

བྲག་རྫོང་།

Draggo

Chinese: Luhuo Xian

炉霍县



<u>roll/neg:</u>	30:6
<u>subject:</u>	seedling nursery on north edge of town
<u>location:</u>	Draggo Dzong (གྲག་འགོ་རྫོང་།), Kartse ཀར་མཚོ། Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture [Ch: Luhuo Xian 炉霍县, Ganzi 甘孜TAP]
<u>approx. date:</u>	winter 1994/1995
<u>comment:</u>	A large seedling nursery is on the northern outskirts of Draggo Dzong. The town is visible in the distance. Similar, though generally smaller, facilities were seen in most other areas of Kartse TAP where tree-cutting is active. The stations appear operative, with extensive beds of live seedlings. This would suggest there is a functional commitment to reforestation. But despite these millions of seedlings, there is scant evidence planted trees are contributing much to Tibet's timber harvest or that strain on virgin forests is being lessened. (Viewing to the south.)
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g. **Draggo Dzong [Ch: Luhuo Xian]**

i. **Brief description and impressions**

Like Dawu, Draggo is a strongly Tibetan area in cultural and demographic terms. But also like Dawu, it is a center of a profitable lumber industry and attracts increasing Chinese exploitation and immigration.

Draggo གྲག་རྫོང་ (Ch. Luhuo Xian 炉霍县) is one of the smaller counties of Kartse TAP in area, covering only 5,070 square kilometers, but its excellent natural resources of forests, gold, agricultural land and pasture have always placed it among the richer districts of Kham. The county seat, known as Xinduzhen 新都镇 under the Chinese administration, lies beside the Xianshui River 鲜水河 (Tib. Da Chu) in a wide fertile valley of cultivated fields and pasture, rising to hills once patched with forests but now largely denuded. Its famous monastery, recently restored, overlooks the modern Chinese-built town from its commanding hillside situation [see photo 30:8, p. 785]. At an elevation of around 3,400 meters¹, the town is not too high to inhibit Chinese immigration. It is also easily accessible from the heavily-populated Chinese areas of Sichuan adjacent to Kartse TAP, a day and a half's journey by bus from Dartsedo 293 kilometers away.

While the countryside increases its determinedly Tibetan demeanor, Draggo county town is being pulled along a Chinese-style path of development. Most of it was rebuilt after being destroyed by an earthquake in 1973. Its main street is dominated by lumber industry-related units and symbols of economic progress like the large new People's Bank premises. Street population, although partially Tibetan, is noticeably more Chinese than remoter and less wealthy county towns in Kartse TAP like Dege or Payül.

ii. **Historical background**

The Draggo region was first settled by Tibetans during the 7th Century, and remained a firmly Tibetan area from the Tibetan Empire period onwards. When the Qing Dynasty established a nominal administration in Kham

¹ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 68

during the 18th Century, Draggo was one of the Hor principalities (Hor Draggo), a powerful group of regional leaders descended from the Mongols of Genghis Khan². A rich agricultural and grazing area, Draggo lay on the northern route through Kham into Central Tibet, with a large monastery and attached town forming its principal settlement. After Lhasa's annexation of Nyarong in 1865, Draggo fell under the influence of the Dalai Lama's government³, but when the local ruling line became extinct at the end of the 19th Century, a Chinese military colony was established there in 1894 by the Viceroy of Sichuan Province. Its Chinese name "Luhuo" derives from the name of this colony⁴. The colony proved rather unsuccessful, but Chinese control was strengthened in 1904⁵. After the fall of the Qing Dynasty the Republic of China took over its role in the town, declaring it a county in 1913 and housing their local magistrate in the former Tibetan ruler's castle⁶.

By the 1930's at least 400 people lived in the town⁷, as well as the monastic community of a thousand monks. Contemporary Chinese sources estimate a total county population of 30,000⁸, probably an over-statement in view of current population numbers, with a 20% Chinese component⁹. Besides the Tibetans and about 1,000 Hui, another group of people, described simply as "barbarians" (Ch. Di 氐), were included as 20% of the Draggo county population at this time¹⁰. These may have been descendants of tribesmen from border regions settled on an agricultural colony in Draggo started by Catholic missionaries late in the 19th Century¹¹. Any trace of them has disappeared in post-1950 Chinese population statistics.

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

³ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, pp. 5, 8

⁴ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 68

⁵ S.A.M. Adshead, *Province and Politics in Late Imperial China*, p. 89

⁶ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 68

⁷ *Xikang wenti (The Problem of Xikang)*, p. 93

⁸ *Xikang jiyao (Outline of Xikang)*, p. 250

⁹ *Xikang jiyao (Outline of Xikang)*, p. 247

¹⁰ *Xikang jiyao (Outline of Xikang)*, p. 247

¹¹ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 67

In 1935, when a detachment of the Red Army entered Draggo pursued by Tibetan forces from Nyarong, a major battle took place between the Communists and the Tibetans at the Draggo Gönpa¹². In 1950 the PLA returned. The Communist occupation of Kham immediately involved the Tibetans of Draggo in forced road-building. Yaks and manpower in the region were requisitioned to help construct the highway through Kham for the PLA's advance into Central Tibet¹³. In 1956 Draggo joined the revolt against the Chinese occupation, but the revolt's failure was followed by severe repression of Tibetan culture and the traditional social and economic system. Draggo's extensive forests and suitability for Chinese-style agricultural methods attracted energetic exploitation, including land reclamation along the Xianshui River¹⁴. An earthquake in June 1973 caused extensive damage in Draggo. Thousands of people were injured and Chinese sources report that 10,000 temporary dwellings had to be constructed by the authorities to house the homeless¹⁵. After three years a new town had been built, with local and national funding¹⁶, although in the mid-1970's this did not involve the more careful town planning and incorporation of "nationalities characteristics" that went into the rebuilding of Bathang after the 1989 earthquake. The Draggo earthquake seems to have provided impetus for intensified exploitation. Once the newer town was rebuilt, wheat-growing schemes were introduced, and the forestry industry expanded. Draggo in 1996 is a steadily sinicizing town, although Tibetan religion and culture show a persistent determination to revive.

iii. **Current demography**

Draggo's county population was recorded as 37,132 in the 1990 census¹⁷. Ethnic divisions showed an 86% majority Tibetan population (32,155 people), and a 14% Chinese remainder (5,110 people)¹⁸. After 1990, however, population statistics recorded a decline in total county population, to 36,000 for 1994¹⁹. Such a decline

¹² Jamyang Norbu, *Warriors of Tibet*, p. 52

¹³ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 57

¹⁴ *Survey of China Mainland Press*, No. 1446, p. 26, from *New China News Agency*, Chengdu, 28 Dec 1956

¹⁵ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 283

¹⁶ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 280

¹⁷ *China Population Statistics Yearbook 1990*

¹⁸ *Tabulation on China's Nationality: 1990 Census Data*

¹⁹ *Statistical Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

is another example of the statistical implausibilities encountered in studies such as this one. It could only be explained either by dramatic shrinkage in the Chinese population, something a site visit reveals isn't happening, or by the cessation of growth in the Tibetan population itself, something else which surely isn't the case. If the greater certainty is that Tibetan population growth is not negative or zero, then Chinese population would have to be calculated near 3,400 in 1994. While such a figure might balance the demographic balance sheet, plenty of evidence suggests it is not true. For reasons which outsiders may never know, it does not suit authorities to reveal accurate numbers of Tibetans or Chinese living in the county. It can safely be assumed both are higher than official statistics indicate.

Easily accessible, agriculturally productive and a major center of Kartse TAP's logging industry, Draggo's characteristics serve to attract Chinese immigration. The town rebuilt in the 1970's after the earthquake, reportedly with national funding of over 17 million Yuan²⁰, was designed in environment and scope to accommodate a growing Chinese population and development pattern. The area supported a wheat-growing project under the 7th 5-Year Plan²¹, and forced settlement of pastoralists and the fencing of pasture land also gained momentum during the 1980's²². Development of the lumber industry since the 1980's, and expansion of its profile and facilities since 1992, compels the participation of increasing numbers of Chinese migrants. Population in the county town clearly and visibly comprises a high Chinese component. All these factors add up to increasing, not declining, Chinese numbers in Draggo.

Chinese cadres from the earlier occupation and development era do sometimes return to their home provinces. The exit of a significant batch of such people from Draggo in 1991-1994 could conceivably explain the sudden drop in Chinese numbers in Draggo suggested by official statistics. What they do not record is the even higher numbers of unregistered economic migrants, security personnel and 'temporary' government personnel still in Draggo. A site visit visibly confirms that many more than 3,400 Chinese live there. For Tibetans, it makes no difference whether Chinese in their towns are officially registered as residents or not. Their presence alone affects local economy, culture and society.

²⁰ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 280

²¹ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 296

²² *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 297

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

iv. **Administrative and control apparatus**

Details are not available in this report.

v. **Economy**

Draggo's GDP for 1994 (101.5 million Yuan²³) ranked sixth of the prefecture's eighteen counties. It was one of the Kartse TAP counties where secondary production outpaced the primary sector, though only by a small margin. Primary industry contributed 42 million Yuan toward the 1994 GDP while secondary production was valued at 44.8 million Yuan.²⁴ The primary production figure is large enough to account for successful farming and pastoralism but not the intensive logging being carried out in the county. Draggo's economy is in lockstep with every other Tibetan area in this respect. The most valuable (and non-sustainable) forms of harvest are simply not treated as part of local production. The forests belong to China according to the Constitution²⁵. Since raw resources aren't Tibetan, local economies have no inherent right to expect to share the profits or economic benefits of subsequent processing and manufacturing. Benefits to China are huge. The removal of the most valuable sector of the economy from local control is not something seen as destructive to regional autonomy. The low population level also keeps per capita GDP relatively high, 2,819 Yuan in 1994.²⁶

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

²³ *Statistical Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

²⁴ *Statistical Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

²⁵ *The Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, 4 December, 1982, Article 9

²⁶ *Statistical Yearbook of Sichuan 1995*

Few villages show signs of government effort to organize farmers into brigades for mechanized production, although official sources mention that wheat-growing projects were carried out in several Kartse TAP counties, including Draggo, under the 7th Five-Year Plan²⁷. Land reclamation schemes had also been tried during the 1950's, aimed at growing vegetables and wheat, the agricultural crops favored by the Chinese whose increasing immigration had to be supported by local produce²⁸. Some settlement of nomads has also taken place²⁹. Both measures would be favored by the Chinese State because they lead to greater control over farmers and pastoralists. The Chinese have tried to convert barley-producing Tibetan areas into wheat-producing areas since the 1950's, since wheat is the Chinese preference.

Draggo's involvement with lumber exploitation is clearly evident from the many large, often new forestry units within the county town and installations along the main highway. The County Forestry Office has recently been rehoused in an imposing 4-story administration block, in keeping with the expanded pace and scope of the local forestry industry. The County Forestry Office operates an extensive Forest Products Processing Factory within the town, famous among other things for producing high quality furniture for sale in Chengdu and the TAR³⁰. Numerous smaller lumber processing and storage facilities line the highway right through the county. Lumber traffic along the highway is heavy above and below Draggo.

Deforestation within the county has been severe after prolonged and sustained logging. Hills once thickly forested have often been stripped bare, leading to degradation of grazing land and soil erosion [see photo 30:4, p. 785], devastating long-term effects for the pastoral-agricultural economy on which local Tibetans depend. Massive wastage also results from floatage of logs down-river. Hundreds of thousands of logs cast into the Xianshui River 鲜水河 (Tib. Da Chu) to be floated towards Dawu, a major collection point further south, become stranded every year when water levels drop in the winter [see photo 30:12, p. 783]. The Nyi Chu (Ch. Niqu 泥曲) tributary, flowing from Serthar County to the north, joins the Xianshui River above Draggo and adds to the concentration of logs. In spring new batches of logs are dumped into the river, many becoming stranded and waterlogged. Particularly large accumulations of logs are seen around Renda 仁达, south of Draggo.

²⁷ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 296

²⁸ *Survey of China Mainland Press*, No. 1446, p. 26, from *New China News Agency*, Chengdu, 28 Dec 1956

²⁹ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 297

³⁰ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 171

Riverbanks along this stretch of about 45 kilometers, from Renda to Draggo, are strewn almost continuously with logs. Salvage is illegal, a punishable offence. Signs posted on telegraph poles along the highway as it follows the river warn “No removal of logs being transported by water”. Locals must therefore watch logs degrade along the riverbanks while the areas in which they live are being logged out. The amount of waste occurring in the entire region must be staggering.

The authorities, well aware of the need to replace the massive forest resources already harvested, have implemented reforestation programs in the prefecture. Large seedling nurseries such as the Draggo County Central Nursery on the northern outskirts of Draggo [see photo 30:6, p. 772], established in the early 1980's, are reported to be producing phenomenal numbers of seedlings for replanting³¹, but evidence suggests that replanting efforts are not meeting with great success. Reforested areas show visibly poor rates of regrowth. The size of logs being transported by river and by truck, averaging about 18 inches in diameter and often over 24 inches, demonstrates that logging of original forests still contributes a very high share to the volume of lumber extracted in Draggo. Trucks loaded with the harvest of replanted areas are easy to spot: logs are much smaller and are of relatively uniform size. There are few such loads.

Gold mining, a lure for Chinese prospectors early this century³², continues in Draggo. Official mines no doubt exist, and local Tibetans also participate in extracting gold from the rivers. North of the county town whole Tibetan villages may be seen engaged in sieving for gold in the Xianshui River, intensive and small-scale operations, but suggestive of a planned project. They tend to work sites already abandoned by Chinese gold miners with more advanced equipment.

vi. **Educational and medical facilities**

Details are not available in this report.

³¹ *Dangdai Ganzi (Contemporary Ganzi)*, p. 156

³² Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, p. 66

vii. Culture

The vitality of Tibetan architectural traditions and religious activity is evident in Draggo. Except for a few state-managed rural settlements, villages throughout the area are entirely Tibetan in population and character. As seen in other parts of Kartse TAP, Tibetans in Draggo have keenly expressed their cultural leanings by building new houses in traditional Tibetan style now that policies and economic levels permit. The countryside is filled with such houses, the vast majority of them new, with their distinctive timber upper stories and exuberant decorative painting of windows, eaves and door-frames, similar to the houses of Dawu. Many villages with only ten to twenty houses have three or four new homes under construction at a time, an incredibly high rate of new construction. None of these fine homes existed fifteen years ago. The economic level in the countryside appears relatively high, a pattern observed in other areas where there is an active logging industry like Dawu and Nyarong. In the short-term, lumber exploitation does bring economic benefits to Tibetans in such areas because of their participation in the labor and transport sectors but the industry's management and profits nevertheless remain primarily with the Chinese State and Chinese people.

The county town itself is relatively sinicized in respect of its administrative and some residential sectors, and many Tibetan town residents have foregone traditional dress for everyday use. The Chinese population is high compared to towns in Kham further from, or less accessible to, Chinese population centers to the east. Within the county town, where much Chinese-style residential accommodation has been built, some newer Tibetan housing also incorporates Chinese features such as pitched roofs [see photo 30:8, p. 785]. Merged Sino-Tibetan architectural features such as these were also seen among some houses in Dawu county town. Where modern attributes serve practical purposes, Tibetans have little hesitation in utilizing them, but their preference is decidedly for traditional form and design.

viii. Religion

Historical Draggo was a prototype Tibetan town, built around the castle of the local ruling family with the monastery on a hillside above. The “great Drango monastery” housed over 1,000 monks in the early 20th Century, and was an active local center of religion and power³³. After its destruction in the Cultural Revolution

³³ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, pp. 68-69

and the 1973 earthquake, the Draggo gönpa has now been restored, with an impressive central dukhang and residential accommodation for several hundred monks [see photo 30.8, p. 785]. While it has not been allowed to resume its pre-1950 size, it is reputed to be an energetic teaching institution these days. Spread across the hillside to the northeast above the county town, it stands as an emphatic Tibetan counterforce to the Chinese development below.

Several other restored monasteries lie within sight of the main highway elsewhere in Draggo County, and shrines, chötens and groups of prayer flags surrounding villages affirm the strength of religion in everyday life.

ix. **Summary comment**

Draggo exemplifies the construct of control and assimilation found in all the richer Tibetan areas. Its resources attract development of an industry to extract them, Chinese immigration follows, some economic benefits accrue to local Tibetans, but most wealth flows towards China as its markets swallow the products of the industry. Towns rarely escape a significant degree of sinicization in population, culture, and the overall economic system. In the countryside Tibetan cultural forms and expressions assert themselves as strongly as they can, but it is the towns which are the centers of functional administrative and controlling power, from which the Chinese State can effectively keep the upper hand.



30:12

30 km S of Drago (near 'Renda'): logs stranded in Xianshui

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roll/neg: 30:12
subject: logs stranded in the 'Xianshui' River
location: 30km south of Draggo Dzong (གྲག་འགོ་རྫོང་།)
Kartse ཀར་མཚོ། Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
 [Ch: Luhuo Xian 炉霍县, Ganzi 甘孜TAP]
approx. date: winter 1994/1995
comment: Wastage of logs seen in many Tibetan rivers, at least to the eyes of the unprepared, seems immense. There are hundreds of thousands of logs laying stranded along this stretch of the Xianshui River 鲜水河 (Tib. unavailable), being degraded by sun, water and ice. Salvaging even one is illegal. Posted along roads are signs warning of punishment for those who “steal” the logs from China.

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30:8

Draggo: Gonpa

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<u>roll/neg:</u>	30:8
<u>subject:</u>	town Gönpa
<u>location:</u>	Draggo Dzong གྲམ་འགོ་རྫོང་།, Kartse དཀར་མཆོས། Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture [Ch: Luhuo Xian 炉霍县, Ganzi 甘孜TAP]
<u>approx. date:</u>	winter 1994/1995
<u>comment:</u>	Like most county towns in Kartse, Draggo has a large gönpa. No details about it are available. It has undergone considerable reconstruction and is arranged around a fine, large dukhang. Monastic residences suggest a population of several hundred. Unlike county towns in some other Tibetan areas, which have been built largely for the purposes of Chinese administration, Kartse's county seats have Tibetan legitimacy. Not only do the presence of the monasteries attest to this, but so do the large amounts of private, traditional Tibetan housing in each place.
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roll/neg: 30:4

subject: deforested area

location: near Draggo Dzong གྲམ་འགོ་རྫོང་།, Kartse ཀར་མཚོ་སྤོང་། Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture
[Ch: Luhuo Xian 炉霍县, Ganzi 甘孜TAP]

approx. date: winter 1994/1995

comment: Repeating an image seen often throughout Kartse TAP's river valleys are these stripped hillsides. Isolated patches of green, remnants of forest, remind of what the former condition of the slopes has been. Dawu and Draggo Counties are still rich forestry areas, though loggers must penetrate areas far from main roads to harvest large trees. Draggo borders Dzamthang and Chuchen Counties in Ngawa T&QAP, where similarly intense exploitation of timber is occurring.

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