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Japanese Visitors to Tibet in the Early 20th Century and their Impact on Tibetan Military Affairs—with a Focus on Yasujirō Yajima*

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Little information has been so far been made available in western language literature on Tibet concerning the Japanese military instructor Yasujirō Yajima (1882–1963, see Photograph 1) who stayed in Tibet between 1912 and 1918. He is known for having been among the instructors entrusted by the government of Tibet with the training of the Tibetan army in the context of modernisation reforms undertaken by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama after 1913. Two eyewitness accounts of him by Tibetans have come down to us, the first by the historian Shakabpa (1907–1989):

> Under the auspices of Japan's ambassador in Beijing, Gonsuke Hayashe, a retired Japanese military officer named Yasujiro Yajima arrived in Lhasa by way of Kham in 1913. He trained a regiment of the Tibetan army according to Japanese military customs. During his six-year stay in Lhasa, he tied his hair (in the Tibetan manner) and attended all of the ceremonies, just like the Tibetan government officials. He also constructed the camp of the Dalai Lama's bodyguard in the Japanese style.[1]

The second account is by the Tibetan army General Tsarong Dasang Dadul (Tsha rong zla bzang dgra 'dul, 1888–1959), as recounted in the biography by his son:

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[1] Shakabpa 2010: vol. 2, 766. He was even qualified by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama as his "personal guard" in addition to being a military instructor in one Thirteenth Dalai Lama's letter quoted by Shakabpa 2010: vol. 2, 820.

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> Around this time [1916], the Tibetan Government approached a Japanese ex-officer, Yasujiro Yajima, who happened to be in Lhasa, and asked him to train the newly recruited men in modern methods of warfare. Yajima agreed to do this and also helped to design the barracks at Norbu Lingka in the Japanese style, and he was given the responsibility of training a group of men in Japanese military methods. Another section was trained in the Russian system by Tenpai Gyaltsen, a Mongolian soldier, and a third in the British system of musketry. After his military instruction was no longer needed, Yajima stayed on for another five years before returning to Japan. His job was then to train the troops in physical drills and to give them swimming lessons. I was told by my father that Yajima was a peculiar man; he wished to be like the Tibetan officers and wanted to wear a headdress like theirs, with red ribbons in the knot. He was told that this red ribbon was an entitlement for the Tibetan officers only and therefore asked Father whether there would be an objection to his putting in a yellow ribbon instead of the red, and my father said this would be acceptable. Thereafter, he kept his hair long and began to tie it in a knot with a yellow ribbon.[2]

Other secondary English-language literature has also focused on Yajima.[3] However, none of these sources were able to make use of Yajima's own personal archive, nor to put Yajima's experience in Tibet sufficiently in context with his prior experience as a military officer in Japan.

Thus, in continuation with the present author's previous work on Japanese travellers to Tibet in the same period,[4] this paper is an attempt to shed additional light on the achievements of Yajima in Tibet based on Japanese language materials, i.e. by using Japanese military archival sources, Japanese language secondary literature, along with Yajima's own personal writings, documents and photographs that remain in the possession of his family.

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2 Tsarong 2000: 49.

3 Hyer 1972, 1982 and Yamaguchi 1987 are among the earliest general treatments of Japanese travellers to Tibet such as Yajima Yasujirō. Both of these authors had personal relationships with Tōkan Tada, who was himself one of the early travellers. Through Tada, Paul Hyer gained access to various material sources and information on these figures (Komoto 2013: 121). Yamaguchi Zuihō was Tada's student at the University of Tokyo and went one to become one of his closest research colleagues. Hyer and Yamaguchi made the most of the materials and information gained from Tada in their pioneering studies in this field. Another pioneering author was Kanai Akira who conducted research on Yajima's career in articles such as "Yajima Yasujirō no sokuseki [The life of Yajima Yasujirō]" in *My Diary in Tibet* (Kanai 1983: 95–138) and "Yajima Yasujirō ryaku nenpu [A Brief Chronological Record of Yajima Yasujirō's Career]" (*ibid.*). His research partly, but precisely, used the materials in possession of the Yajima family. Further work was done by Berry 1990 and Qin 2005 based on these previous researches and published materials.

4 See the final bibliography for selected references.



Photograph 1. Yajima in Lhasa (date unknown, but most likely taken in Lhasa in 1917; source: Ms. Nakako Yajima private archives).

By reconstructing Yajima's experience as accurately as possible, and in particular by gathering whatever information is available in those Japanese sources on his design of the Tibetan military barracks in Lhasa, this study will contribute to a better understanding of one particular aspect of Tibet's military history in the early 20th century.

As only a small amount of records related to his stay in Tibet have been passed down, and in order to understand more precisely the extent of his military expertise and possible influence on the Tibetan army, this paper will also include a study of Yajima's prior experience and training in the Japanese army (1902–1907).

*1. "Visitors to Tibet" (*nyūzōsha*) and Yasujirō Yajima*

When looking at the period from the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, the relationship between Japan and Tibet, from the Japanese side,[5] can be considered to have been determined by two factors.[6] One is the study of Tibetan Buddhism and the introduction of related Buddhist scriptures to Japan, and the other relates to the military and political interests of Japan towards Tibet, within the dynamic of the former's continental expansion. In the early 20th century, Tibet-related topics were not widely popular among the Japanese. Nevertheless, during the period, ten individuals in particular are known for their success in establishing direct contact with Tibet. These individuals were known by the Sino-Japanese expression "*nyūzōsha*" (入蔵者), which literally means "a person who enters Tibet".

Among these *nyūzōsha*, five were monks, namely Yutaka Nōmi 能海寛 (1868–?) who was one of the first Japanese to reach Patang in Tibet; Ekai Kawaguchi 河口慧海 (1866–1945), the first author to travel to Tibet in 1900–1902, and again in 1913–1915;[7] Enga Teramoto 寺本婉雅 (1872–1940),[8] who reached Patang with Nōmi, and was the first to organise a conversation at Wutai Shan between the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and Son'yu Ōtani, sent by his brother Kōzui Ōtani 大谷光瑞, abbot of Nishi Honganji temple 西本願寺 of the Jōdo Shinshū, the largest

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5 In the late 19th century and early 20th century, Japan was competing over Tibet in the international arena while Britain, China and Russia played out their "Great Game" (Kobayashi 2018: 1). The later study has also made clearer the interest taken by the Tibetan government itself in Japan (*ibid.*).

6 For a study of the image of Tibet in Japan see Komoto 2009a and 2009b, 2010. On the relations between Tibet and Japan in the late 19th and early 20th century, see Hyer 1972 and Kobayashi 2019.

7 See Kawaguchi 1909.

8 See Komoto 2012b.

branch of Japanese Buddhism.[9] Then there was Bunkyō Aoki 青木文教 (1886–1956)[10] who was also dispatched to Lhasa by Kōzui Ōtani and stayed there three years, and after his return to Japan worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japanese army. And finally, Tōkan Tada 多田等観 (1890–1967),[11] who after studying at Sera Monastery for ten years, brought the great Tibetan Buddhist scriptures to Japan.

Next, those classified as later visitors are Yasuteru Narita 成田安輝 (1864–1915), who was dispatched by the Ministry of Foreign affairs in 1901; then Jinzō Nomoto 野元甚蔵 (1917–2014), Hisao Kimura 木村肥佐生 (1922–1989) and Kazumi Nishikawa 西川一三 (1918–2008), all of whom entered Tibet as agents of the Japanese secret military agency.

To this day, material such as personal belongings, documents, and biographies have only been investigated and organised for four of these individuals, namely Ekai Kawaguchi, Yutaka Nōmi, Tōkan Tada and Bunkyō Aoki.[12]

The tenth figure, Yasujirō Yajima, on whom this paper focuses, was not affiliated to either of these aforementioned groups. And his personal belongings, documents and biography have not yet been sufficiently sorted and examined. Indeed, among the ten individuals mentioned, Yajima, along with Yasuteru Narita, is the person about whom the greatest amount of information remains unclear.

In 1909, Yajima planned a trip around the world and left Japan.[13] Having only extremely limited means, he himself described the enterprise as a "penniless journey".[14] In his plan, Tibet was initially intended to be no more than a stopover on the journey. In March 1911, he succeeded in reaching Lhasa for the first time from China. He then went back to Japan for a while, before visiting Lhasa again in 1912, where he stayed for six years, from July 1912 to October 1918. He then

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9 Shirasu 2012.

10 See Nagano and Komoto 2010, and Komoto 2013.

11 See Komoto 2012a.

12 References on these figures: Sumida 1989; Okuyama 2003; Tada and Yamaguchi 2005; Komoto, 2012a; 2013. About Japanese *nyūzōsha* as a whole, non-academic works include that of journalist Emoto Yoshinobu published in 1993 and 1994, and Berry 1990.

13 Yajima Yasujirō joined *Nihon Rikkō Kai* (日本力行会 Japanese Striving Society) eleven days after he left the army. *Nihon Rikkō Kai* was established by Shimanuki Hyōdayū (島貫兵太夫, 1866–1913), a Christian minister, as a private organisation, to support underprivileged Japanese to migrate overseas. Under the support of this organisation, Yajima planned to go on a trip around the world in the order of China, India, the Middle East, Africa, South America, North America, Siberia and Manchuria for ten years（Kanai 1983: 98–101).

14 *Ibid*.: 96. See later in this paper for a presentation of this source.

married a Tibetan woman and a son was born to them in 1917.[15] The following year, he came back to Japan with his wife and child (see Photograph 2).

In comparison to the *nyūzōsha* previously mentioned, two aspects of Yajima's profile are worth pointing out as unusual. The first is that unlike all the others, he did not travel to Lhasa entrusted with any kind of political or religious duty or mission. It is clear that his travel was made possible only by individual and personal financial support. For example, we know that Nōmi, Aoki, as well as the monks who worked towards the introduction of Tibetan Buddhist scriptures to Japan, were financially supported by important temples and their devotees. Nomoto, Kimura, and other agents who worked towards military intelligence and negotiations, on the other hand, were supported by the Japanese army and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By contrast, the greater part of what money Yajima was able to secure came from his own family.[16]

The second remarkable point relates to Yajima's direct involvement and level of connection to the Tibetan army, which was unmatched by any of the other *nyūzōsha*. During the same period, military secret agents such as Nomoto and Kimura were carrying out investigations on the Tibetan army as part of their general research on the situation in Tibet, but Yajima was actually employed as an "instructor" for the army itself for four years.[17]

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[15] According to "Yajima Yasujirō ryaku nenpu" in Kanai 1983, Yajima married a Tibetan lady named "Noburā" (ノブラー, 1894–1923) in 1916 and gave birth to a son named "Ishinobu" (意志信, 1917–1944) in March, 1917.

[16] Among the manuscripts and correspondence material that remain with the Yajima family, are several accounts relating to funding requests. For example, before his first trip to Tibet, in a letter thought to have been written in Beijing, one finds the following words: "Even if I use all the money that my family possesses for my trip to Tibet, it will not be wasted. On the contrary, as a way of using money, it will be unmistakably beneficial to all the people of this world. Personally, I hope that the family will gladly support me financially" (Undated letter written by Yajima, Ms. Nakako Yajima private archive).

[17] This is discussed further below. A personal résumé (*Curriculum Vitae*) written after Yajima's return to Japan still remains in the possession of his family. In this résumé, Yajima wrote about three entries relating to his activities during the time he stayed in Tibet: 1) The drawing of a military style map of Lhasa and its environs, covering an area of approximately 36 square km; 2) The draft plans for a barracks to accommodate Tibetan army troops; 3) The training of Tibetan army troops as an instructor during four years.



Photograph 2. Yajima's wife and son (Maebashi, 1919, photographer unknown; source: Ms. Nakako Yajima private archives).

In post-war Japan, especially after the 1970s, research on the "visitors to Tibet" (*nyūzōsha*) attracted greater interest. Yet research on Yajima remained somewhat neglected. I would suggest that one of the reasons for this was Yajima's military involvement.[18]

2. Public Interest in Yajima's Story in Japan

In Japan, the first publications to deal with Yajima date back to the 1980s. The impetus for these came from a series of NHK documentaries (NHK is Japan's public television broadcasting company), which prompted a great upsurge in public interest on the subject of Central Asia generally.[19] Attention also increased towards Tibet in particular, and a number of publications ensued, leading to the "rediscovery", so to speak, of Yajima and the other Japanese *nyūzōsha*. The first example came in the form of a booklet published in 1983, commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of Yajima's birth. It was published under the title *Nyūzōnisshi* (*My Diary in Tibet*, hereafter referred to as such) edited by Akira Kanai (金井晃).[20] However, this "diary" was not directly written by Yajima himself. It was composed by Kanai, based on notes kept at the Yajima family home in the town of Maebashi (Gunma

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[18] For example, the Japanese writer Ito Keiichi (1917–2016), who also experienced going to war between 1938 and 1945, described the atmosphere that prevailed in Japan for the period of twenty years after the war as follows: "As exaggerations in the way war history and so on told of how Japanese soldiers acted [during the war] flowed continuously, those who served in the war remained reluctant to speak about it" (Ito 2008: 17–18). I think that this background is reflected in the delay in interest towards Yajima in comparison to other *nyūzōsha*.

[19] The most important trigger was a documentary series broadcast by NHK, entitled *Shiruku rōdo* [Silk Road]. This series was co-produced by CCTV (China Central Television). Local field reports were made in 1979 and 1980, and then broadcast once a month between April 1980 and 1989, with a total of twelve episodes. At the time, there was a very strong reaction from the Japanese public, and in answer to that, a second series entitled *Rōma eno michi* [The Way to Rome] was created and broadcast once a month between April 1983 and September 1984, in a series of eighteen episodes. Concurrently, a thirty-minute programme entitled *Mō hitotsu no shiruku rōdo* [The Other Silk Road] was broadcast in a series of twenty-four episodes during the year 1981. Then, a third series entitled *Umi no shiruku rōdo* [The Maritime Silk Road] was broadcast in a series of twelve episodes between April 1988 and March 1989. Furthermore, in 1989 highlights from the footage of the first to third series were edited and compiled in a short series of three episodes entitled *Shiruku rōdo・Sōdai na tabi gojūman kiro* [A Magnificent Journey. 500 000 km along the Silk Road] and broadcast in August 1989. After that, special editions, paperback editions, as well as photographic books and related publications continued to be published over a period of time.

[20] Kanai 1983.

prefecture) as well as on newspaper interviews. This was the first publication that accurately collated the fragmentary information to be found in the various mementos available. This "diary" became a valuable foundation for ensuing research, and a number of critical biographies followed on its heels.[21]

In these various early accounts, references to the relation between Yajima and the Tibetan army predominately related to two points, namely his involvement in the training of Tibetan soldiers (see Photograph 3), and his participation in the design of the military barracks. In *My Diary in Tibet*, training as well as command practices and other such disciplines taught by Yajima to the Tibetan infantry are described as being based on Japanese infantry drill manuals, and performed in the Japanese style.[22] The details it contains relate to the descriptions of the barracks are given later in this paper.



Photograph 3. Training of the Tibetan army, Lhasa (date unknown, but probably taken in 1916; source: Ms. Akiko Tada private archives).

[21] For reference on Yajima and besides Asada Teruhiko's *Sekai musenryokōsha: Yajima Yasujirō* [The World Hitchhiker: Yajima Yasujirō] (1986), see the work of Tibet specialist Yamaguchi Zuihō's *Tibetto* [Tibet] (1987: 98–103) and Emoto Yoshinobu's *Tibetto hyōhaku* [Wanderings in Tibet] (1994: 68–77).

[22] Kanai 1983: 81.

A further point of discussion related to Yajima raised in recent years, is the debate about whether Japanese *nyūzōsha* may have been involved in the creation of the Tibetan national flag. As far as Yajima himself is concerned, his diary only touches on the subject of the "flag" in two instances: 1) during his second stay in Lhasa (1913), he relates that in order to celebrate the new year, he raised the Japanese (rising sun) flag on the roof of the house he was staying at, and that doing so attracted the attention of the people of Lhasa;[23] and 2) at the time he was involved with the training of the Tibetan army, he mentions making a "cavalry flag" (*kihei no hata* 騎兵の旗).[24] Consequently, as far as Yajima is concerned at least, it appears that he did not have any direct involvement with the creation of what is now known as the Tibetan national flag.[25]

In addition, a further point should be added to the present discussion, namely Yajima's involvement with weapons, and rifles in particular. Indeed, the 15th Infantry Regiment to which Yajima belonged in the Japanese army was particularly known for its superior expertise in shooting techniques.[26] One can see Yajima's deep interest in firearms from the several references made to these weapons in the accounts he left.[27] Yajima himself mentions rifle practice at the time of his stay in

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[23] *Ibid.*: 130–131.

[24] *Ibid.*: 82.

[25] However, other Japanese travellers did have an influence at least on one early version of a flag used by the Tibetan military. Aoki Bunkyō relates that on his way to Lhasa (from October 1912 to the mid-January 1913) he stayed at Chökor Yangtsé, an occasional palace of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. While there he observed a Tibetan army rifle practice using real bullets. According to Aoki's travel account, on this occasion these soldiers used a new "military flag" whose design was created by Aoki himself together with the "military commander" (i.e. Tsarong Dasang Dadul). The lower half of the design included a lion on a snow mountain, and the upper half showed a rising sun and the moon on a yellow background. He notes that there were discussions about making further modifications, because in this form it looked too similar to the Japanese military flag. Aoki also noted that a previous design of "military flag" used by the Tibetan army had a bigger lion and snow mountain, as well as a very small sun and moon on a triangular red-coloured cloth background (Aoki 1920: 135). A part of Aoki's possessions are currently housed at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, and these include a handmade drawing entitled "Military flag of Tibet" (Tibetto no gunki 西藏の軍旗). However, this is again slightly different from the above-described design of the "military flag" which Aoki says he created together with Tsarong.

[26] For example, the 15th Infantry Regiment was known for frequently achieving excellent marks in the shooting contests that were held in the Japanese army; see Teikoku Rentaishi Kankōkai 1917: 20–21.

[27] For instance, in *My Diary in Tibet*, there is mention of the fact that the commander of the Tibetan army possessed a rifle that bore a seal from the Imperial Japanese Army Tokyo Arsenal (Kanai 1983: 44), and that similarly, the soldiers who served the Dalai Lama were equipped with "1918 type soldier guns" (*ibid.*: 55).

Lhasa, during training of the Tibetan army.[28] It would be worth examining further whether the technology and knowledge possessed by Yajima in this regard were put into practice within the activities of the Tibetan army.

Among the points mentioned above, let us now take a closer look at Yajima's involvement in the design of military barracks, and the sources available to us on this subject.

3. Private Sources Related to Yajima

Among the extant personal belongings and documents related to Yajima's entire life, those that give us most information about Yajima's whereabouts at different periods are held by his eldest daughter, Ms. Nakako Yajima (矢島仲子氏), who possesses more than 500 items. At present, the present author is carrying out a complete survey of these materials. Given the fact that in the field of Japanese history and research on Tibet there has been almost no scientific interest in Yajima until very recently, this constitutes the first time that this data will have been looked at in the context of scientific research.[29]

Among the more than 500 items extant are documents that are thought to have been written by Yajima himself. These include journals, manuscripts, notes and other memoranda, as well as correspondence. Unfortunately, the journal he wrote during his stay in Tibet remains nowhere to be found. However, in addition to his personal correspondence, there are three documents in the hands of Ms. Nakako Yajima that refer directly to Yajima' stay in Tibet.

The first is an untitled manuscript of about 16,000 Japanese characters that Yajima wrote during his stay in Lhasa, in January or February 1913. Although the location of the original document is unknown, a copy remains in the hands of Ms. Nakako Yajima. This document contains detailed accounts of the battles that took place from the end of July 1912 onwards between the Chinese and Tibetan armies, as well as of the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa. It is thought that this account was not extracted from Yajima's personal journal, but that it was a separate report made for a third party. However, the identity of the addressee remains unknown and to this day this paper has not been published.

The second is a manuscript of about 3,000 characters entitled *Rirekisho* (lit. *Curriculum Vitae* and hereafter referred to as such), which he wrote after he had returned from Tibet at the beginning of the

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[28] *Ibid.*: 82.

[29] The author would like to express sincere thanks to Ms. Nakako Yajima for generously facilitating this research in Japan.

Shōwa period, probably in 1931. It is a record of Yajima's personal story up to 1931. However, this descriptive account contains only a brief allusion to Yajima's stay in Tibet of about 500 characters.

The third is an account entitled "Henkyō wo saguru" (lit. "Japanese Frontier Now" and hereafter referred to as such), which was serialised in the Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri* between the 14th and the 22nd of July 1940. It is an article of about 11,000 characters, which mentions Yajima's journey and his stay in Tibet. No original manuscript relating to this article remains in the possession of the Yajima family. It is possible that he dictated this story to a reporter who transcribed it for the newspaper.

4. Concerning the Japanese Model of the Tibetan Army Barracks

Among the three documents discussed above, reference to his involvement in the construction of army barracks can be found in the last two, although neither of these were written at the time of his stay in Tibet itself, but rather at least ten years after his return to Japan. They were therefore written on the basis of recollection. For example, his *Curriculum Vitae*, which is thought to have been written towards the end of the 1920s, tells us the following:

> I received a request from the general, who was chief of the General Staff Office and also a minister. This request was for the building of a military camp with accommodation for several thousand soldiers. So I designed the plans based on what I could remember of my time spent at the Instruction Battalion (教導大隊)[30] of the Toyama Military Academy (陸軍戸山学校). When I presented the project to the Tibetan government, they were very happy with it. It took three years to complete the project based on my plans. Then once again, I was thanked by the Tibetans.[31]

Similar information appears in the 1940 newspaper article.[32] That is to say that following a request from the Tibetan authorities involved in

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[30] More will be said later on the exact function of this battalion in the Toyama Military Academy.

[31] Yajima's *Curriculum Vitae*.

[32] "In regards to the accommodation for the soldiers, there were difficulties with the barracks. I was not an architect so I didn't know how to design them. Oh well, I remembered barracks from the old days, and drew up the plans for buildings that could house up to about 2000 troops"; see Yajima, "Henkyō wo saguru" [Japanese Frontier Now], *Yomiuri*, July 20, 1940.

military matters, Yajima drafted the architectural plans, and the Tibetan army completed the construction of the barracks within three years.

So, what would these drawings actually have looked like? We know from the account above, that his design imitated the barracks of the Instruction Battalion at the Toyama Military Academy, and that they were on a scale suited to housing about 2,000 soldiers. In the year following the end of the Russo-Japanese war, in April 1906, Yajima had been promoted to the rank of sergeant 陸軍軍曹, and on the 15th of the same month he was appointed to the first squadron of the aforementioned Instruction Battalion, where he would remain for more than a year and a half, up to the time of his discharge, which took place at the end of December 1907.[33]



Photograph 4. Toyama Military Academy (from A guide to Toyama Military Academy*, Yasukuni Jinja Library and Archives).*

[33] With regard to these circumstances, in the section entitled "Yajima Yasujirō no sokuseki" [The life of Yajima Yasujirō] in *My Diary in Tibet* (*ibid*.: 96), it is said that he pretended to have a mental illness in order to realise his plan of "penniless journey around the world". However, if we consider the period of Yajima's discharge from military service, we can see that at the time, the Instruction Battalion was undergoing personnel reduction in order to shift to a new organisational structure. Consequently, it is probable that Yajima's military discharge was also due to these circumstances and was not just a matter of his own individual will; see "Rikugun kyōikushi-Toyama gakkō no bu" [A History of Military Education-Toyama Academy], Yasukuni Jinja Library and Archives, undated.

The Toyama Military Academy (see photograph 4) was created in 1873. Within the Japanese army, it was the institution where the upper echelons of mainly infantry soldiers and officers received education and training in cutting-edge military technology.[34] This elite military education, as one might call it, differed from the Imperial Japanese Military Academy in two regards. First, in terms of educational target, it was aimed at those already in active service, and second, all the students belonged to ranks ranging from sergeant (陸軍軍曹) and corporal (陸軍伍長) to captain (陸軍大尉). In other words, the Toyama Military Academy was a place for training active-service commanders. At the end of their training, those educated at Toyama Academy would return to their original units and put the knowledge and techniques they had acquired into practice. Through this practice-based approach, Toyama Military Academy aimed to improve standards across the Japanese military as a whole.

The students who belonged to this Academy were divided into three main groups. The first consisted of students of the Tactics Department, the majority of whom had a rank higher than that of lieutenant, and studied infantry operations. The second was composed of students belonging to the Physical Training and Drilling Department, and the status of these students went up to second lieutenant (陸軍少尉). They engaged in physical development and training. The third group was composed of military music students who received education and training as future trumpeters and leading members of military bands. All students, in all three of these groups, studied practical skills and related topics intensively from six months to a year.

In addition to this, for practical skills training performed by the students of the Tactics Department, actual soldiers with ranks ranging from private first-class (陸軍上等兵) to sergeant were brought in from each regiment of the Japanese army. This experimental unit was designed for the purpose of studying the application of the latest military technologies, so to speak, for actual fighting. This was the unit called the "Instruction Battalion", and it was in this battalion that Yajima served.

According to the "Rikugun Toyama gakkō henseihyō" ("Toyama Military Academy's organisation chart"), when Yajima was actually

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[34] At first the Academy was housed in the Tactics Department 兵学寮 (the former suburban villa of the Owari Clan), but was then moved to Toyama the following year (present day Toyama area of the Tokyo Shinjuku district). The Instruction Battalion itself was established in 1887. It was designed for "training studies" and "development of soldier education", which became the goal of its everyday activities; see *ibid.*

enrolled in 1906, the structure of this battalion consisted of four companies, 54 non-commissioned officers, and 1,000 soldiers.[35]

Let us now examine the question of the external form of the Toyama Academy barracks that served as a model for the architecture of the Tibetan troops' barracks in Lhasa. There is little extant documentation on the Toyama Military Academy, and the greater part of the existing data does not deal with 1906–1907, when Yajima was there, at the end of the Meiji era (1868–1912), but rather with the 1920s-1940s, from the end of the Taishō 大正 (1912–1926) to the beginning of the Shōwa 昭和 (1926–1989) periods. In addition to this, in 1912 the Instruction Battalion and the Tactics Department were moved from the Academy's Toyama site to the Army Infantry School (陸軍歩兵学校) in Chiba. This move is considered the main reason for the dearth of documents relating to the earlier period of the Instruction Battalion. To date, no graphic materials such as specific photographs or drawings of the Instruction Battalion barracks dating from Yajima's period have been found.

However, among the Toyama Academy's records,[36] the "Records of the New Constructions and Repairs" (Shinchiku narabini Eizen 新築並営繕) in *The History of Toyama Military Academy*, does mention that the barracks of the Instruction Battalion were newly built on the 5th of September 1887.[37] Also, in the 1969 publication, *Rikugun Toyama gakkō ryakushi* (*A Brief History of Toyama Military Academy*), by Naonobu Uzawa (鵜沢尚信), himself a graduate of the Academy who later became its headmaster, we find a reference in an entry dated June 1895 to: "1,500 military imperial guards housed in the Instruction Battalion's barracks",[38] which confirms that the buildings had such a capacity at that time.

We are thus forced to imagine what kind of buildings the barracks of the Instruction Battalion were likely to have been. First, many of the

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35 "Rikugun kyōikushi-Toyama gakkō no bu" [A History of Military Education: Toyama Military Academy], Annexe table number 11.

36 Inspectorate General of Military Training, *Toyama gakkō rekishi* [The History of Toyama Military Academy]. This material is undated, but it has an explanatory note: "This description is appendix for *A History of Military Education* vol. 20". Consequently, because "A History of Military Education in Japan: Toyama Military Academy" goes as far as 1914, *Toyama gakkō rekishi* also might have been written at the same period.

37 (unpaged). Student accommodation and so on were built in August 1886 and the buildings inside the Toyama Academy were all newly built approximately around that year.

38 Uzawa 1969: 20.

buildings built at the Academy during the Meiji era fortunately remained intact until the last years of the Pacific war.[39] Even after the Instruction Battalion was relocated to Chiba, it is believed that the former barracks which had housed it until then continued to exist. One can therefore assume that the buildings we see in photographs taken at the site during the Shōwa era were the same as those previously used as barracks for the Instruction Battalion.

Secondly, since there existed a standard type of barracks in the Japanese army, we can assume that the Instruction Battalion's buildings were likely based on the same model. This basic design included two floors, and a corridor along which the soldiers' rooms were aligned. Inside each room, a specific place was designed for the storing of each soldier's rifle. Also, in order for the non-commissioned officers to be able to keep eye on the soldier's rooms at all times, there were no dividing walls between the corridors and the adjoining living spaces. In addition to this, the officer's room was situated on the same floor as those of the soldiers.[40] Later however, alterations were made to this basic layout. For example, in the early years of the Meiji era, each house had been occupied by a single company, but from the late 1870's each house was occupied by two companies, and a single side corridor became the standard. From the end of the 1880s until the end of the 1890s, how to improve sanitation and living quarters in the barracks became a concern, particularly with regards to lighting and ventilation. For this reason, the design consisting of a single central corridor with rows of rooms on both sides was again modified. It is also possible to examine concretely the interior layout of the barracks between 1902 (the year that Yajima had first enrolled in the army) and 1907 (when he joined the Academy), by using the plans and elevation drawings for

[39] However, during the last years of the Pacific War, most of them were destroyed during air raids. Only the foundations of the open-air concert hall and the Officers' mess partly remain.

[40] Description based on the "Infantry Domestic Affairs Report" (1880). This material was written in 1872, but the author used the 1880 edition as reference. In 1888, it was renamed the "Military Domestic Affairs Report" and it was revised in 1894, 1900, 1907, 1921 and 1934. In 1943, it was yet renamed the "Military Domestic Affairs Ordinance" (or the "Code of Military Domestic Affairs"), but there were no major changes as to the stipulations regarding the quarters of non-commissioned officers. The relevant original text goes as follows: "A 'non-commissioned officer's room' requires to be appropriately located separately from the soldiers' rooms and allow him to see through across to these rooms" (chapter 8, "Rule for each barrack room", art. 2, p. 12), and "The room of non-commissioned officers must be located on the end of each company's rooms in order not to be inconvenient for supervision" (*ibid*., art. 3, p. 120).

the barracks of the First Foot Regiment of the Third Battalion of the Tokyo Imperial Guards, which were of the same type.[41]

It is difficult to imagine that Yajima's "plans" for the barracks at Lhasa would have truly been like the "professional" barrack construction drawings, since as Yajima himself wrote, he was not an architect and had no formal knowledge of architectural design.[42] Consequently, our hypothesis is that rather than conceiving entirely new plans, Yajima based his plans on a number of points, to provide a conceptual scheme, so to speak.

Among these points, the most important was the stipulation of "approximately 2000 beds".[43] This is the only point to which Yajima specifically referred in his writings concerning the barracks, so it can be assumed he regarded it as the most important point. In other words, at the heart of Yajima's plans were two main considerations, one being the way a great number of people use a space when they live together, and the other being the way such a space can be managed and controlled. If we consider the solutions provided by Japanese army barracks design with regards to the first point, we can see that pigeonhole shelving was provided for the storing of personal effects, and that bed and eating places were fitted in a compact manner.[44] With regard to the second factor, it is noticeable that in the typical Japanese design, the non-commissioned officer could gaze upon all areas of the soldiers daily life from the vantage point of his room, and that the area where a great deal of water is consumed, such as toilets and the place of washing items, as well as the cooking area, were all situated in separate areas outside the building. We can also observe that rifles were not kept in a separate armoury, but in a rack inside the individual soldiers' living quarters, where they would be looked after by them. Finally we can observe that meals were not served in a canteen but in each room. We can only assume that Yajima's plans for the Lhasa barracks were influenced by these specific features.

Conclusion: Future Points of Attention and the Reassessment of Yajima's Personality

This paper has tried to provide a better understanding of the Japanese background of Yajima's known involvement in the architectural design of the Tibetan army barracks at Lhasa. In the future, it is our hope

41 Nakamori 1993: 1457–1458.

42 *Japanese Frontier Now*, Yajima Nakako private archives.

43 *Ibid*.

44 According to the research of Mr. Masao Fujita, who thoroughly searched and examined modern Japanese military records, the space allotted to each person was of 15 to 16 cubic meters; see Fujita 2018: 38.

to also bring further clarification in regards to the military background of Yajima himself, through a thorough and accurate examination of his military experiences in Japan, in order to better understand what type of military training he is likely to have offered to the Tibetan troops prior to 1916.

In order to do so, it would be necessary to focus on two aspects of his story, the first being his experience of the Russo-Japanese war as the site of a fierce modern war, and second his experience at Toyama Military Academy as a place for practical training in cutting-edge military technology. That is to say, it is likely that Yajima's experiences of modern military methods in the areas of command and training, both during the Russo-Japanese war and at the Toyama Academy, informed his practical implementation of such methods in Tibet. This aspect of our study will be based on the thorough examination of remaining documents.

Such further study would also enable us to shed new light on the image of Yajima as a person. Indeed, until now, the image of Yajima has consistently been that of an "adventurer" (*bōkenka* 冒険家). After the Meiji in Japan, this word was generally used with a connotation of bravery and courage, and conveyed the idea of a character's physical strength and physical prowess predominating over intellectual refinement. This is the kind of individual that Yajima was reported to be.[45] Furthermore, it is suggested that Yajima was not imbued with the same kind of noble feelings or motivations ascribed to other Japanese travellers to Tibet (*nyūzōsha*) in this period. For example, the priests such as Yutaka Nōmi and Ekai Kawaguchi are considered to have been motivated by unyielding religious passion and intellectual curiosity, while Jinzō Nomoto and other special agents felt a deep sense of sacrifice and duty towards their nation. Furthermore, while these men stayed in Tibet for the purpose of acquiring the *Tripitaka* or doing intelligence work, Yajima had no such official purpose. This has contributed to an image of Yajima which is in stark contrast with the others, and tends to emphasise the idea that he lacked the knowledge or sense of duty of the others. This may be the primary factor for explaining why the focus to date has been mainly on the other more "adventurous" episodes of his life, rather than on his military experiences in Tibet. But was Yajima really devoid of knowledge and culture?

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[45] For example, Hisao Kimura, the author of the foreword to *My Diary in Tibet*, uses the expression "adventure lover pioneer" about Yajima, meaning that he is the archetype of the "brave guy" (*bōken-yarō* 冒険野郎) living in adventure (*My Diary in Tibet*, "Foreword", unpaged).

In some of the later accounts of this period of his life made by Yajima himself, there is reference to an episode that triggered his connection with the Tibetan army. This relates to a story about the aforementioned "military-style map" he made of Lhasa. It is said that this map caught the attention of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, and that it was as a consequence of this that Yajima was asked to train the Tibetan army.[46] However, a simple but important question remains—how was Yajima able to make such a map, an enterprise that requires both knowledge and techniques? Unfortunately, because the map itself has not been found among Yajima's mementos, there is no way to verify the level of expertise that was applied to its making. Nevertheless, if it is true that Yajima made such a map, we can assume that he possessed the required knowledge and techniques to do it. To date, at least with regard to the various above-mentioned secondary Japanese language sources, hardly any attention has been paid to the question of Yajima's knowledge, technique or abilities in this regard.

In the meantime, we can only put this question into perspective with the following two facts: Yajima had received a high school education, and had belonged to the Toyoma Academy Instruction Battalion. In the society of the Meiji era, access to high school was economically unrealistic for people who did not come from wealthy families. Except in the case of larger cities such as Tokyo and Osaka, the proportion of elementary school graduates that went on to high school was only about ten percent. This means that, relatively speaking, Yajima received a privileged education.

In addition, the fact that Yajima was a non-commissioned officer in the Instruction Battalion also attests to his abilities. As a rule, non-commissioned officers in the Instruction Battalion were selected from individuals from all over the country who excelled in work attitude, physical condition, knowledge and skill.[47] At the time of Yajima's service, there were 54 non-commissioned officers in the Instruction Battalion, which means from the entire country, only 54 had been qualified for this position. This proves that Yajima was deemed excellent, as a soldier at least. Furthermore, at Toyama Academy's Instruction Battalion, the instructors also served as battalion commanders, company commanders, and company officers.[48] From time to time, as part of the training exercises, these people gave lectures for both the soldiers and the non-commissioned officers who belonged to the Battalion. Well, several descriptions of such lectures can be found in Yajima's diary

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[46] For example, see his *Curriculum Vitae*, and *My Diary in Tibet*, 80.

[47] "Toyama Military Academy Ordinance", art. 28, edict number 54. See "Rikugun kyōikushi-Toyama gakkō no bu".

[48] *Ibid*.

during his days in the Instruction Battalion. This clearly indicates that Yajima, along with the other officers and soldiers of the Instruction Battalion were in a privileged environment that enabled them to come into contact with cutting-edge military technologies and methods. Therefore, the knowledge and skills that Yajima required to draw a "military-style map" of Lhasa were no doubt acquired at Toyama during his year and a half stay there.

Although it is fair to assume that the trigger for the Dalai Lama's interest in Yajima was his "military-style map", the interest taken by the Tibetan ruler in Yajima was most probably based on his discernment of the Japanese officer's wider military expertise. He had a direct personal experience of the modern army of Japan, a country regarded with admiration by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, and possessed the necessary skills to transmit his knowledge. Despite this, it was eventually the British military model, and not the Japanese, which prevailed from 1916 onwards as the main model for training Tibetan troops.

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