

## History

*"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."*

- Confucius

### Historical Overview

*<You are being provided only the information from the arrival of the People of New Lhasa on this continent and onwards. Thank you for your patience and understanding.>*

In 1854 the Dalai Lama, Empress Cian and her followers reached the port of San Francisco, a small and remote Spanish colony. They peaceably joined the settlement there, quadrupling the population, and for many years the Chinese and Spanish coexisted. The Spanish married into the Chinese families and the cultures began to meld.

In 1865, the Dalai Lama, aged much beyond his time demanded that the people leave San Francisco. Some stayed, and others moved on. Exactly a lunar month after they left the Upheaval occurred. The land erupted, and the skies burned. Heaven and Earth shifted as the world experienced the true horror of an Intercalary period. When Heaven and Earth finally adjusted San Francisco was gone and buried beneath the ocean, but the followers survived. That very night, the Dalai Lama, who had led them to safety died in his sleep and ascended, his task complete.

The Empress Dowager C'ian led the effort, with the help of the Elder Council, to start anew. It was at that time that the people's Qi began to manifest. The inner strength of the people became an everyday occurrence, and those particularly skilled in the old ways found even greater power. But with this change came the first reports of Wandering Ghosts, people who had died far from family. They converged on the city trying to reach home. Eventually, with the ancient rites observed, the ghosts were banished from the city.

It was not long after the threat of the Wandering Ghosts was over, that they met their neighbors. At first, the interactions with the Laramites and the People of the Land were positive and they were held in high esteem; however the meeting of these people coincided with the appearance of the Revenants. Lhasan scholars and advisors deemed that the poisoning of the culture by contact with the outsiders was responsible. It was ruled that all trade would take place away from Lhasa soil, to keep the land pure. Even so, it was not enough to stop the spread of the Kee-Wakw threat. In 1872, the Battle of Bear Butte, against the fiercest of the Kee-Wakw, Schila Tanka Mato, was successful. The Laramites provided their heaviest artillery, and the Natives brought skilled hunters and shaman. In the end, the Chinese won the fight with their alchemical knowledge and powerful Qi.

Every triumph, however, comes at a price. As more and more of their citizens were drawn to Laramie, the spiritual troubles around Lhasa continued to increase. Unhappy with this alarming trend, many families choose to shun and disown those that choose to sign the Code of Laramie. In 1876, in an effort to secure their future, the wise Elder Council issued the Lotus Decree: Those who wished to enter Lhasa would be welcomed and integrated into the population. All who came were given homes with host families and lessons in the prevailing traditions. Every effort was made towards their safety, comfort, and education. The generosity that Lhasa showed to these families was misinterpreted by the Laramites and the

People of the Land. Jealous of the wealth and education of Lhasa, they spread lies of “imprisonment.”

In time, word reached Lhasa about the Cardiff explorers through Diplomat reports and traders’ tales. The Scholars consulted the records, and advised the Elder Council that the 3 nations of Cardiff were not to be trusted, and were land-seeking. The actions of the Cardiff explorers proved this truth over the next year. In 1884, during the latest round of diplomatic overtures, the creation of a railroad between Cardiff and Laramie was proposed. The Lhasa diplomats, in a brilliant strategic move, revealed the nation and demanded recognition from Cardiff. Now many of the citizens of Lhasa have been granted permission to go forth and represent the interests of their people.

## Major Events

### The Refugees Arrive (mid 1850s)

The People of Lhasa reached the port of San Francisco. Since they outnumbered the Spanish people many times over, they joined the settlement there, quadrupling the population. The whole community banded together and lived there peaceably.

### The Founding of New Lhasa (mid 1860s and early 1870s)

After escaping from the destroyed San Francisco, the People of Lhasa began to rebuild. Shortly after the rebuilding the People’s Qi began to manifest. With this change, came the first reports of Wandering Ghosts. With the ancient rites observed, the ghosts were banished from the city.

### The Battle of Bear Butte (early 1870s)

The Battle of Bear Butte, against the fiercest of the Kee-Wakw, Schila Tanka Mato, was successful, but cost many lives. The monster was tall as a mountain with hide as thick as dragon and claws as sharp as a tiger. The Laramites provided their heaviest artillery, and the Natives brought skilled hunters and shaman. In the end, the skill of the Art of the True Human Being and The Eight Immortals won the fight with their alchemical knowledge and powerful Qi.

### The Lotus Decree (mid 1870s)

Named after the Buddhist symbol for the complete purification of the defilements of the body, speech and mind, this decree represented the People of Lhasa's deep need for cultural unity. With the heavy appeal and opportunities of Laramie, many of the young in Lhasa choose to leave. When they did leave, the spiritual troubles around Lhasa increased. Fearing the consequences, the Elder Council issued the Lotus Decree: Travel in and out of the city was severely restricted for citizens. Those who wished to enter Lhasa would be welcomed and integrated into the population. An education and integration program was started by the Elder Council to help the new citizens. Everyone would need to earn a pass to leave.

### The Lotus Dilemma (mid 1870s)

When several of the integrated population left the city and other nations found out, it caused great tensions between Lhasa and the others. This did nothing to change the Lotus Decree policies and it is still in effect. Since then, life has been much more stable in Lhasa due to the continuing education and fostering program. However, relations to this day have been strained due to the policy.

## Notable Leadership/Governance

**Ban Zhao** served with the Empress Cian as her attendant in Zhongguo. She was offered a seat on the Elder Council and is revered as a scholar and patron of the arts. When she is not in meetings, she is often found teaching children and sharing her stories and insights with others. Many refer to her as the Grandmother (Nainai).

**Bao Yu** is a member of the Elder Council and the patriarch of the wealthiest merchant family in New Lhasa. In the turmoil of the upheaval he took advantage and built his empire and trade network.

**Bao Zheng & Bao Rita** Zheng is the 2nd son of Council member, Bao Yu, and is a well respected and well trained diplomat. He and his wife, Rita Yu, are often sent to abroad to make trades and keep open communications with the People of the Land and Laramie.

**Boshi Yeye** is the oldest man alive in New Lhasa and the founder of the Grand Historian Society. At this point, no one really knows his original name as he goes by his honorary title, Grandfather Grand Scholar. He runs the Grand Historian Society with an all-consuming purpose. His voracious appetite for new writing and old texts is legendary.

**Cao Guolao** is the foremost expert on gunpowder and alchemy. She runs the Eight Immortals and is responsible for many of the incredible inventions and advancements New Lhasa has achieved. She is known to have Daoist leanings and, as such, tends to lead only by example, not through direct action.

**Guo Xun** has been on the Elder Council since it was formed at the creation of New Lhasa. As such, he is respected for his hard work and dedication to leading the people. He is a great supporter of the arts and is a devout buddhist.

**Han Xiangyu** is the foremost expert on ancient rites and a member of the Advisory Bureau. He earned his fame through developing a plan to ward off the Wandering Ghosts that plagued New Lhasa in its earliest years. His obsession with ancient texts and figures has led to conflict with the inclusionists.

**Isabella Montana** as child genius she passed the exams and was welcomed into the Advisory Bureau with the backing of Ban Zhao. Her mentor was instrumental in having her appointed the advisor on the educational programs that were implemented to counteract the effect of the Code of Laramie. It is believed that given her youth and enthusiasm she would be able to connect with the children that were tempted to leave.

**Ming Torres** is the organizing force behind the Eight Immortals and handles the administrative aspects of the institution. He is known to be a huge fan of games of chance and fond of challenging their membership to push their limits.

**Wu Feng** is well known as an experienced warrior and was trained through the masters in the Art of the True Human Being. She was hailed as a hero in the Battle of Bear Butte by the

people, as her strategic insights were instrumental to success that day. She was rewarded with a permanent position on the Advisory Bureau.

**Xing Liao** is the leader of the Art of the True Human Being. She is an expert in meditation and the foremost expert on the Middle Way. Her father, the founder, was a monk who studied under the Dalai Lama, and as such his teachings have been passed down through her. Many regard her to have the truest understanding of the Buddhism.

## **Geographical Landmarks**

Lhasa is a city on the edge of a mountain with great plains and forests all around. Chiseled into the side of the mountain sits the center of the city with its greatest landmarks.

### **The Top Tier**

The Palace of Lhasa was designed by the late Empress Dowager C'ian, and inspired by her time in the Imperial Palace. It is now the residence of the Elder Council, and the most trusted members of the Advisory Bureau. The Art of the True Human Being temple is built into the mountain itself, with large prayer wheels in the entrance and prayer flags streaming from the sides of the mountain. The Grand Scholar Society Headquarters is located at the top of the mountain, and scholars can be found mixing with the monks and staff of the Advisory Bureau. Many of the city's most influential people live here in terraced houses surrounded by ornate gates. They usually hire private tutors for their children from the Grand Historian Society. Those from the lower city, when invited to the upper city, wear their family heirloom silk (if they still have any) as a sign of respect and pride.

### **The Middle of the Mountain**

Further down the mountain is the trade center where the merchants and alchemists live and work. There are beautiful textiles of wool, cotton and linen, heaps of rice, the sound of sheep, the sharp tang of teas, and the scent of powders and herbs. The headquarters of the Eight Immortals is the largest establishment outside the market square. Inside the strange smells of the experiments mixes with the overwhelming odor of sulfur. Gunpowder, Lhasa's most popular export, is made almost exclusively here, but it is stored deep within the depths of the complex and guarded at all times.

### **The Foothills**

At the foot of the hills leading to the mountain are the irrigated farms and many smaller homes. Most of the day laborers, craftsmen, farmers and integrated families live here. The people here dress simply for a hard day at work. Generally, children attend the city's sponsored schools with hundreds of others during the day while their families are in the fields.

## **Culture**

### **Everyday Life**

Daily life doesn't change very much for the average citizen. Early morning is spent with a family over breakfast before each person is off to their tasks for the day. In the evenings, for those that have the means, a tea ceremony is an excellent way to end the day.

With the lunar calendar (28 day month) the 7th day was often reserved for time with ones family and for cleaning and maintaining the house shrine. Another thing with this calendar that influenced daily life is certain days are more auspicious for different activities. Consulting and planning for the luckiest day to accomplish a task is a normal part of life. Otherwise, festivals throughout the year bring about welcome changes from the routine.

With the settlement of New Lhasa complete and survival of the city based off complex infrastructure that needs to be maintained, all citizens contribute either in the form of goods or manual labor on a public works project . No public works projects take place during harvest time or emergencies. Outside of those times, there is always a maintenance or expansion project occurring in the city.

### **Social Mores**

Bowing is a sign of respect to others when you greet them. To bow you put both hands in front of you in a circle, with palms open facing you and then bend down with a straight back. Depending on your position in relation to that person the depth of your bow denotes a certain amount of respect. The deeper the bow, the more respect you show to that person; however too deep or shallow a bow can be disrespectful or mocking. In addition to welcoming people with a bow, if you have the means, it is always polite to offer tea or a snack as well before starting a long conversation.

Because the Chinese refugees far outnumbered the Spanish settlers, when the cultures intermingled the Chinese was made into the official written language. You'll find that compliments, titles, or high honors will be in Chinese; however insults or negative descriptors will be in Spanish.

Since many of the hereditary prejudices have been erased by the journey and creation of New Lhasa, people who have gained honors have done so through merit and public opinion. This means if someone has an innate talent it is typically nurtured or rewarded regardless of original ethnicity, age, or initial wealth. If you have embraced their ways, you are a Lhasan.

### **Recreation**

In their spare time, many of the Lhasan people choose to indulge in art, strategy games or physical activities.

#### **Art**

Reading, Poetry, Calligraphy, Painting, Music, Opera (Beijing & Zarzuela Style), etc.

#### **Strategy Games**

Backgammon, Mahjong, Weiqi, Pai Gow, Xiangqi, Chess, Draughts, etc.

#### **Physical Activities**

Martial Arts, Tai Chi, Dance, etc.

#### **The National Pastime**

The Tea Ceremony: In China, Tea was first introduced to common people as a medicine, and then a food spice, and later a new material for drinking. Tea was later introduced to the royal family, and then the buddhist monasteries. Tea's bitter taste can refer to buddhist suffering;

the clean and clear tea liquid can refer to the monastery rule of self-discipline, and calm. In Chinese history, many famous buddhist temples had planted and nurtured tea trees of great variety and high quality.

## **Holidays**

These are the major times of the year that the people pull out their old family silks and celebrate!

### **Spring Festival**

1st - 15th of the first lunar month

It is the grandest and the most important festival for Chinese people. It is also the time for the whole family to get together. It culminates in the Lantern Festival feast. People watch red lanterns and fireworks, tell riddles, and perform folk dances.

### **Carnival**

Late February/Early March

A tradition carried over from the Spanish families, this has become a festive season to break the doldrums of winter. It typically involves a public celebration or parade combining some elements of a circus and a mask party. People often dress up or masquerade during the celebrations.

### **Qingming Festival**

April 4th or 5th of the solar calendar

This festival has a close relationship with agriculture. It is a day of paying respect to the dead, spring outings, tomb sweeping, and flying kites.

### **Dragon Boat Festival**

5th day of the 5th lunar month

This festival commemorates the patriotic poet Qu Yuan (340-278 BC). Among the customs observed are dragon boat racing, eating zongzi, wearing a perfume pouch, tying five-colour thread and hanging mugwort leaves and calamus.

### **Double Seventh Festival**

7th day of seventh lunar month

Because of the beautiful legend about Niu Lang and Zhi Nu , the festival has been endowed with the meaning of great romance. Many pray for skillful hands, appreciate the stars, and eat noodles, jiaozi, and wontons.

### **Mid-autumn Festival**

15th day of the 8th lunar month

Mid-Autumn Festival is an inherited custom of moon sacrificial ceremonies. The ancient Chinese observed that the movement of the moon had a close relationship with changes of the seasons and agricultural production. On the festival day, family members gather to offer sacrifices, like incense and wine, to the moon. Typically this is a time to appreciate the bright full moon, eat moon cakes, and express strong yearnings toward family members and friends who live afar.

### **Dia De Los Muertos**

November 1

This is a festival to celebrate and honor one's ancestors. It's based on the belief that there is interaction between the living world and the world of spirits on this day. On the Día de los Muertos, the spirits of the dead are said to come back for family reunions. Many celebrate setting altars in their homes to honor the memory of deceased loved ones and to welcome their visiting souls. Others visit their loved one's cemetery plot and decorate it with flowers, candles and food. The holiday is celebrated with family and community gatherings, music, and feasting, and the festivity of its observance acknowledges death as an integral part of life.

### **Winter Solstice**

Dec. 21st, 22nd or 23rd in solar calendar

On that day, the northern hemisphere has the shortest day and longest night. After that, areas in this hemisphere have longer days and shorter nights. People have dumplings and sticky puddings to celebrate with their families.

### **Spirituality & Beliefs**

The average citizen practices Tibetan Buddhism mixed with Daoist and Confucian beliefs. There are also many deities that the people celebrate and follow.

### **Buddhism**

Buddhism is appealing to most because of its emphasis on morality, ritual, and the cultivation of inner wisdom through the Middle Way. This ability to develop oneself is believed to be available to everyone who spends the time and makes the effort to develop insight.

Emphasized in the teachings are the importance of restraint and moderation. Holy days are celebrated by visiting temples to make offerings of prayers, incense, fruits, flowers and donations.

### **Confucianism**

Confucianism focuses on the importance of the cultivation of virtue and maintenance of ethics. Relationships are central to Confucianism. Particular duties arise from one's particular situation in relation to others. The individual stands simultaneously in several different relationships with different people: as a junior in relation to parents and elders, and as a senior in relation to younger siblings, students, and others. While juniors are considered in Confucianism to owe their seniors reverence, seniors also have duties of benevolence and concern toward juniors. Specific duties were prescribed to each of the participants in each set of relationships.

1. Ruler to Ruled/Master to Apprentice
2. Parent to Child
3. Elder Sibling to Younger Sibling

Such duties were also extended to the dead, where the living stood as sons to their deceased family. Other relationships are considered nearly equal and mutual equal respect is emphasized instead.

### **Daoism**

Daoism is a philosophical, ethical, and religious tradition that emphasizes living in harmony with the Dao. The term Dao means "way", "path" or "principle". Its keystone work is widely regarded to be the Dao De Jing, a compact and ambiguous book containing teachings attributed to Lǎozǐ. Daoism tends to emphasize various themes of naturalness, spontaneity, simplicity, detachment from desires, and most important of all, wu wei [action through

in-action]. It asserts that one must place their will in harmony with the natural universe. Thus, a potentially harmful interference is to be avoided, and in this way, goals can be achieved effortlessly. Famous Daoist tales speak of Sages and Alchemists finding the secret to eternal life.

## Factions

### Government

Once the exams are passed, a position in the government is almost guaranteed. Minor decisions are decided by the Advisory Board, but items that cannot be resolved or are major decisions are presented to the Elder Council. On a day to day level, most people will only have to deal with the guards from the Art of the True Human Being, who serve not only as a moral institution, but also are a source of the law and justice among the people.

### Elder Council

The Council is comprised of 9 members who make the major decisions on policy and resources in New Lhasa. It is a rare honor to be selected from the Advisory Bureau to rise to the council and new members are only welcomed upon the death of others.

### Advisory Bureau

This is an invite-only organization that reports to the Elder Council. It is composed of the most reputable people from every background, from warrior to craftsman to scholars. They are on-call to the Elder Council to advise on any number of projects. People invited into the society are subjected to difficult exams. Once they pass they are, by far, most influential in public policy.

### Military

New Lhasa has a force of warriors available due to the Art of the True Human Being Temple. Although that force may be smaller than other nations, the education system ensures that most people have a small amount of martial knowledge and may be conscripted to help in conflicts or defence. Often, during childhood a personal with potential will be fostered with a military family or strategist to enhance their natural abilities.

### The Art of the True Human Being

Formed by the Buddhists of Lhasa, this organization emphasizes the Middle Way. Through meditation, tai chi and kung fu they build their skill and harness their Qi. Commonly, people turn to them for consults on military strategy and security, as well as morality and wisdom.

### Social

There are many formal organizations that run with the help of the government for essential services. Outside of those, there is not much structure. Most social activities and events take place in the middle of the mountain near the markets.

### The Grand Historian Society

The aim of this society is to maintain and collect knowledge of the past that was left behind, and to seek out new knowledge. Many of Lhasa's greatest scholars and diplomats were trained by this organization.



## The Eight Immortals

The Eight Immortals were a group of legendary immortals and alchemists in Chinese mythology. Each Immortal's power was transferred to a tool that could bestow life or destroy evil. The alchemists of Lhasa have gathered under this name to study this ancient art and the proper application of Qi.

## Views on Other Nations

**The United Kingdom:** They are an untrustworthy people, only interested in gaining power and control over our lands. When we were Zhongguo Ren we outsmarted them and made them acknowledge our superiority, but it would be unwise to underestimate their intelligence and technology.

**The People of the Land:** We respect that they worship their ancestors and acknowledge the spirits like us; however they are utter savages with no concept of law and order. Their chaos contributes to the imbalance of the world.

**The United States of America:** They are like a child to the world. What could they possibly know with only a century under their belt? They think much of themselves and are wholly an unreliable bunch.

**The Roman Ascendancy:** These people are intolerable. When we were Zhongguo Ren we welcomed them with open arms and allowed their missionaries until their Emperor, whom they called "Pope", disrespected us by trying to force our people to stop worshipping our ancestors. We shun them, their ignorance, and their stubbornness at every opportunity.

**Fortress Laramie:** They are trying to steal our citizens away from our traditions and values. Though they are valuable trade partners, that is no excuse for sending scouts to infiltrate our society and unbalance Lhasa.

## Crime and Punishment

Horse Thieving: To steal a horse or a herd from its rightful owner. (5 years in prison)

Rustling: To steal a herd of cattle from its rightful owner. (5 years in prison)

Buffalo Hunting: To hunt wild buffalo without owner. (Not a crime)

Murder: To end the life of another person, regardless of circumstance (Hanging)

Attempted Murder: Like Murder, but without success. (Hanging)

Bank Robbery: To rob resources or funds from an established bank. (Hanging)

Train Robbery: To rob resources or funds from an active train. (Hanging)

Theft of an Official: To rob resources or funds from someone who holds an official position of office, such as a sheriff, marshal or mayor. (20 years in prison)

Grand Larceny: The theft of resources or funds in excess of \$100.00, not counting horses or cattle. (20 years in prison)

Theft: The theft of resources or funds under \$100.00, not counting horses or cattle. (5 years in prison)

Drunk in Public: Displays of egregious behavior while drunk. (Caning)

Public Lewdness: Appearance that promotes lewd behavior or otherwise considered indecent (Caning)

Disorderly Conduct: Behavior that causes a ruckus, such as rough-housing, bar fights and the like. (Caning)

Carrying a Weapon in a No-Weapon Zone: Being armed in an area marked as a "No-Weapon Zone" by the authorities. (Confiscation, Bagging, plus \$10.00 fine)

Desecration of Religious Items: destruction or graffiti of a temple or shrine, whether personal, familial or public (5 years in prison)

Entrance to Lhasa: Entering Lhasa without citizenship or special dispensation from the Elder Council (permanent imprisonment and education)

## Costuming Guide/Clothing

Overall, costuming should consist of wool, linen and cotton as access to silk was lost over 20 years ago. The construction of the garments would follow the typical Qing era wear, but with the addition of Spanish accents, such as embroidery and color.

### General Garments

People generally wear simple clothing if they don't represent a specific organization or have a position that requires formal dress. Very special occasions, such as festivals, funerals, and weddings, do bring out a family's antique silk. Any silk items are highly prized. Predominantly Spanish families still follow this tradition by either buying silk from impoverished families or creating elaborately embroidered pieces. Since the Spanish have been integrated into this culture, accents like color, trim, or embroidery that follow a more Spanish style are appropriate.

### Monks

The monks wear clothing that resembles what you would see on a modern day Buddhist monk. If you are considering dressing like a Daoist monk, their clothing either consist of a long simple robe or shirt and pants. Typically the robes are white and the shirt and pants combination are black or grey. It should be easy to move in.

### Scholars & Diplomats

You'll often find scholars in many layers of long robes, with the most decorative one on top and simple whites below. They tend to wear distinctive hats or headscarves.

### Warriors

Warriors from New Lhasa tend to wear leather armor or plate mail into battle. Often the armor is emblazoned with their family name and colors. Underneath you'll find comfortable pants and a long shirt.

### **Color Restrictions**

Bright Gold/Yellow is the color associated with the Emperor, so wearing that color will be seen as a show of arrogance.

The bright orange cloth of the monk's outfit does specifically denote a Buddhist monks, so wearing this color without the approval of the local Buddhist organizations can spell social trouble for you.