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Gift, Greeting Or Gesture: The Khatak And The Negotiating Of Its Meaning On The Anglo-Tibetan Borderlands

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Gift, Greeting, or Gesture: The Khatak and the Negotiating of Its Meaning on the Anglo-Tibetan Borderlands

Emma Martin

The uncertainties of the British Empire came to the fore during cultural encounters. When material things became a momentary focus (especially those entangled in much larger diplomatic events), how to negotiate them very often resulted in a series of question marks in the Foreign Department files. These micro-narratives of empire, especially those played out in the Himalayan borderlands of British India reveal a less than omnipotent imperial project.

Following the flight into exile of the thirteenth Dalai Lama in February 1910, this paper will trace out one tangible way in which the British renegotiated their 300 years of accumulated diplomatic 'grammar.' Using the arrival at state level of the *khatak* (*kha btags*): a specifically Himalayan piece of material culture, we will witness the recoding of diplomatic protocols made for ceremonials in the plains of India.

Colonial archives make it possible to gain some insight into how the British and their Persian-derived diplomatic nomenclature attempted to make sense and interpret these new material encounters and exchanges taking place on the edge of imperial influence and understanding. As an exchange does of course require both a giver and a receiver this paper will also weave in *khatak*-related Tibetan sources, which make it clear that this scarf already had multiple meanings tied to it and that the Tibetans renegotiated their own diplomatic "grammar" while exiled from their power base in Lhasa.

Keywords: gift exchange, British India, Tibet, diplomatic encounters, objects.

Introduction

On 22 February 1910, the Viceroy of India, Earl Minto (served, 1905-1910) was watching events unfold in the eastern Himalayan borderlands of British India with a great deal of anxiety. According to Minto, what was



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Figure 1. Elliot, Gilbert John Murray-Kynynmound, Viscount Melgund and 4th Earl of Minto. Photographed as Governor-General of Canada, 1886-1904. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, MIKAN no. 3426987.

happening there would have “not only on Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, but also on Indian opinion...a profound effect.” He went on to say of this unprecedented event that, “it is also necessary that we should show our border states that we are not afraid of China.”¹ This closely followed international incident was the flight into exile of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, Tupten Gyatso (thub stan rgya mtsho) (1868-1933). He had arrived in Gnatong, Sikkim just the day before having fled Lhasa as 2,000 Chinese troops advanced on Tibet’s capital, led by the soon-to-be new Chinese *amban* (resident), Zhong Ying.² As his escape routes had narrowed down, he and his entourage were left with little choice but to head for the safety of British India and a government whose diplomatic advances he had until then resolutely ignored.³

The Viceroy’s orders that, “it is of first importance to show him [the Dalai Lama] high consideration. He is regarded with veneration and awe in India,”⁴ showed he was well aware that how the British treated the lama would be care-

fully assessed. Indeed, the colonial anxieties of the Viceroy make this seemingly Anglo-Tibetan encounter specifically Himalayan. Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal—the Himalayan states that had familial, religious, commercial, and political ties with Lhasa and who were now of course also deeply entangled in British India’s colonial rule—would be watching.⁵ How the British chose to make this ‘high consideration’ visible had regional ramifications, which if judged incorrectly could weaken only recently agreed Anglo-Himalayan treaties.⁶ If the British did not gauge their treatment of the Dalai Lama and his status correctly, then those Himalayan states newly drawn into British India diplomatic ‘protection’ and alliances may well have turned their attention to China instead.⁷ This paper will then take us to a diplomatic landscape that the British were trying to stop from unraveling at its Himalayan edges.

This was an encounter that took place in multiple borderlands, most obviously diplomatic and geographical ones. Yet, just as palpable are the intellectual and cultural borderlands: the outer limits of imperial knowledge and understanding that separated Himalayan colonial encounters from those enacted on the Indian plains. For both the Tibetans and the British, knowledge about places beyond borders was nebulous and fragmentary. As a result, even



Figure 2. Tupten Gyatso, the thirteenth Dalai Lama photographed at Hastings House, Calcutta on 16 March 1910. Photographer: Johnston & Hoffman. Courtesy of National Museums Liverpool, 1967.183.2.

the smallest gesture offers us the opportunity to witness the process of statemaking. As a consequence it is possible to trace the strata of colonial knowledge, including how opinions and attitudes differed between those stationed in the Himalaya and those stationed at Foreign Department desks in British India's imperial cities. Through the discussions and often conflicting opinions of colonial officers – individuals who inhabited very different colonial worlds – we see the minutiae of statemaking. Clear tensions emerge within government memos in establishing just how high this consideration for the Dalai Lama would actually be. Would he be understood as the head of a Himalayan state, a religious figurehead or something else? While those officers who operated in Himalayan networks pressed for the highest diplomatic honors their persuasive arguments came under considerable pressure from other officers who understood very little about the politics of state in the Himalaya.

The question of greatest concern in this article is not simply tied to the uncertainties of state making, but more pointedly to how this 'high consideration' materialized. Anglo-Himalayan diplomacy has increasingly become a topic of conversation for scholars interested in the modern geo-politics of Tibet and its neighbors.⁸ Yet, much less has been said about a crucial component of these diplomatic meetings: the objects that punctuated these events and especially those exchanged between heads of state and recognized rulers (see Martin 2014 and 2015 as exceptions to this scholarly trend). While the gifts that accompanied these diplomatic meetings are occasionally and cursorily mentioned in political narratives, they have much to tell us about how each party imagined and positioned the other in relation to their own imagined status.

Such objects also represent what I call 'material knowledge,' a facet of colonial knowledge that has received little consideration despite the intense focus on imperial forms of knowledge making in recent years.⁹ To give this concept a definition we should think about it as a type of knowledge that could be constructed about others from material things. This is not simply knowledge accrued by looking alone, but from touching, performing, valuing, and displaying material things, which could lead to the seeking out and eventual incorporating of local (in this case Himalayan) connoisseurial scholarship into colonial archives. Material knowledge, like many other forms of knowledge borne of cultural contact, had a 'fuzzy logic' as it, "never follows a preconceived script but is always unpredictable and messy" (Mackenthun and Juterczenka 2009: 10). It was often informed by prior 'culture contact' (Campbell 2003), wherein ways of doing things in one culture is reconfig-

ured and made anew for another in order to control and make safe volatile and unforeseen encounters. While gift-giving was often viewed as a diplomatic nuisance by Secretaries of State and Foreign Department officials, the objects presented on these occasions were critical to the political process. They were regularly mined for information, with knowledge made from and projected onto things as they circulated between parties. As Patricia Berger notes in her nuanced reading of the Qing emperor Qianlong's gift exchanges, gifts, and material things per se were, "multivocal in the messages they sent, presenting a long menu of possible positive [EM: and I would also add negative or anxious] readings" (Berger 2003: 41).

To this end, I argue that by following things – in this case white scarves – and the gestures tied to them, we have the opportunity to read beyond the more obvious political narratives found in the colonial archive. By focusing on the choices made following the arrival at state level of a particularly Tibetan piece of material culture, the *khatak* (*khatabags*) or white ceremonial scarf, it is possible to conceive of a more balanced understanding of the shifting power dynamics at play, especially when the sites of encounter move between British India and Tibet. By highlighting the gestures, terminology, and hierarchies stitched into the *khatak* by the British India government and the Dalai Lama, we see that both parties played with its meaning. Paraphrasing Lorraine Daston, the *khatak* could indeed 'talk' (Daston 2004), but both the British and the Tibetans had on occasion selective listening, which becomes apparent as we attune ourselves to the registers they chose to hear and those they chose to brush under the ceremonial carpet. As the title of this article suggests, I read these encounters against the political grain, instead watching over the first meetings between the Viceroy of India and his Tibetan counterpart, the Dalai Lama, using a sharply focused material lens. What will become clear is that these diplomatic encounters and their negotiating—played out more than a century ago—are still strikingly pertinent today. The "grammar" (Michael 2003: 83) hurriedly constructed for this unforeseen event would in fact establish a set of ground rules for future global powers and their interactions with Tibet that are still evident today.

The *Khatak* and its Transcultural Meanings

As the British watched nervously from their administrative positions the first *khatak* in this burgeoning Anglo-Tibetan relationship arrived three weeks before the Dalai Lama, on 3 February, 1910 in Calcutta. This *khatak* was accompanied by an urgent verbal message sent by the Dalai Lama to Viceroy Minto, regarding the escalating situation in Lhasa.

Yet, the *khatak*, meant to be read as an authenticator of the message with which it traveled, was seemingly unintelligible to Spencer Harcourt Butler (1869-1938), the Foreign Department Secretary of State for British India, who was thoroughly bemused by this scarf. Having received the *khatak* from the Dalai Lama's messengers he wrote in dispatches, "I asked if they had any letter from the Dalai Lama to the Viceroy. They said they had not, that the scarf was sufficient according to their custom."¹⁰ This was clearly outside the cultural comfort zone of a Secretary of State who oversaw a department whose note-taking was later described as an "intellectual tours de force" (Dewey 1993: 6). With a hint of desperation Butler asked, "Please look up papers and see what was done in previous communications between the Dalai Lama or Tashi [Panchen] Lama and Viceroy. [sic] and note anything that we have about Tibetan etiquette."¹¹

Butler seems to have had a rather severe case of imperial amnesia when it came to the *khatak*, for it had already played a significant part in making material contact between the British in India and Tibet. Its origins can in fact be traced out to The East India Company's first contact with Tibet in 1774. This was the year that Warren Hastings (1732-1818), then Governor-General of Bengal received a letter and gifts from the sixth Panchen Lama, Lozang Pelden Yéshé (*blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes*) (1738-80) asking for assistance with the Bhutan-Cooch Behar conflict. When Puhrangir and Paima, two Himalayan *gosain*¹² (a mendicant Hindu) and agents of the Panchen Lama, delivered the

request for assistance in Calcutta Hastings made sure not to simply take note of what was written in the lama's letter, but to also make a close reading of the gifts. As Bishop shows, they did indeed speak to him:

Gilded Russian leather stamped with the Czar's double-headed eagle, and Chinese silk, which suggested external commerce; small ingots of gold and silver, purses of gold dust, and bags of musk, which seemed evidence of internal wealth; and Tibetan wool cloth, which together with the well-made chests in which the gifts had come, indicated a knowledge of arts and industries (Bishop 1989: 29)

In his seminal work *The Myth of Shangri-La*, Bishop understood the latent potential in things and that they contributed to complex processes of knowledge gathering, which in this case showed itself in pre-colonial Anglo-Himalayan relations. As Hastings ran his fingers over the luxury commodities in the traveling chests, Bishop concluded that the gifts "activated ancient rumors and vague fragments of knowledge that had been steadily accumulating over the centuries" (Bishop Ibid). These objects of desire not only alerted Hastings to potentially lucrative trans-Himalayan trading relations, but they also indicated to him that the Panchen Lama was a potential regional leader who could make his commercial ambitions in the Himalaya a reality. George Bogle (1746-81), the twenty-seven-year-old private secretary to Hastings was chosen as the Governor's ambassador. He visited Bhutan before making his way to Tashi



Figure 3. 'The Teshu Lama (d 1780) Giving Audience', attributed to Tilly Kettle, c.1775. Likely commissioned by Warren Hastings and gifted to King George III. RCIN 407227. Courtesy of Royal Collections © HM Queen Elizabeth II 2014.

Lhunpo monastery near Shigatse to meet the Panchen Lama. This mission was later immortalized in a fabulous, if somewhat flawed painting now in The Royal Collection, seemingly commissioned by Hastings from one of the artists he favored in India, Tilly Kettle (1735-86). The moment chosen to represent this new relationship was Bogle and the Panchen Lama's first moment of material contact—the exchange of the *khatak*.

Before glancing over the meanings worked into this painting we should first briefly pause on the *khatak* itself. There are a number of contemporary Tibetan writings on the *khatak* that provide a cultural framework for understanding this piece of Tibetan material.¹³ Two publications in particular discuss the *khatak* in its historical and contemporary context and make reference to the loss of the nuanced meanings that were once ascribed to it, particularly in pre-1959 Ü or central Tibet (*dbus*). The first, a eulogy to the *khatak* was originally published in 1989 and again as a letter sent to the author in 2013 from Rakra Rinpoche (*rag ra rin po che*) (1925-2012), the Tibetan scholar, artist, and poet who had studied with Gendün Chöpel (*dge 'dan chos 'phel*). He not only praised the scarf's many qualities, but he also lamented its now ubiquitous and uncritical use in the late twentieth century (*rdo rje dbang phyug* 2013: 339-41). The second, a 1997 publication from the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives on the customs and rituals relating to the *khatak* was compiled by Lobsang Dönden for the Library's oral history series based on interviews with Tibetans who had served as lay officials in pre-1959 Tibet (Blo bzang don ldan 1997).¹⁴

In simple terms the *khatak* is a white scarf. Its use, believed to originate in Mongolia, now stretches across many Himalayan communities who have strong ties with Tibet and its culture. These cultural synergies make the scarf a common sight not only in Tibet, but also in Ladakh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh and at Buddhist sites in plains India. Lobsang Dönden, in his preliminary description, notes that the *khatak* “forms an indispensable practice that binds two sides into a cordial relationship in all important secular and religious events, festivals, and ceremonies” (Blo bzang don ldan 1997: 11).¹⁵ This is an idea we will return to. Furthermore, the *khatak* can also be found in a diverse range of offering contexts, from being given to lamas and guests on arrival and departure, to serving as letter wraps or, as we have already seen, as message authenticators. The *khatak* is also offered at significant religious and pilgrimage sites, at river confluences, the summit of high passes, and even as a catapult, used to throw gifts of money to performers. Rakra Rinpoche also alerts us to the potential Tibetan material hierarchies of the *khatak* and the fact that the fabric, weave, and length of the *khatak* constituted a complex matrix of material knowledge. “As regarding the types of *Khatak*, there are three: *nangzö* (*nang mdzod*), *ashi* (*a she*), possibly a Mongolian term, and *zubshi* (*zub shi*). *Nangzö* were reserved for important occasions, appointment of Kalons, and enthronement of high Lamas; *ashi* was used in common festivities, and *zubshi* is given to those of the lower class” (*rdo rje dbang phyug* 2013: 341).¹⁶ Starting in reverse order, the *zubshi*, is an open weave, mesh-like scarf used for less important occasions and ordinary events, but

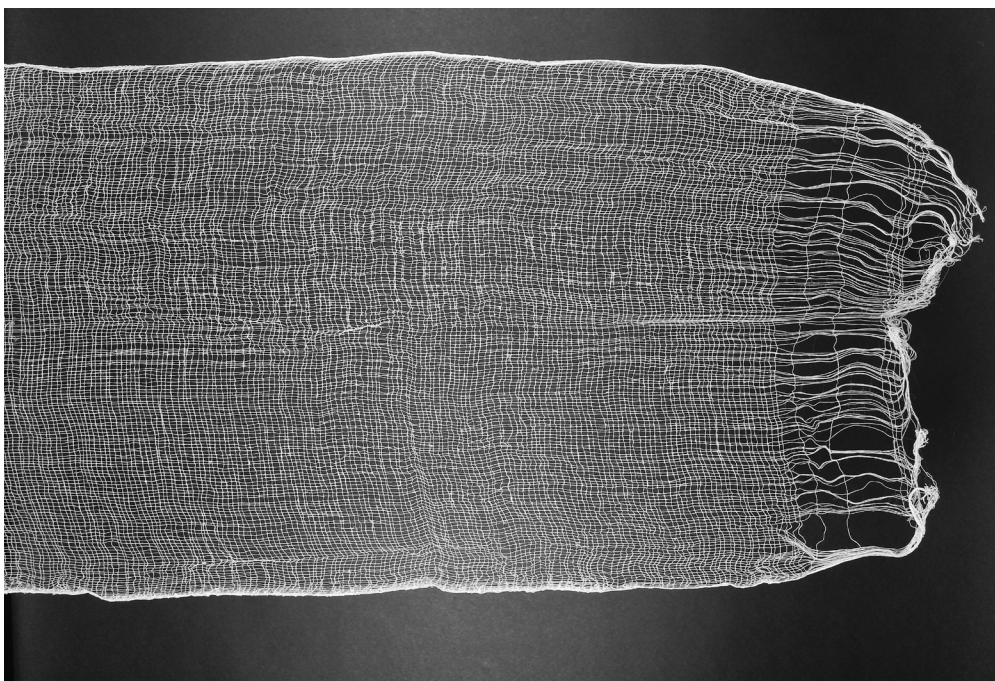


Figure 4. *zub-shi khatak* – a simple open weave *khatak* that is extremely rare today.

(Emma Martin, 2015)



Figure 5. *a-shi khatak* – a silk *khatak* with a single layer of tassels.

(Emma Martin, 2015)



Figure 6. *nang-dzö khatak* – a long wide silk *khatak* with a double layer of tassels.

(Emma Martin, 2015)

also when working people give offerings representing the three-fold mandala of body, speech, and mind. The silk *ashi* is used on important occasions, its defining feature being a single layer of tassels. This is the scarf most commonly used today. Finally, the premium scarf, the *nangdzö*, is woven in a similar way to the *ashi*, but is often much longer in length and with a woven piece within the tassels to create two ‘layers’ (Blo bzang don ldan 1997). While this was a scarf specifically used during festivals, the *nangdzö* would also become enmeshed in the diplomatic relations between Tibet and British India.

If we take a closer look at Kettle’s painting with these *khatak* meanings in mind, the material hierarchy of this gesture is missing – we cannot see the single or double layer of tassels here. But there were other *British* markers of hierarchy on show. We see Bogle—dressed in a Bhutanese robe that is then draped with a status enhancing Roman toga-like cloth—standing at the far left of the painting, while a man dressed in Tibetan-esque clothing steps forward to offer the *khatak*. The Panchen Lama, wearing a fur-lined riding hat, sits reaching out with just one hand to take the offered scarf. The actions, the etiquette, and the

materiality of the scene is “muddled” (Teltscher 2006: 176). The painting seems to be an amalgam of several meetings between the two men that only in part matches the account of their first meeting on 8 November 1774.

The Lama was upon his throne, formed of wood, carved and gilt, with some cushions above it, upon which he sat cross-legged...I laid the Governor’s presents before him, delivering the letter and pearl necklace into his own hands, together with a white Pelong handkerchief on my own part, according to the custom of the country...The Lama...threw white Pelong handkerchiefs over our necks at retiring. (Bogle in Markham 1876: 83)

This ‘muddling’ is something that Kate Teltscher in her evocative account of Bogle’s expedition to Tibet presumes is a result of the reconstruction of this scene in the artist’s studio, seemingly staged by Bogle himself after his return to Calcutta. She wonders if Bogle had reimagined this moment as, “perhaps the stooping posture of presentation was considered inappropriate for Bogle...The upright Bogle retains his dignity” (Teltscher 2006: Ibid). Yet, there is also the possibility of reading this gesture as one that despite the perceived correcting of prestige by Kettle and Bogle, still manages to muddle what it means to offer and receive a *khatak*.

In her own reading of this painting, Teltscher makes us acutely aware of the significance of the performative act; the gestures and specific events that the *khatak* was incorporated into. In this painting we are guided by its British agents (its sitter, painter, and patron) to read a series of hierarchical encodings that seemingly enhance British prestige and power, but this is all rather lop-sided. If we look again, factoring in Tibetan understandings of the theatricalities at play whilst using the *khatak*-related writings of Rakra Rinpoche and the compilations made by Lobsang Dönden as reference points, it is possible to sketch in unintended (from Bogle’s perspective) Tibetan layers of meaning.

Rakra Rinpoche was acutely aware that both temporal and cultural distances had led to a repurposing of the *khatak* in the late 20th and early 21st century. He lamented the fact that the Tibet-specific hierarchical gestures of offering the *khatak* had become highly volatile as the *khatak* and its meanings and gestures became mobile as it moved into exile. As a result the practice of placing the scarf around the receiver’s neck had become common practice. “These days it has however become fashion to tie Khataks around people’s neck and hence we see brides and grooms almost asphyxiated by the loads of Khataks that weigh around their neck, which is ridiculous” (rdo rje dbang phyug 2013:

Ibid).¹⁷ The fluctuating meaning of the scarf when performed in different geographical contexts, was something that the British officers stationed in the Himalaya also recognized. Charles Bell (1870-1945), the Political Officer in Sikkim, who we will meet again shortly, would make a point of noting the cultural subtleties between the Indian and Tibetan practice of garlanding in his second volume on Tibetan culture, *The People of Tibet* published in 1928.

Among the peoples of India it is an exceptional honour to receive a garland round the neck, but the same rule does not apply to the ka-ta of Tibet. And thus the foreigner from India has sometimes been misled, not understanding that, when a ka-ta was placed round his neck, he was being marked with a status of inferiority (Bell 1928: 250).

Rakra Rinpoche having emphasized this smoothing out of Tibetan customs in exile then looked to replace its contours using his own knowledge of *khatak* practice in pre-1959 Tibet.

The etiquette for offering requires a person to present Khataks in the hands of parents and Lamas if they’re standing or to place them on the table if they are seated. Younger siblings placed Khataks in the hands of the older siblings, and parents did the same to their sons. As a sign of respect, friends exchanged Khataks by handing them instead of tying them around each other’s neck (rdo rje dbang phyug 2013: Ibid).¹⁸

We see this practice quite clearly in Bogle’s written account of his first meeting with the Panchen Lama. Bogle, in receiving the *khatak* around his neck, is undoubtedly the subordinate during their meeting. However, if we return to Kettle’s painting—the visual and public colonial record of this meeting—we see that the performance has changed. Here, an intermediary offers the *khatak*, yet still this British correction is by no means perfect. If we turn to the compendium provided by Lobsang Dönden that again references pre-1959 practice and especially if we scan the Lhasa New Year ceremonies for officials, these oral testimonies offer a strict ordering of *khatak* presentation. It is clear that civil officials and foreign diplomats neither placed their *khatak* on the Dalai Lama’s table nor into his casually offered hands. This moment of material contact was, as in Kettle’s painting, completed by an intermediary, as no civil official had the privilege or the right to approach him directly with a *khatak*.

Clearly, Tilly Kettle’s painting is an imperfect act of remembrance and artistic translation. But nevertheless, as Natasha Eaton (2013) notes, the representation of

cross-cultural encounters was a popular and powerful device in the emerging empires of the eighteenth century, marking those represented—in this case Bogle, but by extension Hastings – as agents in the embryonic act of empire building. The *khatak*, in this British context, already signaled the beginning of a ruler-to-ruler relationship. In the depiction of its offering, it visualized those whom the British had chosen to be their would-be Himalayan counterparts. Despite the temporal distance between Lob-sang Dönden and Rakra Rinpoche’s understanding of the *khatak* and this painting, in retrospect it is possible to think through this scene with Tibetan *khatak* etiquette in mind. We do not necessarily see a dignified, aloof ambassador of a soon to be imperial power, but instead see a portrayal of another powerful ruler: the Panchen Lama. Despite positioning Bogle at the edges of this painting, Kettle still shows the British to be subordinate in this moment of contact. In her reading of this painting and the likely processes of its creation Teltscher concludes that, “the painting commemorates a moment of cultural accommodation” (Teltscher 2006: 176). Yet as we leave this painting behind and return to 1910, it is obvious that rather than benignly smoothing over tensions during cultural encounters, material things were just as likely to make cultural fault lines acutely visible.

Making Hierarchies: Gun Shots and Silk Scarves

Kettle’s conversation piece, painted some 135 years before the event we are concerned with here, aimed to suggest that the British knew and could thereby control such diplomatic meetings and their associated material culture. Nevertheless, if we return to the reception given to the *khatak* by the bemused Butler in February 1910, we see it was actually causing a great deal of concern. After Butler’s cries to “note anything that we have about Tibetan etiquette,” reverberated down the corridors of the Foreign Department, Butler then composed himself, deciding that this ethereal message wrapped in a scarf gave the British India government a little breathing space. The Tibetan officials may have delivered a *khatak* from the Dalai Lama, but the British refused to recognize it as an official channel of communication, leaving this diplomatic agent and its two intermediaries without an audience with the Viceroy. Butler further cemented his intentions by adding that, “we should not enter into any written communication with the Dalai Lama about the relations between the Tibetans and Chinese until he first addresses us in writing.”¹⁹ However, these deferring tactics would no longer work once the Dalai Lama arrived in British India. On 24 February, the day the Dalai Lama reached Pedong in Sikkim, Butler reminded the Foreign Department staff in a somewhat prophetically

worded statement that, “we are face to face now with a real North-Eastern Frontier question and the moment has come to formulate a policy. His Majesty’s Secretary of State will probably move now that the matter is hot. If we cannot settle things now we are not likely to be able to settle them hereafter.”²⁰

While the British tracked the Dalai Lama’s escape from Lhasa, the Foreign Department had already begun to make preparations for his arrival. The officials must have been circumspect, as just a few short years before the British Indian government had targeted the ninth Panchen Lama, Tupten Chökyi Nyima (thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma) (1883–1937) as a potential leader in Tibet, someone they could conduct trade and diplomatic relations with.²¹ With this new arrival and the potential for new diplomatic encounters, the Dalai Lama and his reception had to be carefully arranged. There was though a clear difference of opinion between colonial officers as to how this moment should be articulated. On 22 February, the day after the Dalai Lama set foot on British Indian soil, Butler sent word to, “instruct the local authorities to show His Holiness every personal courtesy” but tellingly, “the visit should be regarded as private.”²² This labeling gave an early indication of how British India would establish a road map for the types of actions and gestures that were to follow. It is at this stage that we begin to see how the British manufactured their contact with the Dalai Lama and how the process of showing British civility, whilst keeping him politically at arm’s length manifested itself. Despite the categorizing of the Dalai Lama’s visit as private, there were clearly many official features here, which could have been easily misread by the Tibetan delegation, especially since they would have no knowledge of this British classification. The most obvious example was that the Dalai Lama and his eighty-strong entourage were to be hosted at Hastings House in Calcutta.

Hastings House, a grand residence of the British Indian government, was used by the Viceroy to entertain foreign heads of states and India’s Princely State rulers. In the days prior to the Dalai Lama’s arrival preparations were made and discussions were had relating to the etiquette that would imbue this so-called private visit. Along with the purchase of saffron bed linen for the Dalai Lama’s quarters,²³ questions were raised over the tangible and intangible markers of state business that despite its ‘private’ labeling would welcome the lama to Calcutta.

In order to put the discussions regarding the *khatak* into some kind of wider ceremonial context, it is useful at this juncture to take note of the most audible of these ceremonial markers—a military gun salute.²⁴ The British India gun salute was a highly structured instrument



Figure 7. The Tibetan exiles in Hastings House, Calcutta, March 1910. Photographer: Th.Parr / Burlington Smith. Courtesy of Private Collection.



Figure 8. Postcard of Hastings House. Early 20th century. Photographer: Johnston & Hoffman. Collection of Emma Martin.

of hierarchy, which, along with titles and decorations, articulated a ranking, imposed by the British, on the Indian Princely State rulers and foreign dignitaries (see Cannadine 2001). The gun salute made audible just how significant the British considered any given ruler to be, with salutes ranging from the lowest at eleven to the highest at twenty-one. The question for the British was, just how many gun salutes should the Dalai Lama receive?

The files that Butler had called for, but which offered very little in the way of determining what he should do with the recently arrived *khatak* did give up details of precedent

when it came to the question of gun salutes. The Panchen Lama during his visit to the Viceroy in 1906, Butler noted, had received seventeen salutes as he entered Hastings House. Then, the British understood the Panchen Lama's powers as a ruler to equate to those of other 'third tier' Princely State rulers, including Bikaner, Cochin (now Kochi, Kerala), and Jaipur (Coen 1971: 262). While the Panchen Lama's status was deemed lower than powerful states such as Baroda, Gwalior, and Jammu-Kashmir, his place in the hierarchy of Himalayan heads of state was unrivalled. Bhutan and Sikkim would be his nearest chal-

lengers when awarded fifteen salutes respectively in 1911 at the Delhi Durbar (Martin 2012: 10), while Cooch-Bihar would be invested with a more modest thirteen salutes. However, for a new group of Himalayan officers who had not been directly connected with the promotion of the Panchen Lama as the British India government's preferred Tibetan figurehead, this was not going to be enough for the arrival of the Dalai Lama.

Charles Bell, the Political Officer for Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet would become well known for the relationship he would cultivate with the Dalai Lama in 1910 along with the many books—including a biography of the Dalai Lama—he would write on Tibetan culture. Bell was himself a cultural intermediary of sorts: a British officer firmly rooted in a colonial ideology, but whose ways of thinking were sliced through with Himalayan and Tibetan ways of conceptualizing the world. Bell would describe himself on his return from Lhasa in 1921 as, “in large measure Tibetanised,” (Bell [1946 1987: 29] and while this statement might be stretching his depth of understanding somewhat, his experiences and knowledge did make Bell Britain's ‘Man on the Spot.’ It is Bell's starting position on the subject of gun salutes for the Dalai Lama that opens up the differences—what I called earlier the strata—visible in colonial knowledge. We see here that colonial worldviews rub up against each other, especially when conversations occurred between desk-bound officers in the metropolises of empire and those based in the borderlands. Butler having noted this Panchen Lama precedent suggested the idea of seventeen-gun-salutes to Bell, but Bell had other ideas. Bell wanted twenty-one-gun salutes—the highest salute—for the Dalai Lama.

Bell couched his counter-argument in terms of the lama's superior status as a religious authority. For Bell, he was someone who was, “worshipped as a deity by 10 or 12 million Buddhists and is venerated by at least a hundred million more.”²⁵ Bell, portrayed the Dalai Lama not simply as a leader of a nation state, a position which might make the Foreign Department more than a little nervous, but as someone who had influence and power that could not be contained by national borders. But Butler's predisposition for maintaining colonial order, which manifested itself in the colonial fuzzy logic known as precedent, was not so easily swayed by Bell's religious rethinking of the Dalai Lama's powerbase. Interestingly, Butler chose to factor in a further, new, but still today enduring perception of the Dalai Lama that would temper any powers that Bell might plead for. “Mr Bell thinks that His Holiness should get 21 guns...The Tashi [Panchen] Lama got 17 guns. As he was our friend and the Dalai Lama was not and is a *refugee* I think 19 guns is enough” (author emphasis).²⁶

Bell's was a decidedly Himalayan view. By 1910 he had spent a decade working in the Himalayan borderlands and was someone who understood religious power to be as, if not more, potent than any possible British India decoration or title could be. However, Butler from his Foreign Department desk was not willing to be swayed entirely by Himalayan sensibilities and instead of viewing the Dalai Lama as someone whose religious authority made him an unequalled power, Butler would read the lama as a refugee, someone who had lost something of his potency the moment he stepped on British Indian soil. Furthermore, while the British with one eye on the Himalayan reading of their treatment of the Dalai Lama wanted to express a heightened sense of civility, the lama had sought asylum here—he had not been invited to India. This unanticipated arrival may have given men like Bell unforeseen opportunities to forge links with a man who had refused to deal with the British prior to his arrival. However, for Butler the lama's appearance would cause the British a constant diplomatic headache and this had to be factored into the honors shown him. This wider perspective meant that Butler would not countenance twenty-one-gun salutes for the Dalai Lama, but there was a meeting in the middle: the lama would receive nineteen.

This bartering for state honors would continue when Butler again turned to Bell, this time on the subject of the *khatak*. On 12 March, two days before the meeting with the Viceroy at Hastings House, Butler realized that he had yet to settle the issue of what to do with the *khatak* and so again Bell was sought out for advice. Bell instructed Butler that, “the Viceroy/Foreign Secretary should rise and present a scarf to the Dalai Lama, who will rise to receive it.”²⁷ If we think back to the misplaced choreography sketched into the *khatak* exchange between Bogle and the Panchen Lama and the pre-1959 Tibetan readings of the scarf as recorded by Rakra Rinpoche and Lobsang Dönden, the gesture suggested by Bell would be read by the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan witnesses as an acceptable exchange. Perhaps due to gaps in colonial knowledge, this approach seemed at first to be agreeable to those in the Foreign Department and the Viceroy's inner circle. However, a demi-official letter of the same day reveals that Butler was about to be swayed by the fuzzy logic of men who had no connection whatsoever to the Himalaya. In their discussions we see the potential for a triple translation and colonial recoding of the *khatak* and it becomes clear that those in Calcutta found it impossible to think in a ‘Tibetanised’ way and instead sought their answers from the courtly Persian terminology of the Princely States of plains India.

Soon after his conversation with Bell, Butler consulted his Under Secretary Arthur Roylance Jelf (1875- d. before 1941), who had in turn been discussing the *khatak* exchange with Alexander Fleetwood Pinhey (1861-1916), the Viceroy's Private Secretary. While Jelf and Pinhey were career colonial administrators who had spent several years respectively in the Punjab and the North-West Frontier, they had little knowledge of the Himalayan world. Yet, the small matter of lived experience would not stop Jelf, using Pinhey's musings, from advising Butler on what should be done with the fast approaching *khatak* exchange.

The full Tibetan custom would be for the Dalai Lama to present a scarf to the Viceroy on arriving at Government House and receiving a scarf from the Viceroy on leaving; and *vice versa* at Hastings House. But in the case of the Tashi [Panchen] Lama the Viceroy gave no scarf. Mr. Bell thinks a scarf should be given at the return visit. It should be given by Foreign Secretary to mark the rank of the Viceroy. They did not make much of the Dalai Lama at Peking and in such matters we should be careful of going too far.²⁸

In the space of just a few hours the Dalai Lama's status—performed using British India *khatak* choreography—had gone from one of high prestige, where material contact would be made between equals, to the complete dismissal of the lama. Jelf was here suggesting that the Viceroy should not engage with the Dalai Lama at all. The Viceroy would not offer a *khatak* during their initial meeting and the equally crucial return visit would not be made by the Viceroy, but by his subordinate, Foreign Secretary Butler. Here, we are privy to the proposed transformation of the *khatak* into a British tool of hierarchical designation, enabling rank and standing to be tacitly communicated to the Tibetans, just in case the significance of the nineteen-gun salute as opposed to the Viceroy's forty-one gun salute was not enough. This common, but nevertheless complex offering was about to be unraveled with new British India meanings woven into it, making a nuanced reading by the Dalai Lama a messy and confusing undertaking. There were clear hierarchical implications in this reworking; if this was not the case then there would be no obvious need to alter the established practice as suggested by Bell. The British in their actions were then hoping to make visible their hesitations over how they would quantify their future relationship with the Lhasa government.

We might consider these British India government affronts to be expected, but what is rather interesting here is that Jelf and Pinhey were not building this ceremonial picture simply by positioning the Dalai Lama *vis à vis* the

Viceroy. This new diplomatic construction had in fact been determined by what they understood the *khatak* to be. It appears that something had simply been lost in translation when both men carried out their colonial classification of the *khatak*. In establishing what the *khatak* was they had relied on a fixed inventory of equivalent Persian terms; a practice commonly applied to ceremonial etiquette and its construction by British Residents based in the Princely States. In doing so they had quantified the *khatak* as a *nazr*, the Persian term for a tribute or gift of money, in short a tangible, financial thing. In Jelf and Pinhey's Persian reading of this encounter it would be impossible for the Viceroy to step forward and present the Dalai Lama with a *nazr*. This would be understood by the British as a subordinate act and one that would surely damage the Viceroy's prestige, especially, as Jelf and Pinhey suggested in their deliberations, in the eyes of China.²⁹ While Jelf and Pinhey did not implicitly refer to a Himalayan presence, they were also well aware that Himalayan states would watch over this event intently; Sidkeong Tulku (1879-1914) was part of the Dalai Lama's extended entourage, attending as the British India approved heir to the Sikkim *gadi* (throne).³⁰ In this context, neither man believed there could possibly be an exchange of *khatak* as proposed.

But Bell was not about to allow imperial ignorance jeopardize any chance he had of building closer diplomatic relations with Tibet. Having seen the hurriedly dispatched memo on this conversation he was quick to step in firing back a note that made it clear that this exchange was, "an act of common courtesy which can hardly be omitted and in no way resembles a *nazar*."³¹ Using his Himalayan perspective he was clearly alarmed that both the Dalai Lama and Sidkeong Tulku would interpret this as an arrogant and dismissive act and therefore he asked for the *khatak* and its colonial classification to be realigned. The Foreign Department as a result would reclassify the offering of the *khatak* with yet another Persian term, this time *mizaaj pursi* (the wishing of health ceremony), and would in subsequent memos and reports refer to the exchange of scarves as such.

This movement of the meaning rather than the gesture itself would allow a compromised *khatak* exchange to take place.³² The British had instantly read the *khatak* as a material thing, hence their assumption that the *khatak* should be classified as a *nazr*. Jelf and Pinhey found it difficult to think of the scarf as a sign of something else: a sentiment, an offering of sincerity, something that acts as a precursor to the exchanges both vocal and material that were to follow. Butler had already grasped these dynamics and used them to his own advantage. They instead had chosen

to read it solely through its material value—as a tangible thing—a gift, loaded with issues of reciprocity. The classifying of the *khatak* as *mizaaj pursi* suited the British: not only did it sidestep any issues of reciprocity, but the term and its associated meanings were not seen to be binding, unlike the giving of a *nazr*, which implied a material binding together of the actors involved. The *mizaaj pursi* was regarded as a simple salutation, a lesser, non-binding offering.³³ The British had from their perspective successfully repurposed the *khatak* to their own advantage.

But, what of the Tibetans? The colonial archive as we might expect does not provide both sides of this exchange story.³⁴ Furthermore, I have been frustrated by the lack of detail recorded in the biography of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, which offers a poor record of his visit to Calcutta.³⁵ Despite this, the inclusion of the wording in the fleeting Tibetan account of a week in Calcutta may suggest that the lama knew or had been instructed by the British as to what his newly conceived status and the offering of the *khatak* would now mean. The biography records that, “he traveled to the place, currently known to the people as Calcutta, where he met and exchanged greetings with Mulula [Minto], the British Regent.”³⁶ It is tempting to grasp on to this speck of Tibetan insight, but it is also rather difficult from this to analyze the complexity of gestures and their meanings with any certainty. Therefore, by returning to the material in the archival record and by following the *khatak* back to Tibet it is clear that the Tibetans had been acutely aware of their exile status and that they had in fact reworked their own nuanced *khatak* culture in order to flatter and gain favor from the British.

The *Khatak* Back in Tibet

The British had grown use to receiving the highest *khatak* honors from the Tibetans, while on British Indian soil. David Macdonald (1870–1962), the Scottish-Sikkim British Trade Agent stationed at Yatung in Dromo (*dro mo*) or Chumbi Valley, received the Dalai Lama as he went on the run from Lhasa in February 1910 (Macdonald (1932) 2005: 65). Macdonald having requested asylum for the lama was allowed to offer him overnight assistance and as the Dalai Lama entered the Trade Agency, Macdonald recalled much later that, “he offered me a very large silk scarf, called *nagdzo*, and shook my hand” (Macdonald (1932) 2005: 65). The additional gesture—the handshake—tells us that the Dalai Lama was already renegotiating the tightly choreographed meanings of the *khatak* and reworking them for these unexpected and fraught encounters with British officers. There is no wonder that Macdonald vividly recalled this material encounter in his memoirs as the giving of a

nangdzö khatak—meant for the highest echelons of Tibetan society—by a religious leader into the hands of a junior lay official would have been unprecedented.³⁷ Desperate times called for desperate measures and the Dalai Lama—unlike the British—was not willing to take the risk that he might offend Macdonald (and by extension the British) by not personally giving a scarf.

This first piece of *khatak* contact would define the Dalai Lama’s ceremonial practices in exile. He would apply this same exaggerated, flattering gesture many times in British India and with many relatively junior officers, amongst others Charles Bell, who of his first meeting with the lama in Darjeeling recalled:

Over my wrist he placed a gorgeous white silk scarf, and I one over his, the best I had been able to procure. For this is the recognized Tibetan form of greeting, and by placing the scarf, as he did, over my wrists, instead of round my neck, the Incarnation of Buddha disclaimed all superiority of rank (Bell 1987 [1946]: 104).³⁸

The Dalai Lama, new to British India and its hierarchies, circumspectly negotiated his own actions and expectations accordingly. He knew, like the British did, that he was now in a vulnerable position and therefore must temper his actions. His gestures and his decisions as to which *khatak* to offer were those of a man who had left his homeland with nothing and now needed the support of an influential empire, and if this involved a certain amount of flattery to those men who could help him garner support, then these were the steps he would take. It would be another ten years before the British would come to the realization that the Dalai Lama had also recoded the *khatak* whilst in unfamiliar territory from 1910 to 1912. Bell, having come out of retirement to head a mission to Lhasa in 1920 to 1921, and as the first European to receive a personal invitation from the Dalai Lama, may have expected that he would be treated to similar *khatak* honors as to those he had received in Darjeeling and Calcutta. However, now firmly established as temporal ruler of central Tibet,³⁹ things were very different when the British came to call on the Dalai Lama.

Bell would witness one of the most spectacular *khatak* related ceremonials in the Tibetan calendar when he was invited to the *Gyelpo Losar* or King’s New Year (*rgyal po losar*) in 1921. The first two days of *losar* (New Year) allowed the lay officials of Lhasa, central Tibet, and the foreign dignitaries residing in Lhasa to receive their audience with the Dalai Lama, with their moment of diplomatic contact punctuated by the offering of a *khatak*. Bell watched out for the hierarchical markers that would denote his status,

recording in his notebook his seating position compared to that of other representatives including those from Nepal, Kashmir, Bhutan, and Ladakh. Bell, in his *losar* notes, also documented that it was the ranking Tibetan officials from high to low who offered their *khatak* to the Dalai Lama first. Only when all the Tibetans had made their presentation were the foreign representatives allowed to make their *khatak* presentation, and unlike in Darjeeling, when the Dalai Lama had offered and received the *khatak* from Bell with his own hands, there would be no such material contact between the two men now that the site had shifted to Lhasa.⁴⁰ Instead, in this context, Bell had been instructed to make a deep bow and present his *khatak* meant for the Dalai Lama into the hands of the *Chikhyap Khenpo* (*spyi khyab mkhan po*)—the highest monk official in the Lhasa government. Bell and by extension the British were no longer the dominant power here and they were in fact not even classed as equals. Like the Dalai Lama had been in 1910, they were beyond the borders of their powerbase and as a religious force in the long-standing familial, commercial, and diplomatic ties that existed between Lhasa, several Himalayan states, and the wider Tibetan Buddhist communities of Asia, the British were of little consequence. Yet, Bell's sense of being 'Tibetanised' meant that he had shown a willingness to work within the parameters of Tibetan *khatak* hierarchies and this apparently did not go unnoticed by the Dalai Lama. After the ceremony, Bell was told by one of his closest Tibetan confidants, Palhase (*pha lha'i sras*) (c.1870-c.1936) that the Dalai Lama had offered a gesture that Bell had not registered; he had held out his upturned palms as he received the *khatak* from the *Chikhyap Khenpo*. An honor, Bell learned, that was only given to one other foreign dignitary—the Chinese *amban*.⁴¹ This from the British perspective must have been something of a dubious honor indeed.

Wrapping Up the Khatak

So ubiquitous is the *khatak* in trans-Himalayan culture it is easy to presume one knows what it means. In these geographical, cultural, and diplomatic borderlands we see that meanings became fuzzy and difficult to translate. In its negotiation, recorded in colonial files, gestures, and the actual materiality of the *khatak* itself, it is possible to see how these meanings were made, and how a scarf was used to make and project both colonial and Tibetan knowledge and prestige.

These were moments of acute anxiety for the British India government, who tethered themselves and found imperial comfort in a framework of precedents, developed for the most part in the plains of India. When the British had to

move away from these heartlands, a shakiness soon appeared in their decision-making processes and it is all too clear that Tibetan things could divide colonial opinion. The response to the *khatak* was anything but unanimous and was instead filled with uncertainties in the metropolises, with culture contact responses immediately challenged by those who understood the workings of Himalayan networks and alliances. There was nothing monolithic about colonial knowledge-making here; multiple forms of knowledge produced in different colonial spaces informed it. In Lhasa, the British had finally seen how they too were understood as a useful, if peripheral government on the edge of Tibet's diplomatic and religious world. In this context, a British official was not, and never had been, of sufficient standing to place a *khatak* into the hands of Tibet's leading lamas when they resided in their seat of power.

Finally, more than a century ago, the British set a precedent that the international community still follows today. Accordingly, the Dalai Lama's visits to state leaders are still judged to be private with his status always open to question and interpretation – and, for the most part, formulated in the light of Chinese sensibilities, actions, or possible reactions. In this meeting in March 1910, we see a diplomatic imagining of Tibet and the Dalai Lama that even today continues both in turn to include and exclude Tibetans from discussions with the world's heads of state and religious figureheads.

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Endnotes

1. National Archives of India, New Delhi (hereafter, NAI) Foreign Department (hereafter FD), Secret External, March 1910. Nos. 385-510. Part A. 'Chinese Power in Tibet'. Telegram from Viceroy, Calcutta to British Government Secretary of State for India, London. 22 February 1910.
2. This is more generally understood as a military advance to reassert Qing authority in Lhasa following the incursion by Younghusband and his forces in 1904. See Ho (2008: 211).
3. The first of two ill-fated letters were sent by the then Viceroy, Lord Curzon (served, 1899-1905) to the Dalai Lama in 1899 in the hope that this would lead to new commercial and diplomatic relations with Tibet. Despite the attempted delivery by Kazi Ugyen Dorji (1855-1916), the Darjeeling and later Kalimpong-based Bhutanese government's *vakil* or agent the letter was sent back unopened. The rebuff was acutely felt by Curzon, who had a deeply-held paranoia

regarding Russia and its potential influence in Tibet. In effect, this diplomatic slight led to the Younghusband-led Mission to Lhasa three years later. See Singh (1988: 240).

4. NAI, FD, Secret External, March 1910. Nos. 385-510. Part A. 22 February 1910.
5. Dispatches would be sent to the Political Officer in Sikkim and to the Resident in Nepal, to ensure messages were conveyed to the Sikkim *Chögyal* and the Nepali Prime Minister respectively that British India would remain neutral in its dealings with Tibet and would not contravene the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention.
6. When the Dalai Lama arrived in Gnatong, Charles Bell, the Political Officer for Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet was still in Bhutan following the signing of the Punakha Treaty by Bell and Ugyen Wangchuk on the 8 January 1910. This signaled British India's recognition and assurance of Bhutanese independence, while in turn taking control of Bhutan's foreign affairs. The rushed and covert nature of this treaty signing mission came in response to intelligence that China had a delegation stationed on Bhutan's borders. Its purpose was thought to be the opening of diplomatic discussions with Ugyen Wangchuk. See India Office Records (hereafter, IOR)/L/PS/10/221, Pt 2 - file 505/1912. Pt 2 Sikkim and Bhutan: political control 1907-1912 and also Bell (1987 [1946]: 92) and Singh (1988: 352).
7. The British were aware of potential defections to China. On the 28 March 1909, Charles Bell recorded in his notebook that, "Kumar [EM: Sikkim's Sidkeong Tulku] says M'raja and M'rani [EM: Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dölma] would prefer to be under Chinese even now, Achuk Tsering [EM: Bell's Sikkim and Bhutan advisor] agrees with this statement." Private Collection, 'Sikkim and General Notebook'.
8. Most recently see for example Kobayashi (2013).
9. To give a comprehensive list would make this an endnote of considerable length, most pertinent to the thinking of this article are Bayly (1993), Cohn (1996), Edney (1997), Waller (2004), Stoler (2009), Mueggler (2011), Harris (2012) and Mantena (2012).
10. NAI, FD, Secret External, March 1910. Nos. 385-510 Part A.
11. Ibid.
12. A *gosain* in this context was a Hindu trading pilgrim. Puhrangir was essentially an agent or *vakil* to the Panchen Lama and subsequently also for the East India Company.
13. Please see the accompanying bibliography for a full list of *khatak* sources.

14. These discussions on the *khatak* give the reader a sense of the pre-1959 use of the scarf in diplomatic and ceremonial contexts. I would have liked to have made use of a treatise on the ceremonial use of the *khatak* during the time of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, but during the research period none came to light. I do feel that there is scope for more detailed work on the *khatak* and its discussion in Tibetan texts, coupled with an ethnographic study on the *khatak* in contemporary ceremonial and diplomatic use, but I will leave this for a future researcher.

15. chos srid gnyis kyi rten 'brel mdzad sgo'am/ dga' spro'i dus dran yod do cog la phan tshun 'tshams 'dri byed pa sogs kyi skabs so sor 'bul skyes dngos spom che chung la ma ltos par phan tshun mdza' brtse'i 'brel ba'i sne 'dogs pa'i tshul du kha btags sam/ dar dkar zhig med na mi rung ba'i dam rdzas khyad par can zhig chags bsdad yod pa 'di ni gna' snga mo nyid nas dar ba zhig yin/

16. kha btags kyi rim pa ni/ nang mdzod/ a she sog skad 'dra/ zub she rim pa gsum/ nang mdzod ni/ snga mo mdzad sgo gal chen la yar 'bul ba dang / bka' blon gsar pa/ bla chen khri ston sogs la byed spyod byed pa/ a she de mang che bas bed spyod byed/ zub she g.yogs sa de dma' rim la yin/

17. deng sang/ kha btags g.yogs dus ske la g.yog nas mna' ma mag pa kha btags kyi 'og tu dbugs bsub ma thebs tsam byed pa de dgod re bro/

18. kha btags 'phul stangs la/ yar langs yod na/ pha ma dang bla ma'i phyag la 'bul/ de min gsol lcog gi steng du phul/ spun chung bas che ba'i lag tu phul/ pha mas bu la de bzhin byed/ grogs po phan tshun lag steng du sprod pa ma gtogs rke la mi g.yog pa gus zhabs yin/

19. NAI, FD, Secret External, March 1910. Nos. 385-510 Part A.

20. NAI, FD, Secret External, March 1910. Nos. 385-510 Part A. Butler, 24 February 1910. Butler's short report to the Viceroy is divided into separate Himalayan areas (i.e. Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal and Assam Frontier) each focusing on the impact the Dalai Lama's arrival will have on Britain's relation with said area.

21. The Panchen Lama had been courted by the British as a potential ruler of an independent Tsang or southern Tibet (*gtsang*). The British believed they could secure diplomatic and trading relations with the lama, someone who they saw as an alternative figurehead to the Dalai Lama. The British needed an alternative as the Dalai Lama had fled Lhasa rather than meet Younghusband in 1904.

22. NAI, FD, Secret Internal, May 1910. Nos. 26-31. Visit to Calcutta of His Holiness The Dalai Lama in March 1910. Ceremonies Observed on the Occasion. Butler to Duke (Chief Secretary to the Governor of Bengal). 22 February 1910.

23. In particular, the Darjeeling Police Inspector Sonam Wangfel Laden La (1876-1936) would be responsible not only for the saffron colored bed linen and flowers, but he would also guide British officers in the nuances of diplomatic gift giving. See Martin (2014 and 2015).

24. Edward Henry Scamander Clarke (1856-1947), a senior Foreign Department official would say of the offering of a salute, "I do not think a salute should be fired. A salute establishes the difference between a private and official visit." NAI, FD, Secret Internal, May 1910. Nos. 1-22. Part B. 26 February 1910.

25. NAI, FD, Secret Internal, May 1910. Nos. 1-22. Part B. Bell, 6 March 1910.

26. NAI, FD, Secret Internal, May 1910. Nos. 26-31. Butler to Viceroy, 9 March 1910

27. NAI, FD, Secret Internal, May 1910. Nos. 26-31. Bell to Jelf, 12 March 1909 [sic].

28. NAI, FD, Secret Internal, May 1910. Nos. 26-31. Jelf & Butler to A. F. Pinhey & V. R. Brooke [Military Secretary to the Viceroy], 12 March 1910.

29. A Sikkim delegation headed by Sidkeong Tulku also came to Calcutta and stayed at Hastings House as part of the Dalai Lama's wider delegation.

30. Sidkeong Tulku was a 'first class' member of the Dalai Lama's party and therefore part of the Dalai Lama's inner circle in Calcutta. NAI, FD, Internal, May 1910. Nos. 23-34. Part B.

31. NAI, FD, Secret Internal, May 1910. Nos. 26-31. Bell to Jelf, 12 March 1909 [sic].

32. After Jelf's intervention the Viceroy would travel to Hasting House, but Butler would make the presentation on the Viceroy's behalf. NAI, FD, Secret Internal, May 1910. Nos. 26-31.

33. Jelf would describe the *khatak* in his briefing notes as, "not a nazar but a visiting card." NAI, FD, Secret Internal, May 1910. Nos. 26-31.

34. Unfortunately, neither do Tibetan texts. The compiler of the thirteenth Dalai Lama's biography, the fourth Purchok, Tupten Jampa Tsültrim Tenzin (*phur lcog thub bstan byams pa tshul khrims bstan 'dzin*) (dates unknown) was not a historian, but a religious scholar and it seems that critical pieces of archival material were not used or collated when he compiled and then published the Dalai Lama's biography some seven years after his death in 1940. Several years or periods have information that seem to be little more than vague memories of events, while for several years the entries simply state that the relevant

documents and diaries could not be located. All of these factors combined with the chaos of exile ensured that scant information is now available for critical moments of Anglo-Tibetan contact that the Dalai Lama was party to.

35. The full record of this visit is as follows: “He traveled to the place, currently known to the people as Calcutta, where he met and exchanged greetings with Mulula (Lord Minto), the British Regent. He visited factories and zoos where animals are kept. He remained for seven days by engaging in activities of great benefits”. (deng sang yul skad la ka le ka tar grags pa der phyag phebs te dbyin ji'i rgyal tshab mu lu la la mtshams zhu dang mjal 'phrad mdzad/ 'phrul bzo dang/ spyang gzigs ri dwags sna tshogs yod pa nams la spyang ras kyi btsa' ba dang/ rang gzhan la phan pa'i don rlabs po che mdzad cing zhag bdun bzhugs/). (phur ldog thub bstan byams pa tshul khribs bstan 'dzin, 2010: 150).

36. deng sang yul skad la ka le ka tar grags pa der phyag phebs te dbyin ji'i rgyal tshab mu lu la la mtshams zhu dang mjal 'phrad mdzad/

37. In many respects David Macdonald's published works are a rewriting of colonial history making. Macdonald, critical to the knowledge produced on Tibet in the north-eastern Himalaya in the early twentieth century, was often written out of this process by the colonial officers he worked with. While he received some recognition for his scholarly knowledge many others did not credit him. See my forthcoming article, Knowing Tibet in the Borderlands: the Knowledge Making Networks of Himalayan Hill Stations. I would suggest that by highlighting the type of *khatak* he received during this exchange he was highlighting the elevated position he perceived the Dalai Lama to hold him in.

38. Bell would instruct Tibetans to refer to him as *Lönchen* or Chief Minister (*blon chen*), the highest civil position in Tibetan lay society. In British India however, the post of Political Officer Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet was classed as a 'second class resident' in the British India hierarchy (Coen, 1971: 248).

39. The Dalai Lama had returned to Tibet in 1912 following the collapse of the Qing empire and the removal of Chinese troops from central Tibet. Back in Lhasa in February 1913, he issued what is regarded as a declaration of independence (Shakabpa 1967: 246).

40. Only the *Kalon Tripa* or Prime Minister (*bka' blon khri pa*) was allowed to offer a *khatak* directly to the Dalai Lama in this context.

41. “It was generally noticed that when I presented my *Khata* [sic] to the Chikyab Kempo for the D.[alai] L.[ama] the latter put his two palms forward towards me,

an honour which he shows to nobody but the Chinese Amban.” Private Collection, Charles Bell, Diary Volume VIII, pp.84-85.

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