

THE CHUSHI GANDRUK

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

INTRODUCTION

Chushi Gangdruk (Tibetan: ལྷ་བཞི་སྐང་དུག་, Wylie: Chu bzhi sgang drug, literally "Four Rivers, Six Ranges", full name: Tibetan: མདོ་སྐོད་ལྷ་བཞི་སྐང་དུག་བོད་ཀྱི་བསྟན་སྲུང་དང་ཐང་ཐང་ལྷན་དམག་, Wylie: mdo stod chu bzhi sgang drug bod kyi bstan srung dang blangs dmag, "**the Kham Four Rivers, Six Ranges Tibetan Defenders of the Faith Volunteer Army**" (2) was an organization of Tibetan guerrilla fighters, formally **created on June 16, 1958**, which had been fighting the forces of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Tibet since 1956.

The Dokham Chushi Gangdruk organization, a charity set up in New York City and India with chapters in other countries, now supports survivors of the Chushi Gangdruk resistance currently living in India.



Badge of the "Tibetan Volunteer Defenders of the Faith".
Inscription in Tibetan is "gangs ljongs bstan srung dang blangs".

Chushi Gangdruk also **led The 14th Dalai Lama out of Lhasa**, where he had lived, soon after the start of the Chinese invasion. During that time, a group of Chushi Gangdruk guerillas was led by **Kunga Samten**, who is now deceased (3). Because the United States was prepared to recognize People's Republic of China in the early 1970s, **CIA Tibetan Program**¹, which funded the Chushi Gangdruk army, was ended in 1974 (4).

¹ The CIA Tibetan program was a nearly two decades long anti-Chinese covert operation focused on Tibet which consisted of "political action, propaganda, paramilitary and intelligence operations" based on U.S. Government arrangements made with brothers of the 14th Dalai Lama, who was not initially aware of them. The goal of the program was "to keep the political concept of an autonomous Tibet alive within Tibet and among several foreign nations".

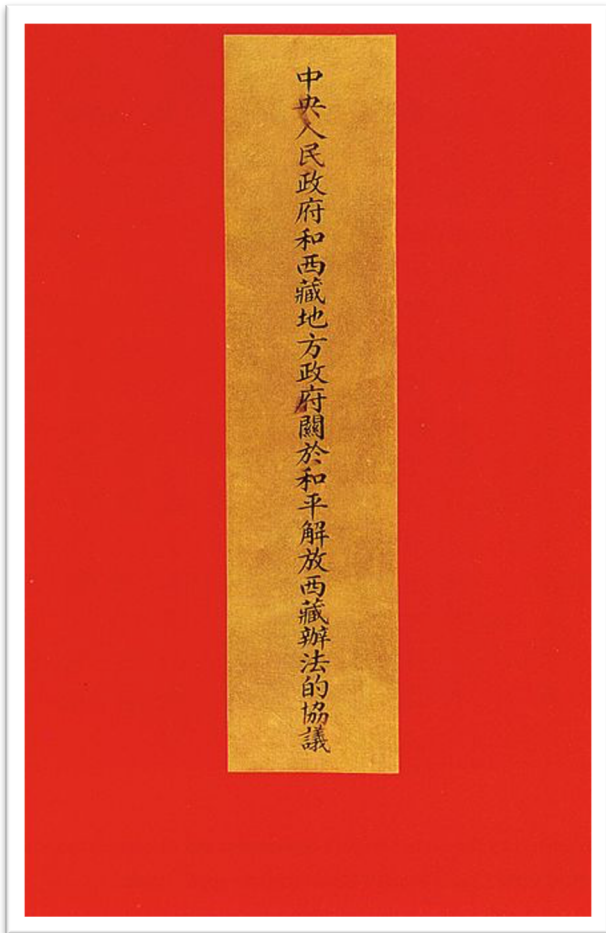


Chushi Gangdruk "**Four Rivers, Six Ranges**" is the name traditionally given to the eastern Tibetan region of Kham² where the gorges of the Gyälmo Nyulchu (Salween), Dzachu (Mekong), Drichu (Yangtse), and Machu (Huang Ho) rivers, all arising on the Tibetan Plateau, pass between six parallel ranges of mountains (Duldza Zalmogang, Tshawagang, Markhamgang, Pobargang, Mardzagang, and Minyagang) that form the watersheds for these rivers. "**CHU**" (choo) is the Tibetan word for "**water**", and "**SHI**" (she) is the Tibetan word for **4**. "**GANG**" is **range**, and "**DRUK**" (drewk) means **6** (4).

The group's full name was the "**Kham Four Rivers, Six Ranges Tibetan Defenders of the Faith Volunteer Army**" (Tibetan: མངོན་སྲོད་ཚུ་བཞི་སྐར་དུག་བོད་ཀྱི་བསྟན་སྲུང་དང་ཐངས་དམག་, Wylie: mdo stod chu bzhi sgang drug bod kyi bstan srung dang blangs dmag).[5]

² Kham (Tibetan: བཅའ་ཁའ་, Wylie: kham) is a region of Tibet. Today it is largely divided between the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and Sichuan, with smaller portions located within Gansu and northern Yunnan provinces. During the Republic of China's rule over mainland China, most of the region was administratively part of Tibetan central government but had some autonomy from the Central Tibetan Government. Its provincial status was nominal and without much interference by central Tibetan government.

On 19 October **1950**, the monastery where **Ngabo Shapé** was hiding was surrounded by the Chinese troops accompanied by a few Khampa guides, and here Ngabo Shapé and his officials and troops surrendered to the invading Chinese (6). The Tibetan Government army in **Chamdo**³ was defeated, and the Communist Chinese army took over the city of Chamdo. In Drugu monastery, Ngabo Shapé signed the official surrender.



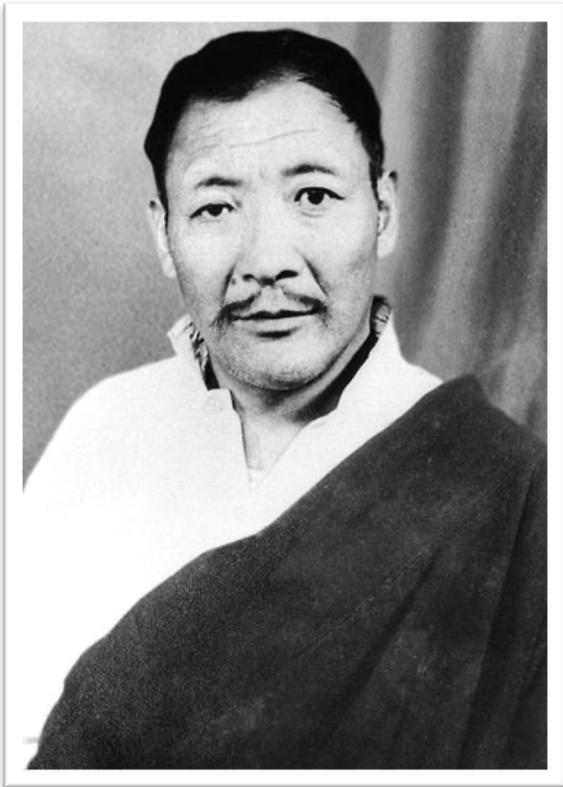
During the negotiation of the **Seventeen-Point Agreement**,⁴ when the negotiation broke down after Ngabo Shapé resisted to sign the agreement, **Li Weihai** threatened to order the Chinese troops to march into Lhasa. They decided it was more perilous to Tibet not to reach an agreement, therefore, they accepted the Chinese terms without asking Lhasa (7). The Chinese were further furious when they were told that the Dalai Lama's seal was still in Yatung with him (8). The Chinese made new seal for Ngabo Shapé to stamp the document when he exclaimed that he did not have his official seal to stamp the document, though he had with him the official seal as the Governor General of Kham (9). Therefore, on 23 May **1951**, Ngabo Shapé was forced to sign under duress the **"Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation**

of Tibet" commonly known as the **"Seventeen-Point Agreement"** (10).

³ Chamdo is a prefecture-level city in the eastern part of the Tibet Autonomous Region, China. Its seat is the town of Chengguan in Karuo District. Chamdo is Tibet's third largest city after Lhasa and Shigatse.

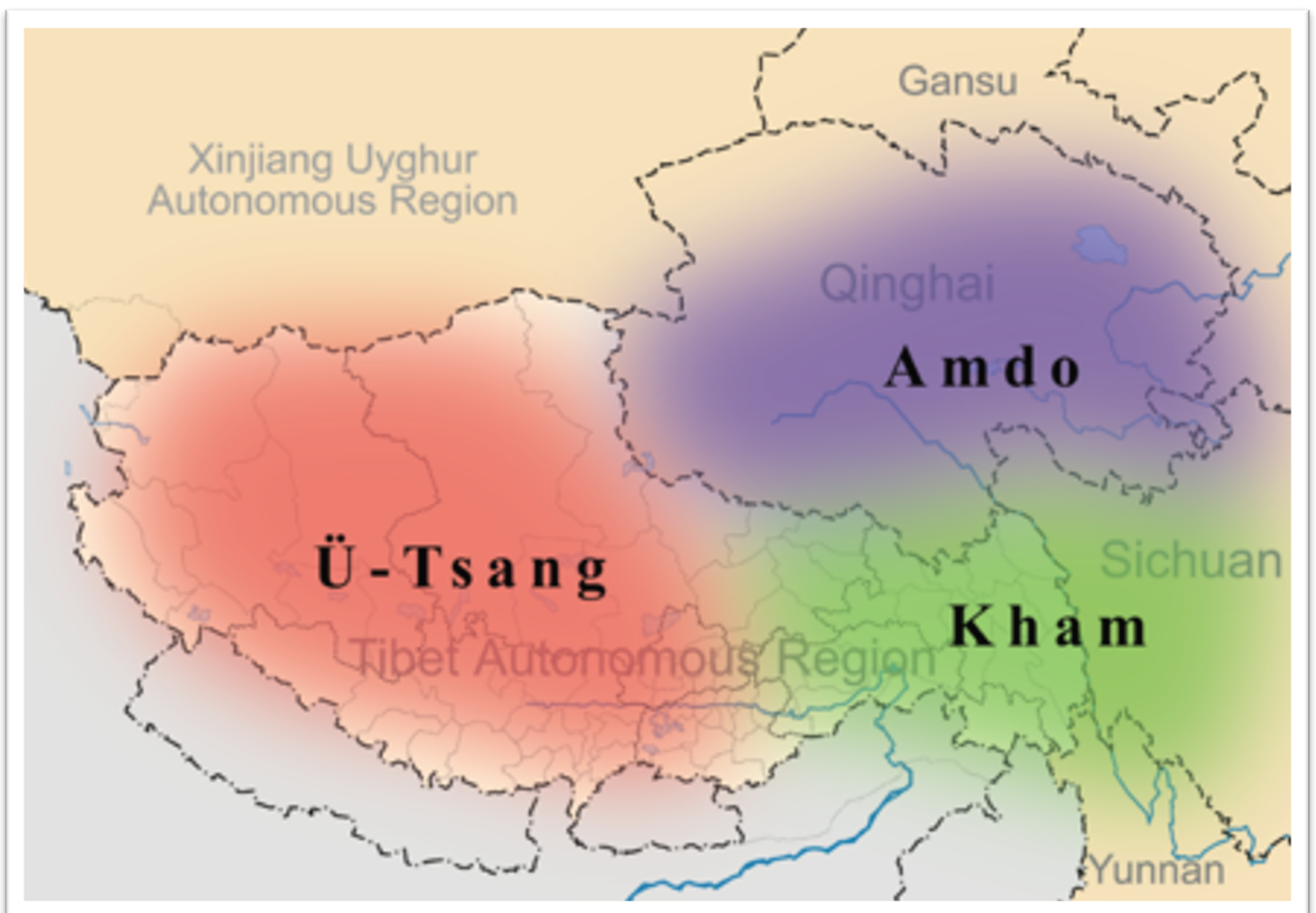
⁴ The Seventeen Point Agreement, also called the Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, or the Seventeen Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet for short, is the document by which the delegates of the 14th Dalai Lama, sovereign of the de facto state of Tibet, reached an agreement in 1951 with the Central People's Government of the newly established People's Republic of China on affirming Chinese sovereignty over Tibet.

FORMATION OF CHUSHI GANDRUG

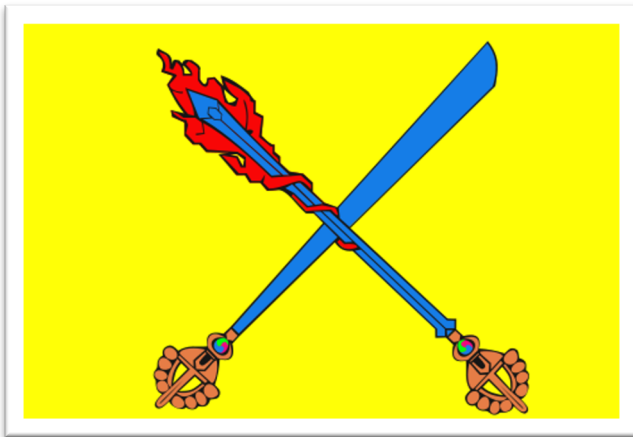


Andrug Gompo Tashi (also known as **Andrug Jindak**) established a people's army called **Chushi Gangdrug**. Like many other volunteered fighters, Andrug Jindak financed many of the freedom fighters and was accepted as their undisputed leader of the resistance army.

In order to mobilize more support across the different regions of Tibet, the names **Tenshung Danglang Mak** were appended to Chushi Gangdrug in order to address the pan-Tibetan composition of the people's army. It was not a Tibetan government army but rather a grassroots army of the Tibetan people. Tenshung Danglang Mak fought for the political and religious freedom of Tibet. Khampas and Amdowas had been fighting against the invading Chinese Communist troops since **1956** in different parts of **Kham** and **Amdo**.



Amdo⁵ is one of the three traditional regions of Tibet, the other two being **Ü-Tsang** and **Kham**; it is also the birthplace of the 14th Dalai Lama.



On 16 June **1958**, a meeting of Chushi Gangdrug and their supporters was held in Lhodak Dhama Dzong with impressive cavalry parade, incense burnt to the Dalai Lama photograph, and then **launched the Chushi Gangdrug yellow flag** of the Tensik Danglang Mak with an emblem of two swords represented a deity and handles symbolic of Dorjee or thunderbolt and lotus flower (11, 12).

The formation of the Chushi Gangdruk Volunteer Force was announced on June 16, **1958**. It was called **National Volunteer Defence Army (NVDA)**. "Chushi Gangdruk" is a Tibetan phrase meaning "land of four rivers and six ranges," and refers to Amdo and Kham. The group included Tibetans from those regions of eastern Tibet, and its main objective was to drive PRC occupational forces out of Tibet. While central and western Tibet (Ü-Tsang) were bound by a 17-point agreement with the People's Republic of China, the PRC initiated land reform in eastern Tibet (including Amdo and Kham) and engaged in harsh reprisals against the Tibetan land-owners there.

Under the direction of Gen. Andrug Gonpo Tashi, Chushi Gangdruk included 37 allied forces and 18 military commanders. They drafted a 27-point military law governing the conduct of the volunteers. Their headquarters were located at **Tsona**, then later moved to **Lhagyari**. Initially militia members purchased their own weapons, mainly World War II-era British .303 in, German 7.92 mm, and Russian 7.62 mm caliber rifles. Chushi Gangdruk contacted the US government for support. However, the State Department required an official request from the Tibetan government in Lhasa, which was not forthcoming. The requests were made and ignored in both 1957 and 1958.

⁵ Amdo encompasses a large area from the Machu to the Drichu (Yangtze). While historically, culturally, and ethnically a Tibetan area, Amdo was administered by a series of local rulers since the mid-18th century and the Dalai Lamas have not governed the area directly since that time. From 1917 to 1928, much of Amdo was occupied intermittently by the Hui Muslim warlords of the Ma clique (or Ma family warlords is a collective name for a group of Hui warlords in Northwestern China who ruled the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu and Ningxia for 10 years from 1919 until 1928). In 1928, the Ma Clique joined the Kuomintang, and during the period from 1928 to 1949, much of Amdo was gradually assimilated into the Qinghai province of the Kuomintang Republic of China. By 1952, Communist Party of China forces had defeated both the Kuomintang and the local Tibetans and had assumed control of the region, solidifying their hold on the area by 1958 and formally spelling the end of the political existence of Amdo as a distinct Tibetan province.

CIA SUPPORT

Without getting approval from the Dalai Lama, the US Central Intelligence Agency decided to go ahead to support the Chushi Gangdrug Tenshung Danglang Mak in the summer of **1959** (14). The CIA provided the group with material assistance and aid, including arms and ammunition, as well as training to members of Chushi Gangdruk and other Tibetan guerrilla groups at Camp Hale⁶.

The Tibetan involvement with the U.S. came during the Cold War and decolonization period in world history that in the United States manifested as anticommunism, and in the People's Republic of China as anticapitalism (15, 16).

Allen Dulles⁷, the CIA deputy director responsible for overseeing all CIA covert operations, saw an opportunity to destabilize Communist China (17). The primary motive was more to impede and harass the Chinese Communists, than to render sufficient aid to the Tibetans.[18]

SURRENDER TO INDIAN GOVERNMENT

Chushi Gangdrug **assisted the escape of the 14th Dalai Lama** to India in March **1959**. After this, the idea of any further battle with the Chinese Communist troops was abandoned. Andrug Jindak persuaded Kunga Samten Dewatshang in Tawang to surrender his weapons to the Indian authorities (19). **Shangri Lhagyal**⁸ and other Chushi Gangdrug fighters handed over their weapons to the Indian officials at **Tezpur**⁹, India.

⁶ Camp Hale, between Red Cliff and Leadville in the Eagle River valley in Colorado, was a U.S. Army training facility constructed in 1942 for what became the 10th Mountain Division. It was named for General Irving Hale and was at an elevation of 9,200 feet (2,800 m) above sea level. Onslow S. Rolfe, who had developed mountain warfare techniques as commander of the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment, was selected to command Camp Hale.

⁷ Allen Welsh Dulles was an American diplomat and lawyer who became the first civilian Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), and its longest-serving director to date. As head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the early Cold War, he oversaw the 1953 Iranian coup d'état, the 1954 Guatemalan coup d'état, the Lockheed U-2 aircraft program, the Project MKUltra mind control program and the Bay of Pigs Invasion. He was dismissed by John F. Kennedy over the latter fiasco.

⁸ Chamdowa Tsawabomei Shangri Lhagyal (1921–1984) was a Tibetan resistance fighter against Chinese occupying forces in 1958–59. He was one of the commanders of the Chushi Gangdruk guerrillas, and fled to India in April 1959 shortly after the arrival there of the 14th Dalai Lama.

⁹ Tezpur is a city and urban agglomeration in Sonitpur district, Assam state, India. Tezpur is on the banks of the river Brahmaputra, 175 kilometres (109 mi) northeast of Guwahati, and is the largest of the north bank towns with a population exceeding 100,000 as per Metropolitan Census 2011.

They crossed the border where they were greeted by a representative of the Tibetan Government, Tsedrung Jampa Wangdu (20). On 29 April **1959**, they handed over their rifles, ammunition, and all other weapons to the Deputy Commissioner of Tezpur district, and were permitted to take their gold, silver, and other valuables (21).

The 14th Dalai Lama conferred the rank of **Dsasak** to Andrug Gompo Tashi in a letter: *"You have led the Chushi Gangdrug force with unshakeable determination to resist the Chinese occupation army for the great national cause of defending the freedom of Tibet. I confer on you the rank of Dzasak (the highest military rank equivalent to general) in recognition of your services to the country. The present situation calls for a continuance of your brave struggle with the same determination and courage"* (22). In addition, Andrug Jindak received some gifts of priceless religious relics including an earthen statue of God of Protection Jigchi Mahai and some holy beads (23).

LATER GUERRILLA OPERATIONS

From 1960, Chushi Gangdruk conducted its guerrilla operations from the northern Nepalese region of Mustang (24).

In **1974**, guerrilla operations ceased after the CIA, given the realignment of Sino-American relations initiated by President Richard Nixon, terminated its program of assistance to the Tibetan resistance movement and the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual and temporal leader, taped a message telling the Tibetans to lay down their weapons and surrender peacefully.

RATUK NGAWANG (1926-2016)



He was Born in southern Lithang and after some years spent in the Monastery he was appointed as business manager of his College. His business ventures brought him to Lhasa where he met Andrug Gonpo Tashi. The rest is history: becoming one of Gonpo Tashi's trusted commanders, setting up the Driguthang base, going on the epic ride north across the Jhanthang, endlessly battling

superior Chinese forces, escaping and rejoining the Lhoka base, and finally, laying siege to the principal Chinese garrison in southern Tibet at Tsetang. The last undertaking was critical in enabling the safe escape of the Dalai Lama and so many other Tibetans. His wife, Dechen Wangmo, was one of the first women combat paratroopers in Tibetan military history. He published four volumes in tibetan with the history of his life, also as Dapon of the Special frontier Force (SFF) and describing the creation of the Cushi Gandruk and its actions.

REFERENCES - CITATIONS

1. "Membership & Support". Chushigangdruk.org. Archived from the original on 2012-07-17. Retrieved 2012-06-10.
2. "Resistance and Revolution". Tibet Oral History Project. Archived from the original on 2017-06-27. Retrieved 2017-06-25. He went to India after the Nepalese Government disbanded the unit in 1974.
3. Stephen Talty (Dec 31, 2010). "The Dalai Lama's Great Escape". The Daily Beast.
4. Kunga Samten Dewatshang (1997). *Flight at the Cuckoo's Behest, The Life and Times of a Tibetan Freedom Fighter*. New Delhi: Paljor Publications. p. 113.
5. Goldstein, Melvyn: *A History of Modern Tibet*. Vol. 2. *The Calm before the Storm, 1951-1955*, University of California Press, London, 2007, p. 598
6. Ford, Robert (1990). *Captured in Tibet*. NY: Oxford University Press. pp. 136–137.
7. Knaus, J. K. (1999). *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival*. NY: Public Affairs. p. 84.
8. Goodmann, M. H. (1986). *The Last Dalai Lama, A Biography*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson. p. 173.
9. Dalai Lama (2006). *My Land and My People*. New Delhi: Srishti Publishers & Distributors. p. 88.
10. INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS (1959). "The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law". International Commission of Jurists.
11. Knaus, J. K. (1999). *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival*. NY: Public Affairs. p. 150.
12. Gyalo Thondup and Thurston, A. F. (2015). *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong, The Untold Story of My Struggle for Tibet*. NY: Public Affairs. p. 176.
13. Thondup, Gyalo; Thurston, Anne F. (2015). *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong: The Untold Story of My Struggle for Tibet*. Gurgaon, India: Random House India. p. 169. ISBN 978-818400-387-1. Most of the resisters in India were followers of Andrug Gompo Tashi, a wealthy, patriotic Kham trader from Litang where the resistance had begun with the introduction of China's so-called reforms. Popular outrage had been further fueled with the death and destruction unleashed when the Chinese attacked and bombed the local Litang monastery.

14. Knaus, J. K. (1999). *Orphans of the Cold War*. NY: Public Affairs. pp. 139.
15. McGranahan, C. (2018). *Ethnographies of U.S. Empire: Love and Empire: The CIA, Tibet, and Covert Humanitarianism*. Durham and London: Duke University. p. 334.
16. McGranahan, C. "Ethnographies of U.S. Empire: Love and Empire: The CIA, Tibet, and Covert Humanitarianism" (PDF).
17. Roberts II, J. B. (1997). "The Secret War Over Tibet". *The American Spectator*. December: 31–35.
18. naus, J. K. (1999). *Orphans of the Cold War*. NY: Public Affairs. pp. 139.
19. Kunga Samten Dewatshang (1997). *Flight at the Cuckoo's Behest, The Life and Times of a Tibetan Freedom Fighter*. New Delhi: Paljor Publications. p. 149.
20. Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang (1973). *Four Rivers, Six Ranges: Reminiscences of the Resistance Movement in Tibet*. Dharamsala: Information and Publicity Office of H.H. The Dalai Lama. p. 105.
21. Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang (1973). *Four Rivers, Six Ranges: Reminiscences of the Resistance Movement in Tibet*. Dharamsala: Information and Publicity Office of H.H. The Dalai Lama. pp. 105–106.
22. Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang (1973). *Four Rivers, Six Ranges: Reminiscences of the Resistance Movement in Tibet*. Dharamsala: Information and Publicity Office of H.H. The Dalai Lama. p. 101.
23. Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang (1973). *Four Rivers, Six Ranges: Reminiscences of the Resistance Movement in Tibet*. Dharamsala: Information and Publicity Office of H.H. The Dalai Lama. p. 101.
24. Cowan, Sam (17 January 2016). "The curious case of the Mustang incident". *The Record*. Retrieved 2017-02-10.

REFERENCES - SOURCES

1. Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows - A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, Columbia University Press, 1999, ISBN 0-231-11814-7.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chushi_Gangdruk