text retains a dim memory of the Khotanese king killed by the Tuyuhun and that the Palangwa Sumpa were the people of Polan (Bailan) who accompanied the Tuyuhun (Molè 1970, 72). This would also explain why some Tibetan sources tell of Sumpa's presence as far as the Khotan region (*Li yul* in Tibetan) (Stein 1972, 30). This also might be the reason why some of the Tibetan (and Mongolian) scholars, such as Lozang Tayang (*Blo bzang rta dbyang*), talk about Sumpa originating near Liyul, so far to the west (Hor gTsang 2009, 132). Other sources, however, speak of Pelan being the Chinese name of Sumpa (Hor gTsang 2009, 132). Hortsang further mentions several Tibetan authors and their share of information related to Bailan. Tibetan author Gyalmo Drukpa (*rGyal mo 'brug pa*) states that Drogön chögyel phakpa (*'Gro mgon chos rgyal 'phags pa*) of Sakya (1235-1280) received the title of King of Pelan from the Mongolian emperor (Hor gTsang 2009, 133). This event, if taken as reliable, is of far later date than any mentions of Sumpa, so it seems that this title was referring to an area rather than a political entity. Hortsang continues, stating that most modern Chinese historians are saying that before the Yarlung dynasty's conquest, Pelan was a great clan and subtribe living in the southwest of Qinhai Lake, north part of Sichuan, at the southern border of the Gansu province, which belonged to the

ancient Qiang and that it is believed by some that so-called Pelan was a transcription of ‘white’ (bai 白 in Chinese) and ‘place’ (*gling* in Tibetan) (Hor gTsang 2009, 133). The general area and the claim that the Qiang inhabited the area fits with the general notion of Bailan being mountians, however, the etymology of combination of Chinese and Tibetan elements seems a little dubious. Another name associated with the Pelan and Sump is the so-called Bumling (*Bum gling*). In Wang Gyel’s (*dBang rgyal*) History of Choné, it is stated that Pelan was transcribed in Tibetan as is the Tibetan translation of Bumling (Hor gTsang 2009, 133)., however, he does not provide any further explanation.

From the sources available, it seems that Bailan was a local name denoting a specific mountain range or ranges and was applied to all those who resided in the area, without those people having to be necessarily linked by origin or political structures. It also seems plausible that the Bailan was at the point of Yarlung dynasty’s conquest inhabited by or somehow connected to Sumpas and, therefore, became associated with them. Establishing a relative chronology of the usage of the term Bailan in Chinese, Tibetan, and possibly other sources is, however, beyond the scope of this work.

2.5 Sumpa as a part of the Tibetan Empire

The massive territorial gains acquired by the Tibetan Empire during the seventh century, brought the need for an intricate yet effective system of territorial administration of the new empire. The territorial administration of the Tibetan Empire was based on the creation of new territorial administrative units from the seventh century onwards. Initially, during the mid 630s, the Tibetan territories, along with Central Tibet itself, were ruled by administrative chiefs *khö pön* (*khos dpon*) (Dotson 2009, 38). There were at least six important administrative chiefs in Bod, Sumpa, Zhangzhung, and other conquered territories. These temporary political institutions marked the beginning of a process by which new imperial territories replaced the borders drawn by earlier kingdoms and local clans (Ryavec 2015, 49). Among the first attempts to integrate conquered territories into a more centralized form were the eighteen ‘shares of power’ (*dbang ris*), also known as ‘administrative arrangement of territories’ (*yul gyi khod bshams pa*). This measure formally assigned specific territories to specific clans, however, most likely this was merely a formalization of the de facto situation of different territories being administered by the resident clans. Nonetheless, this move started the process of transformation of the autonomies into administrable units of the empire (Dotson 2009, 38).

One of the most important reforms of Songtsen Gampo seems to have been the integration of the entire Tibetan territory into units called *ru* of which there, in time, would be five, serving as unified military and administrative units (Mu and Wang 1996, 361). The word *ru* or horn is the term for the largest administrative division of the Tibetan empire (Takeuchi 2004, 53). As Gertraud Taenzer states, the first reference to this segment of the territorial division of the empire, a horn, occurs in the entry of the year 684 of the Old Tibetan Annals. It is said that the assembly was held in Rékar (*Re skar*) in the lower Wu ru shö (*Dbu ru shod*). Until around the year 726, the Old Tibetan Annals speak of three horns and Tsangchen (*Rtsang chen*). With the reorganization of the administration of the Tibetan Empire, Tsangchen was added among the horns, and since then the four *ru* are recorded. The Central horn, Wu ru (*dBu ru*), the Left horn Yo ru (*G.yo ru*), the Right horn, Yé ru (*G.yas ru*), and the Supplementary horn Ru lak (*Ru lag*) (Taenzer 2012, 10). The horn system, however, did indeed likely begin with only three horns, the Central horn, the Left horn, and the Right horn. Since the horns were placed along the north-south axis, the Left horn was the one to the east and the Right horn to the west. With the addition of the Supplementary or Branch horn, Ru lak, the famous ‘four horns of Tibet’ (*Bod khams ru bzhi*) came into existence (Dotson 2009, 38).

Each horn was comprised of eight tongde (*stong sde*) or ‘chilliararchies’, which served as the basic unit for supplying soldiers to the government (Takeuchi 2004, 53), and by the mid-seventh century, tongde replaced the traditional clan areas (Ryavec 2015, 49). However, military recruitment was but one of the aspects of such a division. It is noted that heads of tongde also mediated civil disputes and were responsible for the equitable distribution of the surplus grain, and tongde included those whose duties were not strictly military in nature (Dotson 2009, 38).

All of these types of districts were located in agricultural and not pastoral areas, and the administrative districts were administered by local officials, yülpön (*yul dpon*) and interior ministers, nanglön (*nang blon*). Specifically, each horn was divided into two administrative halves. The upper half contained four tongde, each of which was governed by an official called a tongpön (*stong dpon*). These leaders were identified only by their clan names, indicating the hereditary nature of the posts (Ryavec 2015, 49). The individual leaders were subjects to the general of the respective half of the horn called rupön (*ru dpon*), ‘horn official’ or magpön (*dmag dpon*), ‘general’. The two halves were, however,

independent from each other, each with their own chain of command, emblematic horse, flag, insignia of rank, and so on (Ryavec 2015, 49).

By the mid-eight century, there are indications that the tongde no longer acted simply as units from which soldiers and provisions could be levied (Dotson 2009, 39). As the empire grew stronger and more elaborate system of administration was needed, it seems that the military aspects of tongde became more prominent. Soldiers were conscripted from the individual estates of the districts, which were then responsible for provisioning the soldiers to war (Dotson 2009, 39). Along with the presence of rank of general, this line of argumentation is further supported by the Old Tibetan Chronicle, which states that three tongde of the Central horn were commended for their help in the siege of the Tang capital Chang'an in 763 during the reign of Trisong Detsen (*Khri srong lde brtsan*) (Ryavec 2015, 49). This shows that the troops supplied by the tongde did not serve as local militias guarding only their own area but were sent all over the Tibetan Empire (Dotson 2009, 40). It is, however, still not sure how the Tibetan armies were recruited and dispatched across the Tibetan plateau, what were their exact duties and so on. Nonetheless, an effective and well-organized administrative system would be crucial (Takeuchi 2004, 50).

The first reference to the tongde in the Old Tibetan Annals appears relatively late, in 746, but the lists of the names of units which are generally toponyms and their designation to a horn can be found only in later sources. According to Khépé gatön (*Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*), each horn of Central Tibet and Zhangzhung included eight tongde (Taenzer 2012, 10). Curiously, Zhangzhung, incorporated already in 644 or 645, was not referred to as a horn. Nonetheless, it was also subdivided into tongde, the same as horns (ibid, 10).

The horn of Sumpa, Sumru (*Sum ru*) or so-called 'The additional horn of Sumpa', Yenlak sumpé ru (*Yan lag Sum pa'i ru*), was first mentioned only in 702 (Ryavec 2015, 49) and, as mentioned previously, this horn, which incorporated the former Sumpa, present-day Domé, northeast Amdo (Takeuchi 2004, 53) was never included among the horns of Central Tibet and was thus added as the fifth horn (Taenzer 2012, 10). The Tibetan-Chinese dictionary, Bögya tsikdzö chenmo (*Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*), also mentions the territory of former Sumpa as a separate, fifth, horn, but also that the Sumpa was part of the fourth horn of Ü Tsang (Hor gTsang 2009, 129) which, however, seems to be incorrect.

The Old Tibetan Annals, unfortunately, don't provide much information on the state of horn of Sumpa. Nonetheless, sites of the council meetings regarding the administration of Sumpa are mentioned. As Brandon Dotson states, in eastern Tibet, political power was devolved to a political council of Domé, which operated in the same manner as the central Tibetan council. The Old Tibetan Annals, record the sites of the political council of Domé, the first of which is recorded in the entry for year 692-693 (Dotson 2009, 40). Hortsang supports this by stating that in the Dunhuang documents, it is said that in the year 702, an assembly was called in Domé at a place called Dongtrom (*lDong prom*) by Khu mangbojé lhazung (*Khu mang bo rje lha zung*) and Lön mangtsen dong (*Blon mang rtsan ldong*) on the matter of collecting taxes and other administrative issues of Sumpa. He goes on to state that the meeting place, Dongtrom, was part of an area in Domé in the direction of Coné (Hor gTsang 2009, 134). This place is attested in Old Tibetan Annals, in the entry for the year 702-703 (Dotson 2009, 101). Hortsang concludes, that it is stated 'many times' that the council gathered both in summer and winter to discuss matters, mainly taxes, of Sumpa (Hor gTsang 2009, 134). Another meeting of the Domé council is attested for the year 759 and it is mentioned that 'many from Sumru' were bestowed with insignia of rank (Dotson 2009, 131). It therefore seems it is most likely that Domé was one of the centers of the horn of Sumpa.

According to Hortsang, Döndrup Gyel (*Don grub rgyal*) (1953-1985), a great Tibetan writer from Amdo, regarded as the founder of modern Tibetan literature (Virtanen 2014, 1), states that it seems, according to Khépé gatön and other sources, that the area of the horn of Sumpa initially wasn't as large, and became larger only gradually. So it seems that the different areas of present-day Nakchu, Chamdo, and Dokham were included within the horn of Sumpa (Hor gTsang 2009, 129). And although the area of the horn of Sumpa wasn't big at the beginning, later the territories of Tangzhang, Pélen, Jang, Azha, and others were conquered and included. So the different areas of present-day Nakchu, Chamdo and Dokham were included in the area of the horn of Sumpa. This is the reason Sumpa ru being this large (Hor gTsang 2009, 129).

Albeit the Khépé gatön is much younger, dating to the sixteenth century, and no specific passages, sources, or arguments are provided, the horn of Sumpa is attested to the latest of all five horns, in 702, and this might signal possible administrative or even military issues. Nonetheless, Döndrup Gyel's claim might be indirectly supported by the entry in the Old Tibetan Annals dating to 708 stating that the Domé council convened and

they gathered many gold taxes from the subjects (Dotson 2009, 105). While the Sumpa were known for their deposits of iron ore, the Tomi (多彌) clan, neighboring to the east, was known for their gold as mentioned in Xin Tangshu (新唐書). It is therefore likely that the horn of Sumpa did include other clans and territories apart from the Sumpa as such (Sokhina 2021, 173).

The horn of Sumpa, or more specifically its tongde, are also mentioned on woodslips found in the Tibetan fortress of Miran (Milan 米蘭) in Tarim basin, present-day Xinjiang. The fortress, situated to the west of lake Lop-Nor was a military base of the Tibetan administration of the Lop-Nor area during the Tibetan occupation of the Western regions, Chinese Xiyu (西域), specifically of the Southern branch of the Silk road and most of Hexi corridor, from the late eighth century to the mid-ninth century (Takeuchi 2004, 50). These newly acquired territories were divided into units called trom (*khrom*). These were colonial military governments established on Tibet's border that provided direct Tibetan control over the territories (Dotson 2009, 11). The wood slips found at the fortress of Miran, which was part of the Tselji trom (*Tshal byi khrom*), tell us that in the case of Miran, we can see that the watchmen at Miran also belonged to different tongde, but, unlike Mazar-Tagh, another fortress in the region, they are all from the Horn of Sumpa, which is located to the southeast of Miran. Thus soldiers sent to Miran belong to different tongde from those sent to Mazar-Tagh (Takeuchi 2004, 53). Apart from directly mentioning the Horn of Sumpa and some of the tongde from which the soldiers were assigned, this fully supports Dotson's statement of tongde as military units being sent all over the Tibetan plateau (Dotson 2009, 40). As Mariia Sokhina states, the horn of Sumpa was probably located in the western part of the Domé region as the Tibetan Empire strengthened its position in eastern Tibet, and as the administration gradually became more and more effective, it incorporated new, albeit already conquered, areas (Sokhina 2021, 175).

Nevertheless, apart from the fragmented information about the Horn of Sumpa, its administration, and divisions, there is almost no other information in both Tibetan and Chinese sources on Sumpa after the conquest. Christopher Beckwith mentions that according to Zizhi Tongjian (資治通鑑), Takdra (*sTag sgra*), 'prince of Sumpa' betrayed Tibet and surrendered to the Tang at the beginning of the year 755 (Beckwith 1987, 142), however not much more is known about this incident. Chinese sources also reveal that the

Sumpa were known as Sunbo (孫波) after their annexation by the Tibetan Empire instead of Supi (蘇毗) (Molè 1970, 98). but, again, no further pieces of informations are provided. As Géza Uray states, after the dissolution of the integral state of Tibet, the organization of horns as the largest units naturally could not survive the fragmentation of the territory, though the new principalities may have preserved parts of the old organization and some of them may have adopted the names of the old administrative units. It seems that the The last remains of the horns must have disappeared from the territorial organization of the state when the country was united by the Yuan dynasty and the Sakyapa (*Sa skya pa*) (Uray, 1960, 35).

One of the latest attestations of the term Sumpa might be one of the main incarnation lineages of the Gönlung jampaling (*dGon lung byams pa gling*) monastery in present-day Huzhu Tu (互助土) Autonomous County in Qinghai. This tulku lineage, the Sumpa, is associated with the influential local clan of the same name that played a key role in the foundation of the monastery. The most famous tulku of this lineage is the illustrious Sumpa Khenpo (*Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'jor*), an outstanding scholar of the eighteenth century (Kim 2020, 250-251). It is plausible that this might be the consequence of the Sumpa presence in the far northeast of Tibet, presumably due to the relocation of the tribes during the administration of the Tibetan Empire.

2.6 The localization of Sumpa

As we have seen, most sources place the Sumpa to the general area of northeastern Tibet, to the present-day Amdo, northern Sichuan, and sometimes all the way to the northern edge of Jangthang. This area is, however, very vast which is rather confusing. Nonetheless, the Sumpa, are considered indigenous to this region both by the Tibetan tradition and Chinese sources, who associate them with the Qiang known to the Chinese since the Shang dynasty. The New Book of Tang, *Xin Tangshu* (新唐書), albeit being of a later date, compiled only in the eleventh century, states that the Sumpa (Supi) were the largest group (Stein 1961, 42) and this fact, coupled with their very likely nomadic way of life, might explain why the extent of their territory was so large. Since they reportedly also occupied the northern edge of Jangthang (*Byang thang*), their sacking of Khotan, located in the Tarim basin, and therefore being recorded in the Kharoṣṭhī documents (Molè 1970, 98) also makes sense as it was probably not that much of a problem for them to raid the lower

regions. The Tibetan theories of the Sumpas originating in the Khotan area is, therefore, not very probable.

The Xin Tangshu is also the only source that directly delineates the Sumpa's territory, presumably before the conquest, stating that to the east they bordered on the Tomi (多彌), and therefore the Driчу river (*'Bri chu*, 犁牛河 Liniuhe, the Yak River), and to the west their territory reached the Humang Gorge ³(?) (Sokhina 2021, 166). According to Hortsang, the ancient kingdom of Sumpa was comprised of Chamdo, Dzachu (Rdza chu), and Nagchu, which, however, would according to him be too small (Hor gTsang 2009, 129). Nonetheless, Paul Pelliot suggests that the Sumpas originally occupied a larger territory from south of Kokenur to the mountain passes leading to the Khotan area and only the later conquests of the rising Yarlung dynasty restricted their territory known to Tang (Molè 1970, 99), which seems very plausible.

Hortsang further mentions other Tibetan theories, delineating the territorial extent of Sumpa. These are, however, hard to work with as he usually does not provide any useful sources and does not specify the point in time, which is crucial for correctly establishing the territorial extent at the specific stages (See Hor gTsang 2009, 129, 130, 132).

During the initial stages of the conquest of the Yarlung dynasty, the Sumpas, albeit counted as Yarlung's allies, were most likely located too far away to directly participate in the conflicts in Central Tibet. What is, however, relevant to the issue at hand is the information provided by Beckwith that the Tibetan armies attacked the Azha through the conquered territories of Sumpa of Rgyarong and Bailan (Beckwith 1987, 23). This explicit specification supports the theory of Sumpas being a somewhat loose confederation of nomadic tribes as opposed to a centralized kingdom as presented in the Tibetan sources. Moreover, as we explored in a previous section, the people of Bailan (白蘭 or other spellings like Pailan, Polan, or Pelan, Pelen) are also at some point associated with the Sumpas as the term Bailan most likely refer to a mountain range inhabited by said people and not the people's ethnicity itself (Molè 1970, 71).

The fact that the Horn of Sumpa, which is evidently named after the people or more likely the area inhabited by them, was administered by the council of Domé from certain places, whose names are preserved in the Old Tibetan Annals, suggests that Domé was the (or at least of of the) core areas of the Sumpa territory (Dotson 2009, 101). The area of Horn of Sumpa, as a whole, however, cannot be taken as Sumpa's territory as there is

³ I was not able to find neither the location of this place, nor its name in Chinese.

compelling evidence that as the administration of the Tibetan Empire became progressively more effective, to the initially smaller territory of the Horn were gradually added other subjugated territories.

Even though the Sumpa were conquered and assimilated, they left a distinct trace in the region as they are considered to be the direct ancestors of people of Amdo (Hor gTsang 2009, 133), and the name ‘Sumpa’ reportedly survived in local placenames, such as a district in the Kokenur region (Stein: 1961, 42) and others. In the works of Sumpa Yeshe Penjor (*Sumpa ye shes dpal ’byor*), who himself was a tulku of a lineage reportedly originating from the Sumpa clan, it is said that there are ruins of a well-known castle called Dumkhar (*Zlum mkhar*) built by the Sumpa in Hang nga district in Amdo. And in Amdo’s Chen tsa district (*Gcan tsha*), there is a place called ‘checkpoint of Sumpa’, which might be a reminiscence of the times long gone (Hor gTsang 2009, 129).

As the Sumpa were most likely nomadic people, it is very difficult to directly delineate their territory. In both Tibetan and Chinese sources, we can find various, often contradicting, attempts, which might be the source of the confusion about the ‘kingdom of Sumpa’ being either too small or too large. At the present state of knowledge, we can assume that the core territory of the Sumpa could be placed in the general area of Domé. To determine the territory of Sumpa at the specific stages, the relative chronology of the mentions in both Tibetan and Chinese sources would, however, have to be established.

3 The Great History of Domé

In the following section a translation of the section from The Great History of Domé, titled *Of the Sumpa Kingdom from the Great History of Domé*, will be presented. The translation aspires to be as faithful to the original as possible, though sometimes at the expense of the English syntax and stylistics. All Tibetan proper nouns are rendered phonetically with the original spelling provided in round brackets, and transliteration of the whole section is provided in the appendix for those interested in the original text.

3.1 Translation

Of the Sumpa Kingdom from the Great History of Domé

(125) As for the ethnicity and location of Sumpa, it is not that complicated to state that it belongs to principalities. However, we have not come across clear accounts devoted specifically to Sumpa in the chronicles. When talking about the Domé, there is no choice but to introduce it by mentioning the brief history of Sumpa as it was an important kingdom.

(126) It is said that the term Sumpa was used for a Tibetan clan lineage and Tibetan tribes, and it is possible to be understood this way. However, it was also understood as the name of the dwelling place of those tribes in ancient times. Sumpa as a tribal confederation or a kingdom had existed since before the times of Nyatri Tsenpo. Generally, it is stated in some of the well-known chronicles and records that Sumpa first came to be under the rule of Namri Songtsen. According to Deü chöjung (*Lde'u'i chos 'byung*), the section concerning the origin of Nyatri Tsenpo states 'Nyatri Tsenpo built the castle of Yumbulakang, he subdued the king Sumpashang and was of great miraculous power.' Only in passing it is said in Khépé gatön chronicle (*Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*), that 'he [Nyatri Tsenpo] built the first castle of his body and king Ayong bönpö (*A yong bon po*) of Sumpa was subdued.' There are mentions like this that emphasize again and again the defeat of Ayong bönpö of Sumpa at the hands of Nyatri Tsenpo. It is clear that while Nyatri Tsenpo was ruling Yarlung, he was having disputes with Sumpa. It is not clear why there was a dispute between Sumpa and Yarlung since Nyatri Tsenpo himself had bönpö ministers. By that time, bönpös of Sumpa and bönpös of Nyatri's retinue disagreed about religious practice and a conflict broke out. However, Nyatri Tsenpo and Sumpa fought over political power in the region, and in the end, Ayong bönpö of Sumpa was defeated.

(127) On the other hand, it is possible that the king (of) Sumpashang and Ayong were the same person. If we look into this and the two are one, it is possible that Ayong would be a king and a bönpö at the same time. [If Ayong is a bönpö], why it is said that Bön was new since the times of Drigum Tsenpo. This needs to be examined further, so we can understand this better. Religious teachings related to Bön came to Sumpa in times before Nyatri Tsenpo. Many of our own scholars throughout history are saying that Tibet was a spiritually dark place, but this is but a repeated whining and self-disregard. Since it is clear that the wisdom of Bön had spread hundreds of years before Christ, it is probable that Tibet was not an (intellectually) dark place. And Nyatri Tsenpo was invited by the so-called 'twelve knowledgeable bönpös'. One should not understand the 'knowledge' (*shes*)

mentioned here as mere ‘knowledge of senses’ and mental cognition. It has to be understood in the sense of sophisticated knowledge or possession of deep insight.

Moreover, we know that the kingdom of Sumpa existed since before the arrival of Nyatri Tsenpo. Sumpa existed from very ancient times until it was first subdued by the king of Tibet, Namri Songtsen. During the reign of Namri Songtsen, Pung sétsé (*Spungs sad tse*) of clan Khyung along with others skillfully facilitated an alliance (oath) between the king and the ministers, and through this, they managed to lead an army and subdue Dakpo (*Dwags po*), Kongpo, Penyül (*'Phan yul*), Tsang (*gTsang*) and Sumpa. In the end, some ministers rebelled against the king, and the political power [of the empire] was diminished [so that] previously subdued regions broke free. Later, [during the reign of] Songtsen Gampo, [Tibet] regained political power.

(128) [And] later, the [previously escaped] subjects were genuinely subdued. To the four ru of Ü Tsang was added the fifth ru of Sumpa, so there were five. It is said in many chronicles, that during the reign of Songtsen Gampo, there was a military commander by the name of Nakshö (*Nags shod*). We are not sure if Nakshö, today Biru (*'Bri ru*) county, is a personal name or not. There were eleven divisions of 1000 units in Sumpa and the last one, the eleventh, was Nakshö. Perhaps he was a hero from Nakshö and as he was appointed commander of the Sumpa military, his real name was not used anymore and he used the name of his region instead. It is the same as if there was a man from Amdo called Trashi and instead of his real name, he was called Amdo. There could be a similar tradition.

The borders of Sumpa at the time went from Nyéyül bumnak (*gNye yul bum nag*) in the east to Yelzhap dingbo ché (*Yel zhabs sding bo che*) in the west and from Miti chunak (*Smri ti chu nag*) in the south to Nakshö zitrang (*Nags shod gzi 'phrang*) in the north. It is said that Gyashö takpatsel (*rGya shod stag pa tshal*) was in the center.

In Bögya tsikdzö chenmo (*Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*), it is said that the Sumpa was part of the fourth ru following three ru of Ü Tsang, or there was a separate, fifth, ru of Sumpa. There is Penyül tsongön (*'Phan yul mtsho sngon*) in the north, which is connected with Tewa gyashö takpa (*Lte ba rgya shod stag pa*), which is in the center, Nyéyül bumnak (*gNye yul bum nag*) in the east, Miti chunak (*Smri ti chu nag*) in the south, and Yelzhap dingbo ché (*Yel zhabs sding bo che*) in the west. Nakshö (*Nags shod*) in the north and everything that comes in between is called Zi trang (*gZi 'phrang*), which is an old name for

that area. In later Chinese sources, it is said that the Sumpa's area is comparatively much smaller.

(129) Gédün Chöpel (*dGe 'dun chos 'phel*) said that Sumbha was a small kingdom belonging to Tibet. [And] that [Sumpa's] clans are mixed in people of present-day Amdo. He says this is reality. There is a clan called Sumpa in present-day Amdo. In the histories of illustrious scholar Sumpa Yeshe Penjor (*Sumpa ye shes dpal 'byor*) and others, it is said that there are ruins of a well-known castle called Dumkhar (*Zlum mkhar*) built by Sumpa in Hang nga district in Amdo. In Amdo's Chen tsa district (*Gcan tsha*), there is a place called 'checkpoint of Sumpa', a name which was not changed [over centuries], which is proof that Sumpa existed.

The ancient kingdom of Sumpa comprised Chamdo, Dzachu (*Rdza chu*), and Nagchu. By taking this, we would be making a mistake because this area would be too small. If we take the area of the upper range of Amdo's northwest and the surrounding area of Kham, it is a very large kingdom.

There is a mention of the kingdom of Sumpa in two chronicles in chapters on the history of Tibet in *Zui gurgyi gyelrap* (*Zu'i gur gyi rgyal rabs*) as well as in Chinese chronicle, volume 122, mentioned in the third book of Gédün Chöpel. The section of history mentioned by Gédün Chöpel is not exactly word by word quotation. His work is essentially a brief overview of the two Chinese chronicles mentioned above.

(130) At the time of Sumpa's existence, when they talk about Tibetan place names, they are incorrect since they are Chinese. However, it is difficult to say since there had been great changes in the pronunciation of Chinese.

In the east, the kingdom of Sumpa bordered Turpan, Tangsang (Tang shang by the Chinese name, its original name being Minyag), and Moco. In the west, there was river Ho in Tsang. In the north, there was Liyul. In the southeast, there was Pajo (*Pha jo*) and Lona mentsu (*Lo na man tsu*), and the land of barbarians Selang. It is said that there were nine regions from the east to the west and twenty from the north to the south. There were eighty cities and a hundred thousand families. In Chinese sources, it is said that in the east was the so-called Kingdom of Women, which was ruled by a Queen. In the vicinity of the Queen's palace, a river called Ju (*'Ju*) flowed to the south. Just the area around the Queen's palace was said to have about forty thousand households and from this, it is possible to judge how big it was. Khagang Trashi Tséring (*Kha sgang bkra shis tshe ring*) draws attention to the following verse from the Dunhuang manuscript:

*'In the Sum country, up in Sum,
Are Lord Belji Mangruti ('Bal lji mang ru ti),
And two ministers: Lang (Rlang) and Kam'*

He holds the view that before the arrival of Songtsen Gampo, Sumpa originally appeared from Khotan (*Li yul*), and only at a later stage did it spread into Tibetan territory. Although it is impossible to be certain about such an obscure topic, we do must consider the viewpoint of Khagang Trashi Tséring. Most scholars led by Gédün Chöpel are saying that Tung Nyuukao (*Tung nyu'u ka'o*) appearing in the Chinese chronicles about Tibetan history is “the queendom of the east“, and it was, is part of Sumpa. However, when it is said to be within Nyéyül bumnak in the east, Miti chunak in the south, and Nakshö zitrang in the north with the center at Gyashö takpatsel, it is said that Sumpa would compose of [territory] encircled by the present-day Golok (*mGo log*) and [autonomous regions] of west and north Qinghai, high parts of Amdo (i.e. Yushu, etc), Nakchu and parts north of it and high parts of Kham (i.e. northern parts of Chamdo and Kandze prefectures).

(131) Therefore, to say that the eastern Queendom was in this area is not fitting at all. difficult to find credible proof that is was so. In some of the works of the Mongolian scholar Lozang Tayang (*Blo bzang rta dbyangs*), it is described that there was a queendom in ancient times that originated between Liyul and Horsok (*Hor sog*). It seems important discoveries might come from this research if continued. I urge scholars to research this further.

It is said in Domé chöjung (*mDo smad chos 'byung*) that Sumpa is one of the eighteen great clans of Tibet. If we examine this further, it is difficult to say that [Sumpa] came from Liyul. We must research this further. If the clan of Sumpa came from Liyul, then is a contradiction to the prophecy of Buddha of Liyul. If the Tibetans can say the Sumpa is a part of Dri (*'Bri*) clan, that would be baseless to think.

In several sources, the name of the Sumpa clan is Supi. In very ancient times, it was called Pelan by the Chinese, and in the later Tibetan pronounciaton, the literal translation became Supi, which however looks like an [original] lineage of Sumpa.

(132) Kushap Gyalmo Drukpa writes in his text that Drogön chögyel phakpa (*'Gro mgon chos rgyal 'phags pa*) of Sakya received [the title of] King of Pelan (Pelan wang) and a seal from the Mongolian emperor of China as such he was appointed Master of Law

of the Three provinces of Tibet. Nowadays, most Chinese historians of Tibet are saying that before the formation of the Great Tibetan (empire) Pelan was a great clan and subtribe living in the southwest of Qinhai Lake, north part of Sichuan, at the southern border of the Gansu province, which belonged to the ancient Qiangs. But it is believed by some that so-called Pelan was transcription of ‘white’ (Ch. Pai) and ‘ling’ (Tib. *gling*) and these two opinions were later generally accepted.

In Wang Gyal’s History of Choné, there are several [possible] answers about so-called Bumling written, however, the extensive [view is that] so-called Pelan was transcribed in Tibetan as is the Tibetan translation of Bumling, [but this is] probably a bias and the perception among scholars is not similar as well, [so] learned people should do more research.

They say that [Sumpa] fought with Minyak several times. Some say the early origin of most Amdo people is the Sumpa. People are also saying that Penyül (*Phan yul*) and other areas were part of Sumpa. Sumpa bordered Minyak in the east. Liyul in the north with, Domé in the northeast, from north to south, it probably bordered many different regions.

The extent of the so-called Sumbha at that time was [that] in the east it bordered Domé, Tibet in the south, India in the west, Liyul in the north, with many regions between it. Above all, it is said that Sumpa was a very large kingdom and it was powerful, rich, and flourishing.

(133) However, Döndrup Gyel (*Don grub rgyal*⁴) says that it seems like the area of the horn of Sumpa wasn’t that big at first. It became bigger only gradually. So it looks like the different areas of present-day Nakchu, Chamdo, and Dokham were included within the ru of Sumpa. It is said in Chöjung khépé gatön and other sources, that the extent of the area of Sumpa was like this.

Although the area of the horn of Sumpa wasn’t big at the beginning, later the territories of Tangzhang, Pélen, Jang, Azha, and others were conquered and included. So the different areas of present-day Nakchu, Chamdo, and Dokham were included in the area of Sumpa ru. This is the reason Sumpa ru being this large. In Chinese, Tangzhang are the Minyak. Most scholars disagree on what the Chinese term Pélen, means. Some scholars say the term Pélen is for the kingdom of Sumpa, and it is connected with Sumpa itself. Tibetan historians are not in agreement concerning what is called in Chinese Tang Zhang

⁴ A well-known Tibetan poet.

and then Minyag or Pelan. Some hold that Pelan is known as a specific principality of Sumpa connected with it. But others do not explain it so. They write it down as 'Bum gling (i.e. Pelan) and it is as a whole (i.e. including Minyag and others) and do not distinguish between them.

It is without doubt, that the Sumpa is one of the great Tibetan tribes. Above all, it is said that the Azha was conquered by Sumpa, and it became a great kingdom. There are doubts about that. There is nothing in the Tibetan writings about the fact that Azha was included in the territory of Sumpa [and] it wasn't conquered by the Songtsen Gampo's minister Gar.

In the Dunhuang documents, it is said that in the year 702, an assembly was called in Domé at a place called Dongtrom (*lDong prom*) by Khu mang bo jé lha zung (*Khu mang bo rje lha zung*) and Lön mang tsen dong (*Blon mang rtsan ldong*) about the matter of collecting taxes and other [business] in Sumpa. It is clearly stated many times that they gathered both in summer and in winter in Domé to collect taxes from Sumpa.

(134) The meeting place, Dongtrom, is part of an area in Domé in the direction of Coné. Moreover at the place called Dongtrom is also a mountain that seems [like the place] where they assembled there to discuss taxes collected from Sumpa. According to Gédün Chöpel, the tribe of Sumpa are the ancestors of the people of Domé, which is a shred of great evidence.

In Chöjung khépé gatön (*Chos 'byung mkhas dga' ston*) and other sources, there is however a small mistake regarding the area of Sumpa. Moreover, the entire kingdom of Sumpa at that time didn't have any subjects of their own so from this point of view, we are one step closer [to solving this and] it should be analyzed [further].

In The clan histories of the six great tribes of Tibet (*Bod mi'u gdong drug gi rus mdzod*) and other sources it is stated that Dri ('*Bri*) clan were the kings of Sumpa, of the twelve vassal tribes that were always independent. And in this manner, it is explained that Sumpa came from Dri clan, one of the four great tribes of Tibet, and from that the thousand generations of Dri came.

4 Conclusion

Even though there are only a few sources available on the Sumpa and the general ethnopolitical situation in northeastern Tibet, especially before the advent of the Tibetan Empire, is rather confusing, we can still make several conclusions.

As for the origin of the Sumpa, it is very likely that they were of Qiang, namely Western Qiang, stock and therefore roamed the area long before the Yarlung dynasty's rise to power. As there was little to no agriculture in the region, the main source of living would be, and still to a certain degree is, the nomadic way of life as it has been for centuries. The Sumpa were, therefore, most likely nomads, and in the light of this theory, the very name of the present work is, therefore, inaccurate as there was likely no 'kingdom of Sumpa' since there are no mentions of any city or castle, apart from the information provided by Hortsang on the palace of the queen of the Eastern Land of Women, which, however, can't be taken uncritically. In the early Medieval period, the Sumpa lived in the greater area of present-day Amdo, northern Sichuan, and along the northern edge of Jangthang, from where they were able to raid settlements in the lower regions, and, apparently, cross great distances, which have led some authors to place their homeland far to the west or even split them into different groups. Although some of the sources suggest different subtribes living in different places, such as the people of the Bailan mountains or the Sumpa of Rgyarong, they were indeed likely just a different group of the same general tribe. The same goes for the association of Tibetan clans Tong and Dri, and the ruling family of the Eastern Land of Women. These specific clans might have traced their ancestry and possibly culture or language to the Sumpa, but at the same time created and maintained a non-mobile way of life closer to the traditional Tibetan clan areas. Due to their nomadic ways, their territory shifted considerably, which might have confused the Chinese as well as some Tibetan authors into thinking that there was some powerful centralized state structure in northeastern Tibet. The Sumpa, however, were presumably indeed considered powerful and rich, which is supported by the Namri Songtsen's alliance (possibly a marriage one) with them. As the power of the Yarlung dynasty grew, they were able to overpower and quickly defeat their former Sumpa allies after they rebelled and tried to regain their independence. Not much is known about the conquest itself, but data presented suggest that at this point in time, the tribes were either only in some form of

loose confederation or fractured entirely and the Tibetans, trained by the past conquests, had no problems with overpowering them.

The creation of the administrative unit called Sum ru, the Horn of Sumpa, in the early eighth century, and its main political body being located in Domé, suggests that this was indeed, at least at the time, a core territory of the Sumpas. The Horn itself was, however, not all just the Sumpa's territory as evidence suggests that other subjugated tribes and their territories, such as the Tomi, were gradually added until the Horn reached its attested size.

By the time of the fall of the Tibetan Empire in the ninth century, it seems like the Sumpa were all but assimilated with only placenames and fractured clans remaining. Some of these clans, especially the one bearing the name Sumpa, are however attested all the way to the eighteenth century, albeit probably only as a reincarnation lineage, as Sumpa Khenpo rose to prominence for his scholarly efforts.

It is difficult to provide any conclusive statements as most of the points made above are only speculations based only on a portion of the material available, and a proper study that would critically examine the primary sources both in Tibetan and Chinese as well as all the secondary sources available would be of great use. It would be interesting to set up a careful relative chronology of the Sumpa's territorial extent at different stages of history, but this is, unfortunately, completely beyond the scope of the present study.

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Appendix 1

[p.125] mDo smad lo rgyus chen mo las Sum pa rgyal phran gyi skor

Sum pa 'di rigs rus dang gnas yul gang ci'i cha nas rnyog dra ha cang che ba'i rgyal phran gyi gras min na'ang / Sum pa'i lo rgyus gsal bo khol byung du bris pa zhig ma mthong zhing / mDo smad lo rgyus kyi sngon 'gror mi 'chad rang 'chad kyi rgyal khab gal chen zhig yin stabs mdor bsdu shig 'chad pa skabs su bab pa yin /

Sum pa zhes pa'i tha snyad 'di Bod kyi rus rgyud tsho khag Sum pa rang [p. 126] la go dgos pa yin mod / yang skabs rer gna' dus kyi tsho khag de gnas yul la go ba'ang yod / Sum pa rgyal khab 'di gNya' khri yar sngon nas yod pa'i Bod kyi rus rgyud tsho khag chen po gcig gam rgyal khab cig yin la / spyir btang yongs grags kyi lo rgyus yig tshang khag tu Sum pa 'di dang thog dbang 'og tu bsdu mkhan ni gNam ri srong btsan yin par bshad kyang / Lde'u'i chos 'byung du gNya' khri btsan po'i byung rabs dang 'brel nas de nas sku mkhar Yum bu bla sgang btsigs te / Sum pa shang gi rgyal bo btul te rdzu 'phrul che / Chos 'byung mKhas pa'i dga' ston tu /

sku mkhar thog ma Yum bu bla sgang mdzad // Sum pa'i Bon pa A yong rgyal ba btul // zhes sogs lo rgyus yig tshang mang bo zhig na gNya' khri btsan pos Sum pa'i Bon pa A yong rgyal ba zer ba zhig btul skor nan bshad byas 'dug pa la bltas na / gNya' khri thog mar dbus kyi Yar lung tsam la dbang sgyur byed skabs nas Sum pa dang kha mchur thug gin yod pa gsal zhing / gNya' khri rang nyid la'ang Bon gyi blon pa yod 'dug pas / de skabs kyi Sum pa'i Bon po dang gNya' khri'i sku 'khor gyi Bon po dag la chos lugs kyi 'dod tshul mi mthun pa byung nas rtsod pa byung ba'am / yang na gNya' khri dang Sum pa'i rgyal bo gnyis kyi srid dbang gi 'thab rtsod yin nam gang ltar khong tsho'i bar rtsod pa byung nas mtha' mjug Sum pa'i Bon po A yong rgyal ba pham pa'i zur tsam gsal bo red /

yang gong gi Sum pa shang gi rgyal bo zhes pa de dang Bon po A yong [p. 127] gnyis gang zag gcig yin shas che zhing / gal srid de gnyis gang zag gcig yin tshe A yong de rgyal bo'ang yin la Bon po'ang yin srid pa'i gnas tshul 'di tsho la bltas na / Gri gum gyi skabs nas Bon gsar du byung zhes pa ci zhig la dmigs nas bshad par brtag dgos shing / nga tshos 'di nas shes pa ni / gNya' khri'i yar sngon nas Sum pa'i yul du Bon dang 'brel ba'i chos lugs rig gnas dar khyab byung 'dug pa de red la / rang re'i mkhas pa snga phyi mang bos Bod yul mun pa'i gling zhes rang gis rang la brnyas pa'i smre ngag bgrang ba tsam las / don gyis spyi lo ma tshugs pa'i lo brgya phrag gi yar sngon nas Bon chos dar yod pa gsal

stabs rig gnas kyī 'od snang rtsa nas med pa'i mun pa'i gling zhig ni yin tshod mi 'dug
cing / gNya' khri gdan 'dren zhu mkhan Bon shes pa can bcu gnyis su grags pa rnam
kyang / dbang shes dang yid shes tsam yod pa zhig la bshad pa ma yin par rig pa'i gnas
gang zhig shes pa'i shes pa'am shes rab yod pa la go dgos /

yang snying nga tshos gNya' khri ma byon yar sngon nas Sum pa rgyal khab gnas yod pa
shes shing / ches gna' dus nas brgyad yong ba'i Sum pa rgyal khab de phyis kyī Bod btsan
po'i rgyal rabs kyī dbang 'og tu mdzad mkhan thog ma ni gNam ri srong btsan yin / gNam
ri srong btsan gyi ring la Khyung bo Spungs sad tse sogs rgyal bo dang blon chen bar
mna'a 'jog pa'i byed thabs la brten nas Dwags po dang / Kong po / 'Phan yul / gTsang /
Sum pa 'di dag la dmag drangs nas dbang 'og tu bsdus kyang / mtha' mjug blon chen khag
cig gis rgyal bor ngo log byas pa sogs srid dbang nyams te sngar 'bangs su bkug pa rnam
phar shor bas / phyis Srong btsan sgam pos [p. 128] rgyal srid la dbang sgyur byed skabs /
de dag slar 'bangs mal mar bkug ste / dBus gtsang gi ru chen bzhi'i steng du Sum pa'i ru
bsnan te ru chen lngar phye ba yin /

lo rgyus yig tshang mang bo zhig na Srong btsan skabs kyī Sum pa'i ru'i dmag dpon Nags
shod kyis byas par bshad kyang / Nags shod (deng gi 'Bri ru rdzong du 'bod) ni mi zhig gi
ming yin min la dogs pa yod de / Sum pa stong sde bcu gcig gi tha ma la Nags shod zer bas/
gcig byas na Nags shod kyī khongs nas yong ba'i dpa' bo zhig Sum pa'i dmag dpon du
bskos pas khong gi dngos ming gis ma bzung bar sde ming bed spyod byas pa dper na / A
mdo nas yin pa'i bKra shis zer ba la dngos ming bKra shis zhes mi 'bod par A mdor 'bod
srol yod pa dang mtshungs par snang /

skabs de'i Sum pa'i rgya khyon gyi tshad ni / shar gNye yul bum nag nas nub Yel
zhabs sding bo che'i bar dang / lho Smri ti chu nag nas byang Nags shod gzi 'phrang bar /
Rgya shod stag pa tshal zhes pa lte gnas su byas par bshad / Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen
mor / Sum pa'i ru / Srong btsan sgam po'i skabs Bod dBus gtsang gis thog drangs pa'i yan
lag gsum pa'i ru'am / dBus gtsang ru bzahir phye ba'i thog tu btsugs pa'i ru chen lnga ba ste /
byang phyogs 'Phan yul mtsho sngon dang sa 'brel yul 'di'i Lte ba rgya shod stag pa tshal
la bzhag nas shar gNye yul bum nag lho Smri ti chu nag nub Yel zhabs sding bo che/
byang Nags shod gZi 'phrang bcas so so'i bar du song ba'i sa khul gyi ming rnying / zhes
bshad 'dug pa 'di 'og nas 'byung ba'i rgya'i yig tshang gi Sum pa'i rgya khyon bshad pa
dang bsdur na chung skyon yod par snyam /

[p. 129] dGe 'dun chos 'phel gyis Sum bha de sngar Bod khongs kyi rgyal phran zhis gi sa yin pa la/ khong tsho'i rigs de deng sang A mdo'i nang du 'dres nas yod/ ces gsungs pa bden par 'dug ste/ deng sang yang mDo smad du Sum pa'i rus ming can gyi rgyud pa ni/ lo rgyus thog gi mkhas pa snyan grags can Sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor sogs byung 'dug la/ mDo smad Hang nga rdzong khongs su Sum pa rgyal khab kyis bskrun par grags pa'i sum pa'i Zlum mkhar zhes pa'i mkhar rnying gi shul yod cing/ mDo smad gCan tsha'i khongs kyi Sum pa 'gag sogs sa ming ma nyams pa'ang yod pa sogs bden dpang khungs skyel mang bo yod stabs/ gna' bo'i Sum pa rgyal khab de Chab mdo dang Rdza chu kha Nag chu dang/ A mdo stod ma'i phyogs tsam la bshad pa der chung skyon yod cing/ mDo smad nub byang gi Stod rgyud kyi yul cha dang/ de dag dang sa 'dabs 'brel ba'i Khams khul gnyis 'dus pa'i sa khyon gzhi rgya ha cang che ba'i rgyal khab cig yin 'dug/

dGe 'dun chos 'phel gyi gsung rtsom deb gsum par bkod pa'i rgya'i thang yig le'u brgya dang nyer gnyis pa dang/ Zu'i gur gyi rgyal rabs le'u rgya gsum pa'i nang 'khod pa'i bod kyi lo rgyus zhes pa 'di gnyis las Sum pa'i skor cung zad cig mthong thub cing/ dGe chos kyis bsdus pa'i lo rgyus dum bu 'di ma rtsom gyi tshig ris ji bzhin yin stshod mi 'dug cing/ gong 'khod rGya'i deb ther de gnyis kyi nang don snying bsdus su bkod pa zhis red/

skabs de'i Sum pa'i rgya khyon bshad skabs rgya mi dag gis Bod kyi sa ming zin bris byas pa yin pas sgra gdangs ma dag pa'am/ rgya'i gna'a deng [p. 130] gi skad gdangs la 'gyur tshabs che ba'i dbang gis deng sang ngo 'phrod dka'a yang/ rgyal khams de shar du Tu phan dang/ Tang sang / ('di deng sang rGya'i tang zhang zer te Mi nyag yin) Mo co'i yul la thug cing/ nub tu gTsang bo Ho dang/ byang du Li yul/ shar lhor Pha jo dang Lo na man tsu/ Se lang gi kla klo'i yul dang thug/ shar nas nub tu yul gru dgu dang/ byang nas lhor yul gru nyi shu/ grong khyer brgyad cu/ dud khyim khri bcu tsam yod par bshad/ rgyal khab de'i srid skyong ba ni rgyal mo zhis yin stabs / rGya'i lo rgyus su ton nyis go ste shar phyogs bud med kyi rgyal khab tu 'bod/ rgyal mo'i pho brang yod sar 'Ju bya ba'i chu bo lho phyogs su 'bab cing/ pho brang yod sa'i yul de gcig rang la'ang dud khyim bzhi khri tsam yod par bshad pas 'khor 'bangs kyi rgya ci tsam che ba'ang shes nus/

Kha sgang bkra shis tshe ring gis Tun hong yig rnying du yul sum yul gyi ya sum na' / rje 'bal lji mang ru ti/ blon po Rlang dang Kam gnyis zhes pa'i tshig 'di drangs te/ 'di

nyid Srong btsan ma byon yar sngon gyi Sum pa'i gnas tshul dang/ Sum pa ni thog mar Li yul nas byung zhing phyis rim gyis Bod yul du mched pa'i lta ba bzung 'dug /

ches lkog gyur gyi gnas 'di 'dra la kha tshon rbad de gcod pa'i gdeng spobs ga la mang' yang/ sku zhabs Kha sgang bkra shis tshe ring lags kyi lta tshul 'dir bsam blo nges par gtong dgos te/ dGe chos gcos pas lo rgyus smra ba mang shos kyis rgya'i yig tshang las byung ba'i bod kyi lo rgyus su Tung nyu'u ka'o ste shar phyogs rgyal mo'i rgyal khab bya ba zhid byung ba de Sum pa'i khongs yin par bshad rkyang byas yod na'ang/ shar gNye yul bum nag lho [p. 131] Smri ti chu nag byang Nags shod gzi 'phrang/ lte ba Rgya shod stag pa tshal byas par bshad pa'i sum pa ni / deng dus kyi mGo log dang mTsho sngon nub byang gi rgyud/ A mdo stod ma/ Nag chu dang de'i byang rgyud/ Khams stod kyi sa khul skor zhid 'dus pa la zer bas/ 'di'i khongs su shar phyogs rgyal mo'i rgyal khab cig byung bar bshad na 'os de tsam med la/ yin lugs kyi sgrub byed tshad ldan kyang yod dka' /

sog po Blo bzang rta dbyangs kyi deb ther sogs yig tshang re zung du Li yul dang Hor sog gi bar gyi yul cha zhid tu/ sngar rgyal mo'i rgyal khab cig byung rabs bshad 'dug pa la mu mthud nas zhib 'jug byed thub na don gnad cig lhang la 'bud rgyu yod par snang bas mkhyen yangs dag gis dpyad par mdzod/

mDo smad chos 'byung du/ Sum pa ni spyir Bod kyi rus chen bco brgyad kyi nang tshan du grags la/ zhes 'byung ba la gzhdgs na Li yul nas mched pa yin dka' ba lta bu yin la/ da dung bsam dgos pa zhid ni/ gal srid Sum pa'i rigs 'di Li yul phyogs nas tshur bod du slebs pa yin na/ Li yul skor ston pa'i gna' dpe lung bstan du grags pa de dag dang yang mthun dka' la/ rang cag gis Sum pa 'di mi'u rigs drug gi khongs nas 'Bri'i rigs su gtogs par bshad pa'ang khungs med du thal bar snyam mo//

lo rgyus 'ga' zhid tu 'di'i rigs kyi ming la Su pi zer zhes 'byung ba ni rgya rnams kyis ches gna' dus Sum pa la Pe lan zer zhid/ de'i phyis shig nas Bod kyi sgra gdangs phar bris pa ni Sum pa sgra sgyur byas te su pi zer stabs Sum pa'i rus rgyud yin pa 'dra yang/ sku zhabs rgyal mo 'brug pa'i [p. 132] deb ther du / Sa skya'i 'Gro mgon phyag na la Hor se chen gyis pe lan wang zhes pa'i thob dang tham ga gnang nas Bod chol kha gsum gyi khrims bdag tu bskos tshul las 'phros te/ deng rabs rgya rigs Bod kyi lo rgyus nyams zhib pa phal cher dang Bod mi skor zhid gis Pe lan zhes pa Bod chen po'i rgyal rabs ma

tshugs gong du mTsho sngon lho nub dang/ Si khron byang phyogs/ Kan su'u zhing chen gyi lho rgyud mtshams su sdod pa'i gna' bo'i chaang gi khongs gtogs kyi rus rgyud tsho khag chen po zhis yin tshul dang/ yang la las Pe lan zhes pa dkar bo dang gling gi sgra sgyur byas par 'dod pa'i lta tshul gnyis bkod nas phyi ma 'thad phyogs su bzung 'dug dBang rgyal gyi Co ne'i lo rgyus su 'Bum gling zhes lan kha yar bris 'dug pa'ang rgyas pe lan zer ba Bod kyi 'bum gling sgra sgyur byas par 'dod pa'i phyogs yin pa 'dra ba bcas mkhas pa'i bzhed tshul mi 'dra ba du ma snang bas blo ldan rnam kyis brtag par bya'o/

khong rnam kyis Mi nyag dang 'thab mo lan kha yar la byas 'dug A mdo ba phal cher gyi sdon gyi rgyud pa yin par grags zhes kyang 'byung ba bcas gang la bsams kyang Sum pa rgyal khab ni lho ste dbus kyi 'Phan yul sogs dang 'dres shing/ shar Mi nyag dang 'brel/ byang du Li yul/ byang shar mDo smad lho byang gi yul gru phal cher dang 'dres sam snyam ste/ de skabs kyi Sum bha zhes pa'i rgya khyon ni/ shar mtshams mDo smad dang/ lho mtshams Bod/ nub mtshams rGya gar/ byang mtshams Li yul bar gyi yul gru rgya che rnam yin/ zhes kyang bkod 'dug pa bcas Sum bha rgyal khab de sa khyon rgya shin tu chen po mang' zhing stobs 'byor yang dar ba'i rgyal khab cig red/

[p. 133] 'on kyang Don grub rgyal gyis/ Sum pa'i ru 'di dang thog rgya chen po med par snang yang/ rim gyis rgya che ru song ste/ da lta'i Nag chu sa khul dang Chab mdo sa khul/ mDo khams kyi sa cha khag gcig kyang Sum pa ru'i khongs su 'dus par snang/ zhes bshad pa 'di Sum pa'i rgya khyon Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston sogs las bshad pa lta yin la/ yang de nyid kyis/ Sum pa'i ru 'di dang thog sa rgya chen po ni med par 'dug kyang phis rim gyis Tang zhang dang Pe lan 'Jang 'A zha sogs dbang du bsdus pas/ da lta'i Nag chu sa khul dang/ Chab mdo sa khul/ mDo khams kyi sa cha khag gcig kyang Sum pa'i ru la gtogs par snang/ zhes Sum pa'i rgya khyon chen por gyur pa'i rgyu mtshan ni/ rgya'i skad kyi Tang zhang ste Mi nyag dang/ rgya'i tha snyad Pe lan zhes pa 'di Bod kyi lo rgyus zhib 'jug byed mkhan rnam kha mi mthun te/ kha shas kyis Pe lan zhes pa Sum pa rgyal phran gyi tha snyad cig tu grags zhes Sum pa rang la 'grel ba dang/ yang 'ga' res gang yin 'di yin gyi skor ma bshad par 'Bum gling zhes bris pa sogs khrun thag gang yang ma chod par lus pa zhis tu snang yang/ Bod kyi tsho khag chen po zhis yin pa gdon mi za ba yin/

gong du bshad zin pa ltar 'A zha dbang du bsdus pas Sum pa'i rgyal khab chen por gyur par bshad 'dug pa la dogs pa mchis te/ 'A zha ni mGar gyis btsan po'i rgyal khongs su ma bsdus pa'i yar sngon Sum pa'i khongs su bsdus pa'i zur tsam yang Bod kyis yig tshang khag tu mi snang la/ Tun hong yig rnying du/ spyi lo 702 lor Khu mang bo rje lha zung dang Blon mang rtsan ldong gnyis kyis mDo smad kyis ldong prom zhes pa'i sa char tshogs chen bsdus te Sum pa la khral bsdus zhes sogs mDo smad du dbyar dgun gyi tshogs 'du [p. 134] 'tshogs nas Sum pa la khral bsdus skor lan du mar gsal/ de'i IDong khrom ni mDo smad Co ne phyogs kyis yul cha zhig yin la/ yul der IDong khrom zhes pa'i ri bo zhig kyang yod 'dug der tshogs 'du 'tshogs te Sum pa la khral bsdus tshul la bltas na/ dGe chos kyis Sum pa ni mDo smad dag gi mes pa yin par bshad pa la rgyu mtshan che zhing/ Chos 'byung mkhas dga' sogs kyis Sum pa'i rgyu khyon bshad pa la chung skyon yod pa'am yang na Sum pa thams cad skabs de'i Sum pa rgyal phran gyi khongs su tshud med pa gang yin la gom gang mdun spos kyis sgo nas dpyad dgos pa yin/ Bod mi'u gdong drug gi rus mdzod sogs las/

Sum pa 'Bri yi rgyal bo yang/ rgyal phran bcu gnyis rgyud du grol// zhes kyang 'byung stabs Sum pa 'di 'Bri'i rigs su bshad pas Bod kyis rus chen bzhi las stong gi rigs su gtogs pa'i a lcags 'Bri'i rigs yin//