

## Contact Network and Attribution to the Mainland-the Yongzheng Period's Governance of the Western Sichuan Plateau

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**Keywords:** Yongzheng period, Western sichuan plateau, Geopolitical ties

**Abstract:** The governing of the Western Sichuan Plateau during Yongzheng period played a key role in linking the past and the next between Kangxi and Qianlong periods. In order to strengthen the effective governance of Tibet and maintain unimpeded access to Tibet and regional stability, the Central Government of the Qing Dynasty planned to include the Western Sichuan Plateau under its direct rule. The central government used new ideas such as the first large-scale garrison, administrative demarcation, and setting up Xuntang (basal military organization) to improve the administrative establishment of the Western Sichuan Plateau. It also appointed chieftains, and built grain platforms, thus realizing the direct management of the Western Sichuan Plateau. It established the Qing Dynasty's new model of governing Tibet based on the Western Sichuan Plateau, making the Western Sichuan Plateau a geographic link between the Central Plains Dynasty and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

### 1. Introduction

During Yongzheng period, the Qing central government took the governance of Tibet as its starting point and quickly carried out governance of the Western Sichuan Plateau (Dajianlu, Litang, Batang), deepening into the west area of the Yalong River, making the Western Sichuan Plateau a geographic link and strategic hub between the Central Dynasty and Tibet. At present, there have been many discussions on the governance of the western Sichuan Plateau in the Qing Dynasty. The first is to pay attention to the management of the Western Sichuan Plateau by the central government in the late Kangxi period, Qianlong period and the late Qing Dynasty, which contributed to the overall grasp of policies and measures for the governance of the Western Sichuan Plateau in the Qing Dynasty. The second is to discuss the background, policy evolution, specific measures and impacts of the Qing's governance of the Western Sichuan Plateau from the perspective of the governance strategy, which promoted the in-depth study of the governance of the Western Sichuan Plateau in the Qing Dynasty. The third is to start from the frontier governance and explore the process of establishing the frontier bases of Sichuan and the Western Sichuan Plateau in the Qing Dynasty's governance of Tibet, creating a new idea for the study of the Western Sichuan Plateau governance. Most of the existing results are based on archives, local chronicles and other documents to statically sort out the governance of the Western Sichuan Plateau in the Qing Dynasty. However, there are few discussions on the overall research on the governance of the Western Sichuan Plateau during the Yongzheng period, and fail to fully understand the origin of the Qing Dynasty's governance of the Western Sichuan Plateau. It also failed to clarify the characteristics of the initial stage of the Qing Dynasty's governance of the Western Sichuan Plateau. This article focuses on the governance of Dajianlu, Litang, Batang and other places in the Western Sichuan Plateau during the Yongzheng period. The process of the Qing government's governance of the western Sichuan Plateau has been sorted out and the stage characteristics of the link between the preceding and the following have been summarized.

### 2. Background

From the end of the 17th century to the beginning of the 18th century, the Qing central government changed its strategy and attitude towards Qinghai Heshuote Troop. Through the Battle

of Xilu, Dajianlu and adjacent areas east of the Yalong River were brought under direct rule. Measures were taken such as setting up military bases in the Jianlu area, opening post roads, installing pond shops, granting toasts, building bridges and paving roads, etc. “This enabled the Qing Dynasty to consolidate and implement the direct governance of the area east of the Yalong River, including Dajianlu, on the Western Sichuan Plateau.[1]” It marked the opening of a new chapter in the Qing Dynasty's strategy of governing Tibet, and it also further pushed the Qing dynasty to begin to set its sights on the western Sichuan plateau west of the Yalong River. From the late Kangxi period to the early Yongzheng period, the situation on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau changed many times, prompting great changes in the situation on the Western Sichuan Plateau. In order to maintain stability in Tibet, the Qing central government sent Ga'er Bi and Yue Zhongqi to lead troops into Tibet from the Western Sichuan Plateau. At the same time, under Nian Gengyao's plan, Sichuan officers and soldiers entered Litang and Batang to recruit the upper echelons of monks and laymen in Zaya and Qamdo. It established actual control over the Western Sichuan Plateau, with the specific jurisdiction of Sichuan [2], and no longer belong to the Khan King of Heshuote Troop. The regulation of the Heshuote Troop on the Western Sichuan Plateau to provide taxes to the Heshuote Troop was abolished, and the power of the Heshuote Troop was further hit politically and economically and declined. The leaders and chiefs from various places along the western Sichuan Plateau heard the news and pay allegiance to the Qing Dynasty and gave money to the Qing army [3]. Under such changes, the Western Sichuan Plateau, as an important part of the Qing army's entry into Tibet, needed to further strengthen management and maintain order. This also marked the beginning of the Qing central government's formal management of the aftermath of the Western Sichuan Plateau.

### **3. The Central Government's Administrative Measures on the Western Sichuan Plateau during the Yongzheng Period**

3.1 For the first time in the Yongzheng period, permanent officers and soldiers stationed in many places west of the Yalong River, which laid a solid foundation for the government to use the Western Sichuan Plateau as a strategic military frontier for Tibet.

In the first year of Yongzheng, the Qing government realized the strategic position of the Western Sichuan Plateau as the “main road to Tibet”, and divided the 500 green barrack soldiers to station in Litang [4]. In 1724, on the basis of the Qing army's withdrawal from Tibet into Sichuan in the late time of Kangxi period, the government immediately made a comprehensive military deployment on the western Sichuan Plateau, which not only consolidated the area east of the Yalong River, but also established a new general barracks outside the Dajianlu, which gave the Qing army's prestige by chieftains out therer, and consolidated the military garrison in the area east of the Yalong River. The government set the two banks of the Yalong River such as Zhongdu, Litang, Batang, and Oluo as the strongholds of troops [5]. Since then, the area from Yunnan in the south and Shaanxi in the north were connected, which could be assist when there were wars. In 1729, the Qing government began to upgrade its military deployment to the Western Sichuan Plateau due to the move of the Seventh Dalai Lama to the Western Sichuan Plateau. In order to defend the 7th Dalai Lama, the Qing government carried out a systematic and thorough military deployment on the western Sichuan plateau. The Liya and Ebian battalions were under the jurisdiction of Jianchang Town and Yongxing Association [2], and they were moved to Taining, got the name Taining Association, which were governing five battalions: Taining (the capital of the Chinese military stationed in Gada), Hualin (the capital stationed in Hualinping), Fuhe (the capital stationed in Dajianlu), Dejing (the capital stationed in Zhongdu, now Yajiang County), and Ning'an (Dusi stationed in Lingque Temple, now Daofu County). The army stationed in many places in the western Sichuan Plateau, formed a joint organization system of “one town, two associations and five battalions”, with a strength of 1,800 [6]. In 1731, the Qing government sent another 500 soldiers to defend the Taining Association due to the obstacles on the road from Taining to Dajianlu [2]. The 7th Dalai Lama lived in Gada Taining Monastery for 6 years, and the military center of Yazhou Prefecture has also been pushed from Hualinping to Gada, which objectively promoted

military construction on the plateau of western Sichuan. Since then, in order to realize rapid support to Tibet, the Qing government has basically formed the deployment of garrisons in Dajianlu, Litang, Batang and other highland towns and strategic passes in western Sichuan.

3.2 Completed the deployment of Xuntang (basal military organization) and grain platform systems on the Western Sichuan Plateau for the first time, ensuring stability along the Sichuan-Tibet highway and logistical supply and transportation.

The installation of Xuntang (basal military organization) on the Western Sichuan Plateau began in the 41st year of Kangxi, and “a total of 87 stations” were set up in the late time of the Kangxi period [7]. Till the beginning of the Yongzheng period, the Qing government planned to “set up a station along the road west of Dajianlu” [8]. After the Albuqa Rebellion, in order to obtain further information about Tibet, quickly stabilize the situation in Tibet, and escort the Dalai Lama to move to the Western Sichuan Plateau, Yue Zhongqi and Zhou Ying successively sent troops along the Western Sichuan Plateau to “set up military organizations” and “stations” [4], so as to speed up getting military information and get connection with the front line. So far, the establishment, improvement and re-installation of Xuntang (basal military organization) and grain terraces on the Western Sichuan Plateau in the Kangxi and Yongzheng period have basically come to an end. During the Yongzheng period, 9 military associations in Dajianlutang, 13 in Litang, and 25 in Batang were completed and formed a system of Xuntang (basal military organization) and stations, realizing the “six days for the information of Chamuduo to Dajianlu [4]”. The transmission of official documents and communication between the central government of the Qing Dynasty and Tibet raced against time, which became the prototype of the Qianlong Dynasty to establish the Xuntang system on the Western Sichuan Plateau.

### **3.1 Completed the Administrative Division of the Western Sichuan Plateau for the First Time, and Gradually Established a Regional and Level Administrative Management.**

During the Yongzheng period, the Qing government arranged for Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai and other provinces to coordinate the administrative ownership of the Western Sichuan Plateau, making the Western Sichuan Plateau a larger and more strategic hub area. During the Yongzheng period, it went through the “Thirteen Articles of Qinghai Rehabilitation Matters” plan, and then to the governors of the Sichuan-Tibet line such as Yue Zhongqi and Zhou Ying. They carried out several inspections and adjustments involving Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan and Tibet for more than ten years. Many administrative divisions, including the Sichuan-Tibet demarcation in the third year of Yongzheng, the Sichuan-Yunnan demarcation in the fifth year of Yongzheng, and the Qingchuan-Tibet demarcation in the tenth year of Yongzheng, which all involved in the Western Sichuan Plateau. “It determines the administrative boundaries of Sichuan-Tibet and Qinghai-Tibet in both legal and practical terms. [9]”. After the delimitation, the Qing government clarified that the important towns of Batang, Litang, and Dajianlu on the Western Sichuan Plateau were under the jurisdiction of the Sichuan Province. During the Yongzheng period, the administrative demarcation of the Western Sichuan Plateau was determined, involving Tibet, Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai and other border areas, filling the “vacuum zone” governing Sichuan and Tibet, giving the central government a legitimate reason to govern the surrounding areas of the snow-covered plateau and clearing Mongolia. The Heshuote Troop and the Dalai Lama have been exercising power on the Western Sichuan Plateau for a long time, which has transformed the Qing government from staying at a “memorial” (agreement between the two parties) to actual control over the Western Sichuan Plateau, which is closely linked with Tibet's political and religious forces.

## **4. Inherit and Perfect the Measures Taken by the Central Government of the Kangxi Period to Manage the Western Sichuan Plateau**

### **4.1 Improving the Administrative Establishment of the Western Sichuan Plateau**

In 1729, the Qing central government added the Yazhou Prefecture Tongzhi (official's name) (later known as Dajianlu Hall), which realized the earliest administrative system on the Western

Sichuan Plateau. In November of the same year, Yazhou Prefecture Tongzhi were stationed in Dajianlu by following the imperial edict. After that, they set up positions such as Zhaomo, inspector, supervision assistant department director, and archivist, which were awarded to supervisors and guards, and were responsible to collect taxes. “There are no less than two hundred officials and servants of Yamen. [10] “ At the same time, Dajianlu Tongzhi managed the “Shenbian, Lengbian, Mingzheng inside Dajianlu, and places outside [11].” They were there for managing Han-Tibetan trade. The Yazhou Prefecture Tongzhi moved into Dajianlu, and led all areas of Sichuan in the west of Dajianlu. The administrative system formed a situation where officials and chieftains coexisted to ensure the stability of the Sichuan-Tibet area.

4.2 Improve the establishment of the official system of the Western Sichuan Plateau and incorporate the Western Sichuan Plateau into the national administrative official system to ensure the implementation of the administrative instructions of the Qing government

Because the Western Sichuan Plateau was located in the complex geographical environment of the southeastern edge of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and the Western Sichuan Plateau, the Qing government met difficulties in setting up local administrative agencies and arranging officials on the Western Sichuan Plateau. In addition, because of the fierce folk customs and advocacy of force in the western Sichuan plateau, the deterrence of military power was indispensable in actual governance. In 1728, the Qing government set up grain stands in five places, including Dajianlu, Litang, Batang, Chamuduo, and Zhaya, to “supply and support” [12]. Issues concerning the supply of military rations, ordnance transportation into Tibet, and the supply of food and rations of Xuntang along the road, which could ensure the smooth flow of personnel exchanges, document transmission, and material transportation between Tibet and the inland areas. According to Zhang Hai [13], who was on the Sichuan-Tibet line at that time, described the grain affairs committee as “concurrently managing the feelings of the barbarians”, explaining that grain affairs were “liuguan (officials with tenure) [14]” set up by the Qing government on the plateau of western Sichuan with the color of local officials. It has not only the military duties of storing and transporting military rations, transporting ordnance, and maintaining transportation, but also the civil affairs duties of managing localities and supervising the chieftain, marking that the officials appointed by the Qing government poured into the vast chieftain area west of the Yalong River. In the early days of Qianlong, the Western Sichuan Plateau “though Sichuan was affiliated, there were no liuguan (officials with tenure) [15]”, indicating that the grain committee continued to play an important role in local governance. As a result, a “liuguan” system with four local officials including Dajianlu tax customs supervision, Dajianlu Tongzhi, Litang grain commissioner and Batang grain commissioner were formed on the Western Sichuan Plateau, ensuring the smooth flow and safety of traffic nodes of Sichuan-Tibet Road. The administrative system of the Western Sichuan Plateau was governed by the decentralized system and the Dajianlu Tongzhi, and the establishment of officials on the grain platform. It did not change until the late Guangxu period.

#### **4.2 Establishing the Two Major Chieftain Systems of “Xilu” and “Lubian” on the Western Sichuan Plateau**

At the beginning of the Yongzheng period, the leaders from all over the western Sichuan Plateau were attached, and the official appointment was not approved. In order to fight against chaos and change the state of “each is the emperor, and not belong to each other”, the Qing government, based on the experience of the management of the chieftains east of the Yalong River, proposed the general idea of “all should be given a seal and letter license and integrated with the inland chieftains”. The chieftain who was convinced by the local people was given the titles of government official, who was in charge of the jurisdiction of nearby roads, halls, and additional sanitation officials.[16]” In July 1726, Zhou Ying made a thorough investigation of the situation and population of the tribes, and said: “From Litang and Batang to Die'erge, Shangnaduo, Lincong, and Huo'ershushu, the total area is large and small. Thirty-eight offices, 30 native officials, 18 native heads, and 33,267 households, all of which are connected by borders, should be under the jurisdiction of the inland. In addition to analyzing the booklet, the ministers are now consulting the supervisors to

check and verify the questions, please grant the titles of chieftains, and award them to the printed signal paper seal. [17]” This provided decision-making information for the official appointment of the chieftain by the Qing government. In April 1729, the Qing government officially canonized the chieftains of the Western Sichuan Plateau that have been attached since 1719, clearly stipulating the number and title of chieftains, granting seals and number papers, stipulating tribute money and grain, etc. The highest grade is the Xuanfusi (the eighth level), the lowest grades are Changguansi and Tubaihu (the eleventh level). The newly titled chieftains were collectively referred to as “Lubian” and “externally attached cheiftains”. In addition to the “Xilu” tribe recruited in 1701, there were a total of 122 cheiftains known as Xilu and Lubian, which formed two major chieftain systems [18]. Therefore, all the old and new chieftains belonged to the four chieftains of Mingzheng, Dege, Batang, and Litang. They belonged to the Dajianlu Association, and were all under the jurisdiction of Yazhou Prefecture which belonged to Sichuan. It is worth noting that the salary of Litang chief and deputy chieftains includes 150 taels of Yanglian silver, which was unique to court officials, which shows that Litang chieftain has the characteristics of “liuguan rule” more than Batang chieftain, and the Qing government paid more attention to the governance of Litang.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, although the Yongzheng period was not long, the Emperor Yongzheng boldly promoted the rebellion and remediation of the Western Sichuan Plateau, which caused the low maturity order of the Western Sichuan Plateau to be broken by the dynasty political order for a long time. It played a key role in linking the past and the next, and it was a milestone for the Qing central government to govern the vast Tibetan areas. Since the late Kangxi, major changes had taken place in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and surrounding areas as well as the whole country. Governing Tibet and the vast Tibetan areas had become an inevitable historical task facing the central government and related local governments. The establishment of regional and level administrative management and military affairs in the Western Sichuan Plateau was the key to solving the difficult problem of governing Tibet, and it was far more difficult than inland military administrative governance. The Yongzheng Central Government reviewed the situation and realized the direct governance of the region west of the Yalong River for the first time by the central government of previous dynasties, and ended the disordered affiliation of the Western Sichuan Plateau under the struggle between Tibet and Qinghai. The Qing Dynasty’s strategy for governing Tibet took the Western Sichuan Plateau as the forefront. An important hub for the transfer of positions and strategies laid the foundation.

Some scholars have pointed out that the Western Sichuan Plateau gradually became the forefront of the Qing government’s governance of Tibet during the Kangxi and Yongxi period [19]. The author would like to add: First, the political order brought about by the eastward development of the snow-covered plateau formed on the Western Sichuan Plateau was broken by the Qing dynasty's political order by garrisoning troops, setting up Xuntang, demarcating delimitation, and injecting officials. Since the Yongzheng period, the central government and Sichuan have paid more attention to the governance of the Western Sichuan Plateau such as Batang and Litang, providing a routine case for the governance of Tibetan areas in the Qianlong dynasty, making the western Sichuan plateau more obvious in the Qing Dynasty strategy of governing Tibet. The second is the effective construction of the Western Sichuan Plateau during the Yongzheng period, so that the Qing army that entered Tibet gradually formed the pattern of withdrawal from the Western Sichuan Plateau to the interior. During the Yongzheng period, Zhou Ying, who led troops to Tibet, once said: “If you look closely at the soldiers in Sichuan, the people and horses are still impressive, and they have advantages of the environment along the way and enough horses. The thing is that the army in Yunnan, because of the snow and high mountains on the way, and the danger of passing the river, and the lack of food, not only the soldiers are limited, but the horses are thin and in shortage. [4]” It shows the achievements of the Qing Dynasty in the construction of the western Sichuan Plateau. The three periods of Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong successively went through three stages: marching to Tibet of the army from Sichuan, Shaanxi and Yunnan, setting up stations in Tibet of

Sichuan-Yunnan army, and then supporting Tibet of Sichuan Army. It marks the formal formation of Sichuan as the strategic frontier base of the Qing Dynasty's governance in Tibet.

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