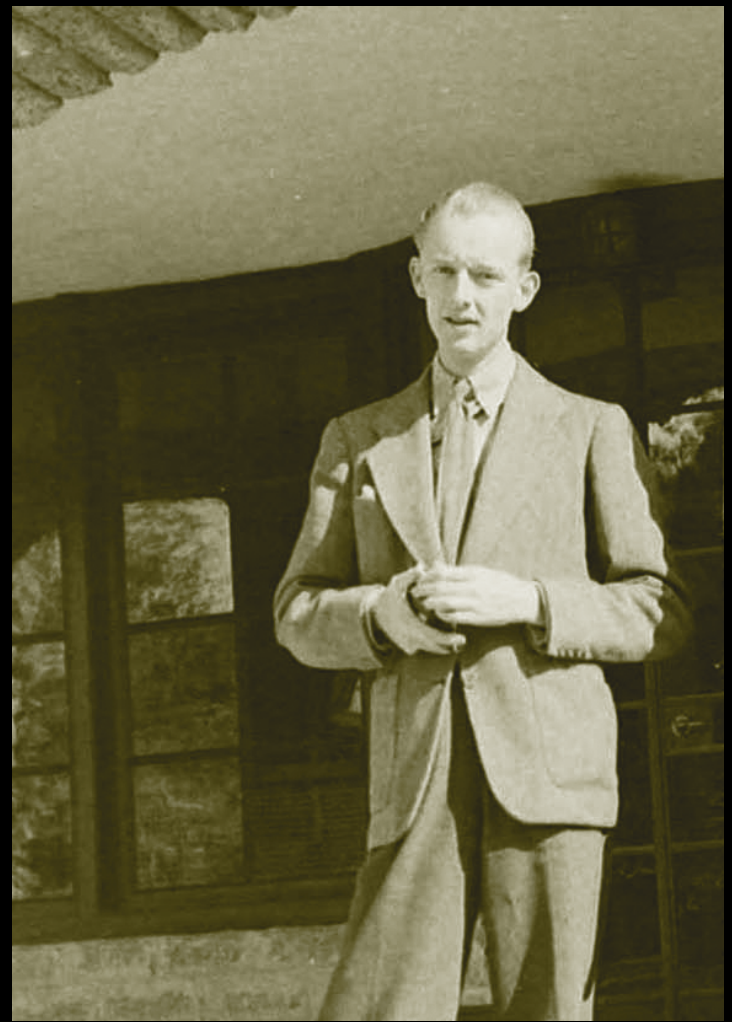


*A Glimpse of Another World:
A Journey Through Western Tibet (1938)*

*Selected Photographs by
F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr. and Wilbur L. Cummings, Jr.*



Wilbur L. Cummings, Jr. (1914-1943)



F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr. (1913 – 2008)

In June 1938, at the ages of 24 and 25, Wilbur L. Cummings, Jr. and F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr. set off on an expedition into Tibet to photograph the famous *Lama* dances in Gyantse, Western Tibet.

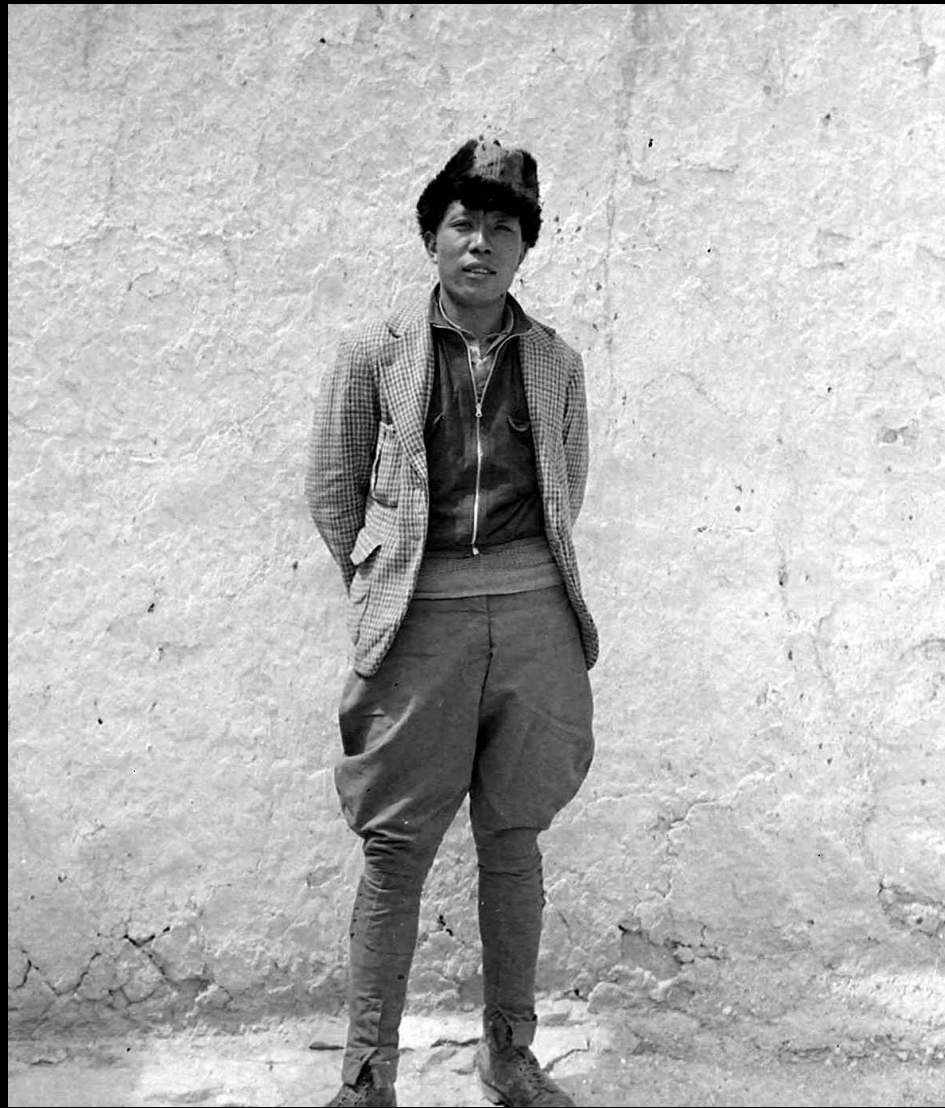


Travelling approximately 200 miles in 10 days, the two young Americans ventured on foot from Kalimpong, India to Gyantse in Western Tibet along an ancient trade route.





“Our caravan consisted of one guide, one translator, two grooms, three muleteers, and eight pack animals of mules, horses, and yaks.”



“Our interpreter was Ugden Thundup Lal, a young man we found in Darjeeling who attended English school, but he was born in Yatung so he also spoke Tibetan.”



“The going was so slow because of the prevalence of falls like this one...”



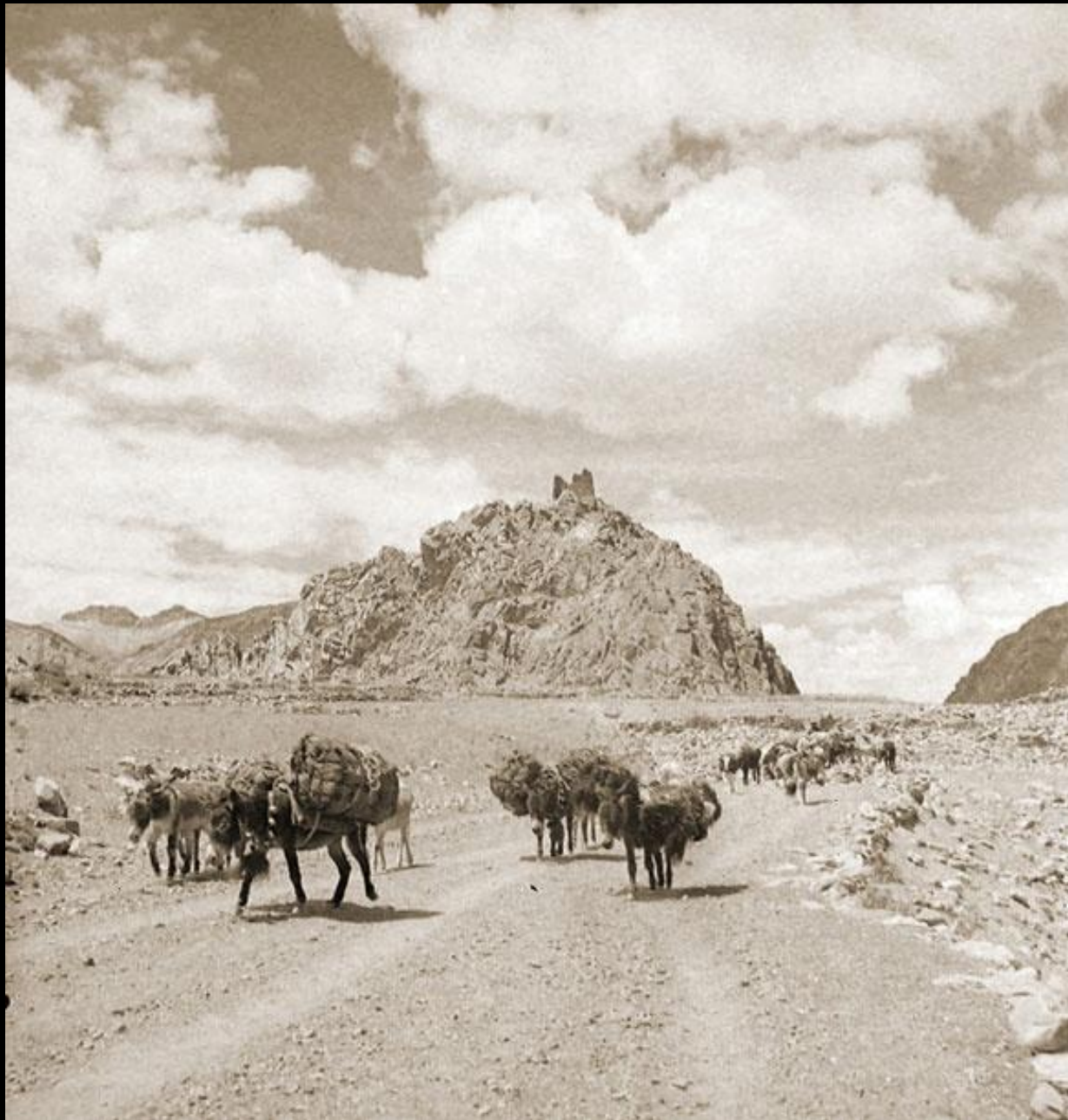
“As we stood there, astride both those worlds...we looked back towards the plains of India, catching a glimpse of the snow-clad Himalayas in the distance.”



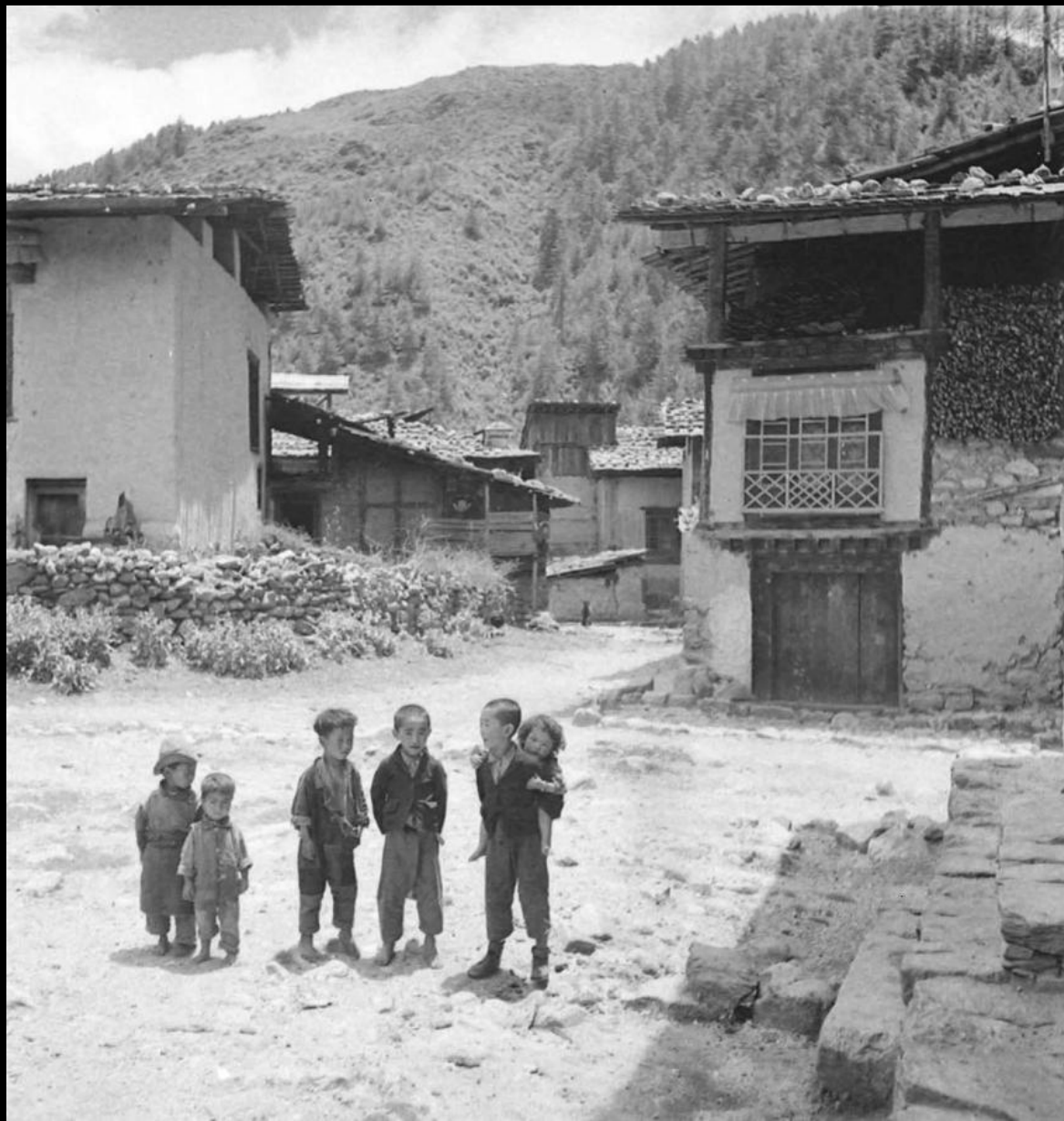
“Here is the top...about 18,600 feet. Our guide, Aku, told us that here you do not pass without adding a stone to the carin (a prayer for safety).



“A familiar sight along the way were *chortens* (Buddhist mounds) and prayer flags. The prayer flags have a short life whipped by the constant wind in these places.”



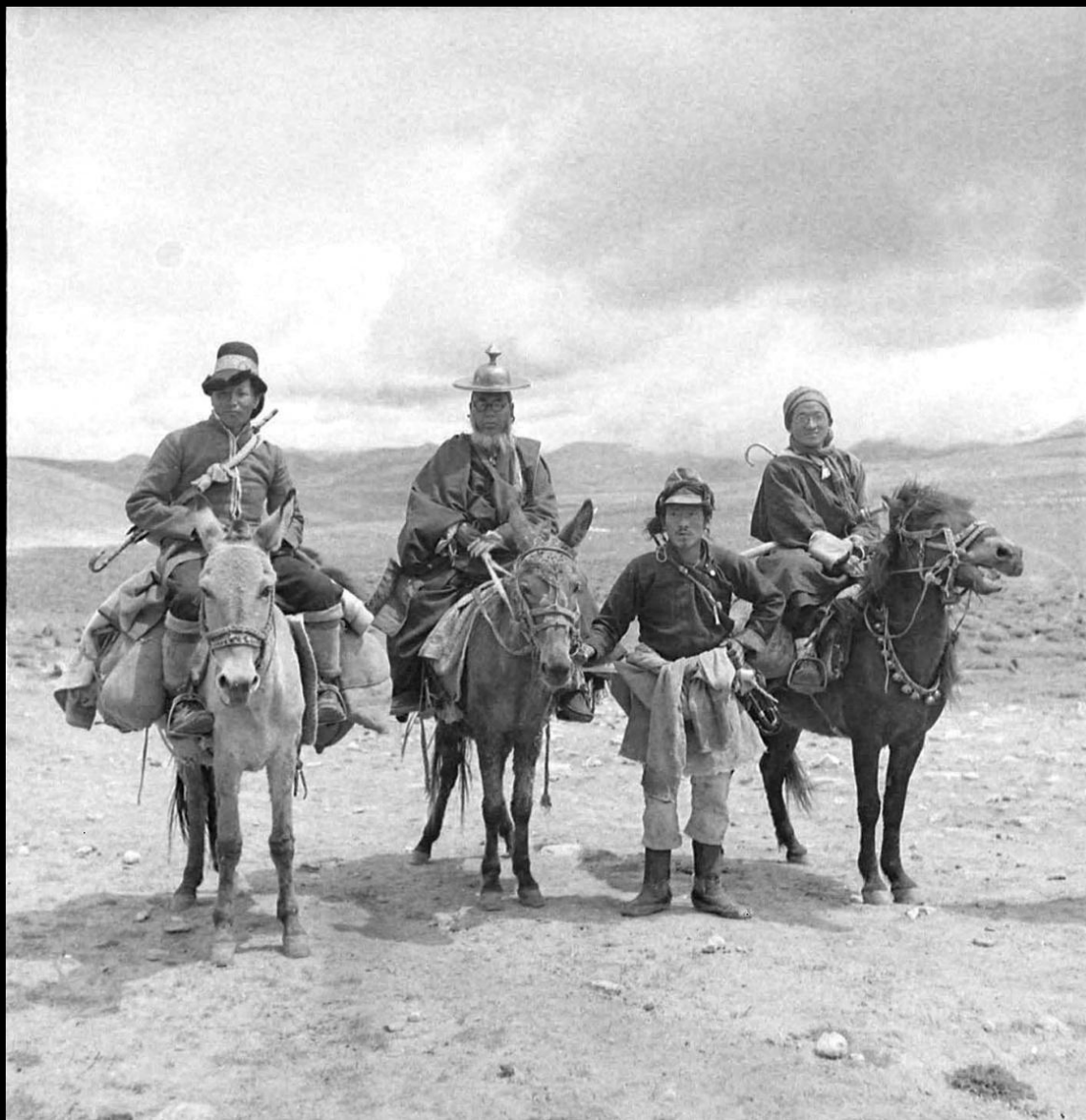
“Passing several wool caravans bound for India.”



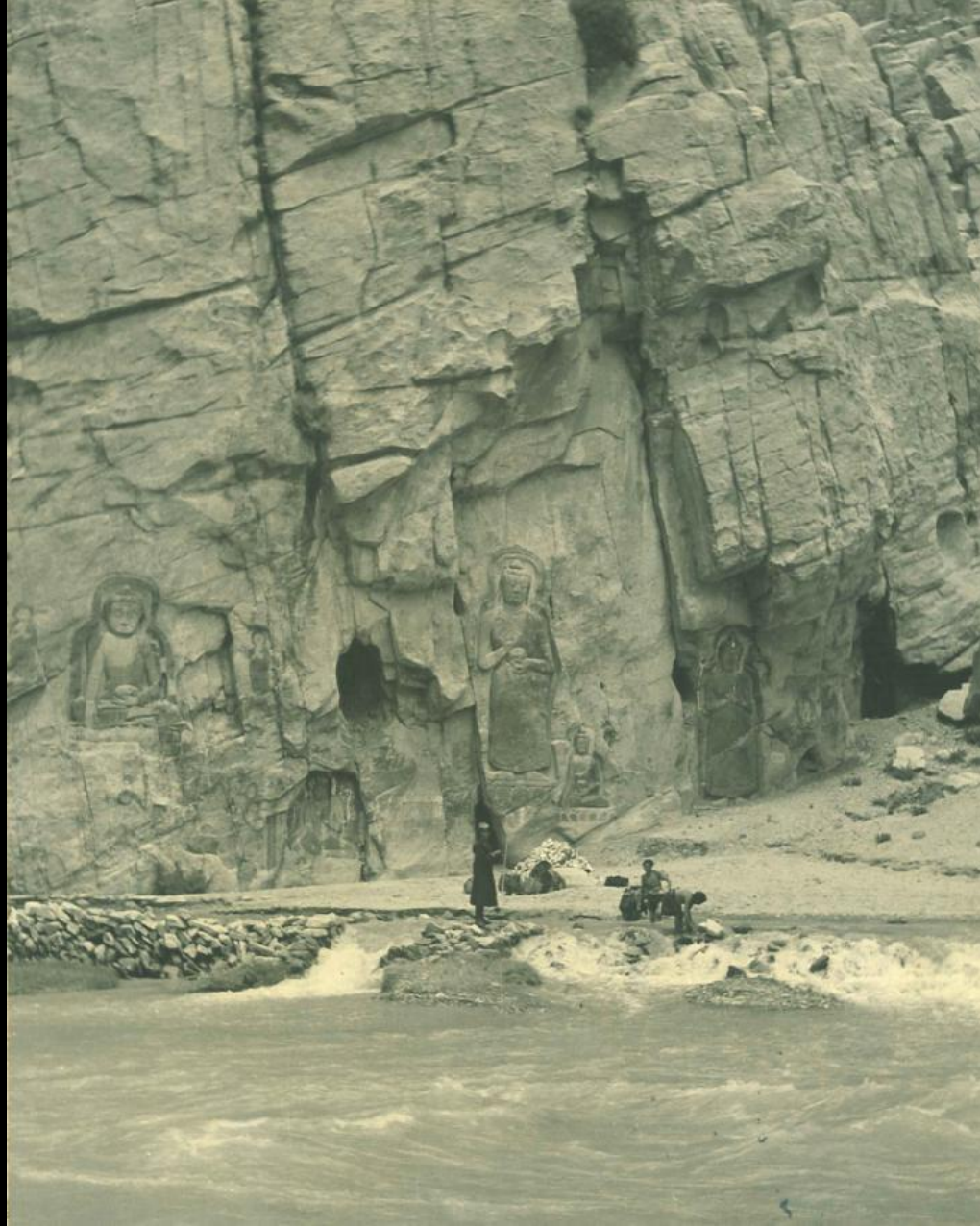
“...we passed through the village of Yatung much to the delight of the children, and stopped at the magistrate’s office to show our permits and replace our exhausted horses.”



Traveling Container and Jade Bowls
Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr.
Santa Barbara Museum of Art



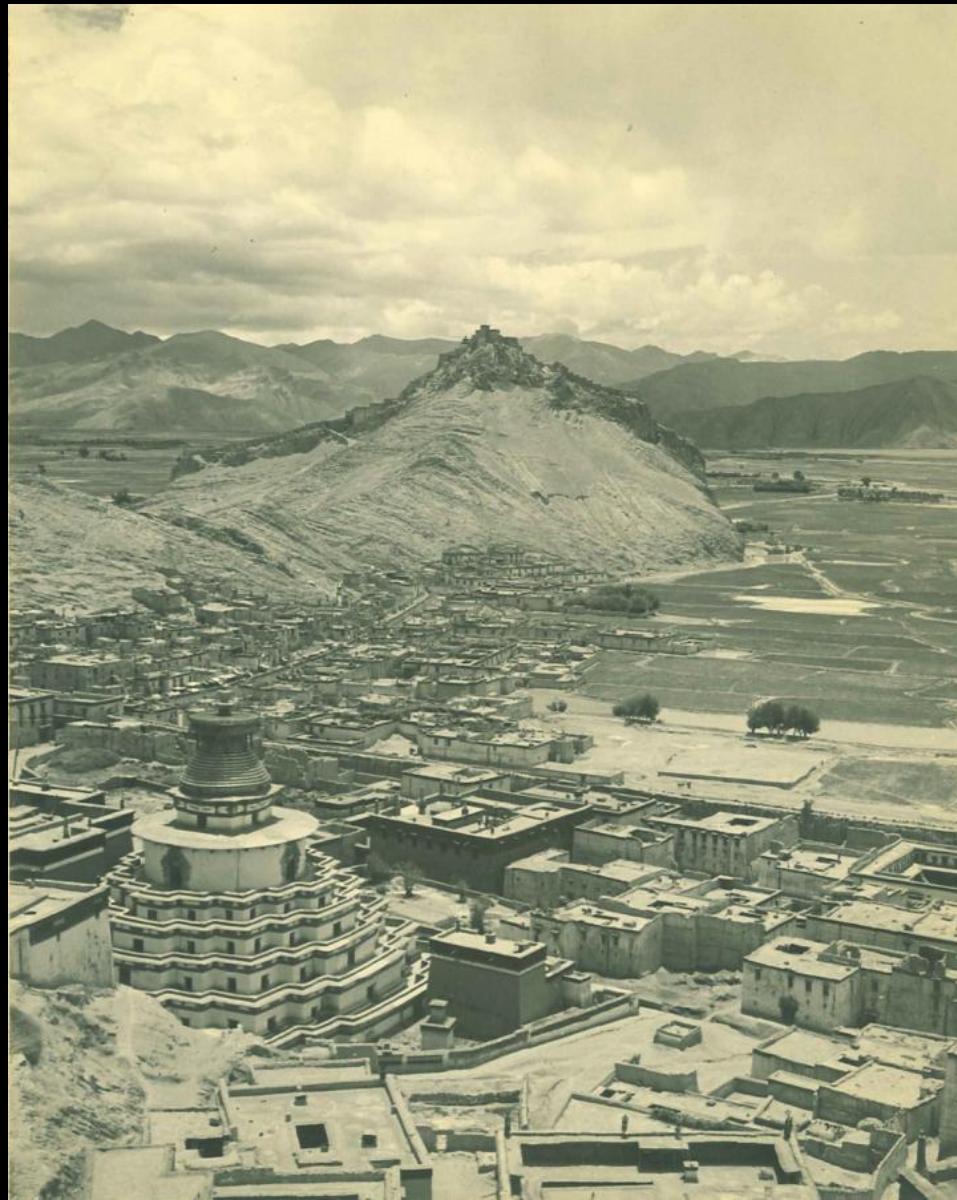
“The dignified gentleman in the middle was a *Rinpoche* ‘Precious One,’ a high-ranking reincarnated *Lama*. Our paths crossed when his group stopped to have lunch...his attendants served him soup and curry in beautiful white and green jade bowls.”



Buddhist deities carved and painted on the cliff by the river crossing.



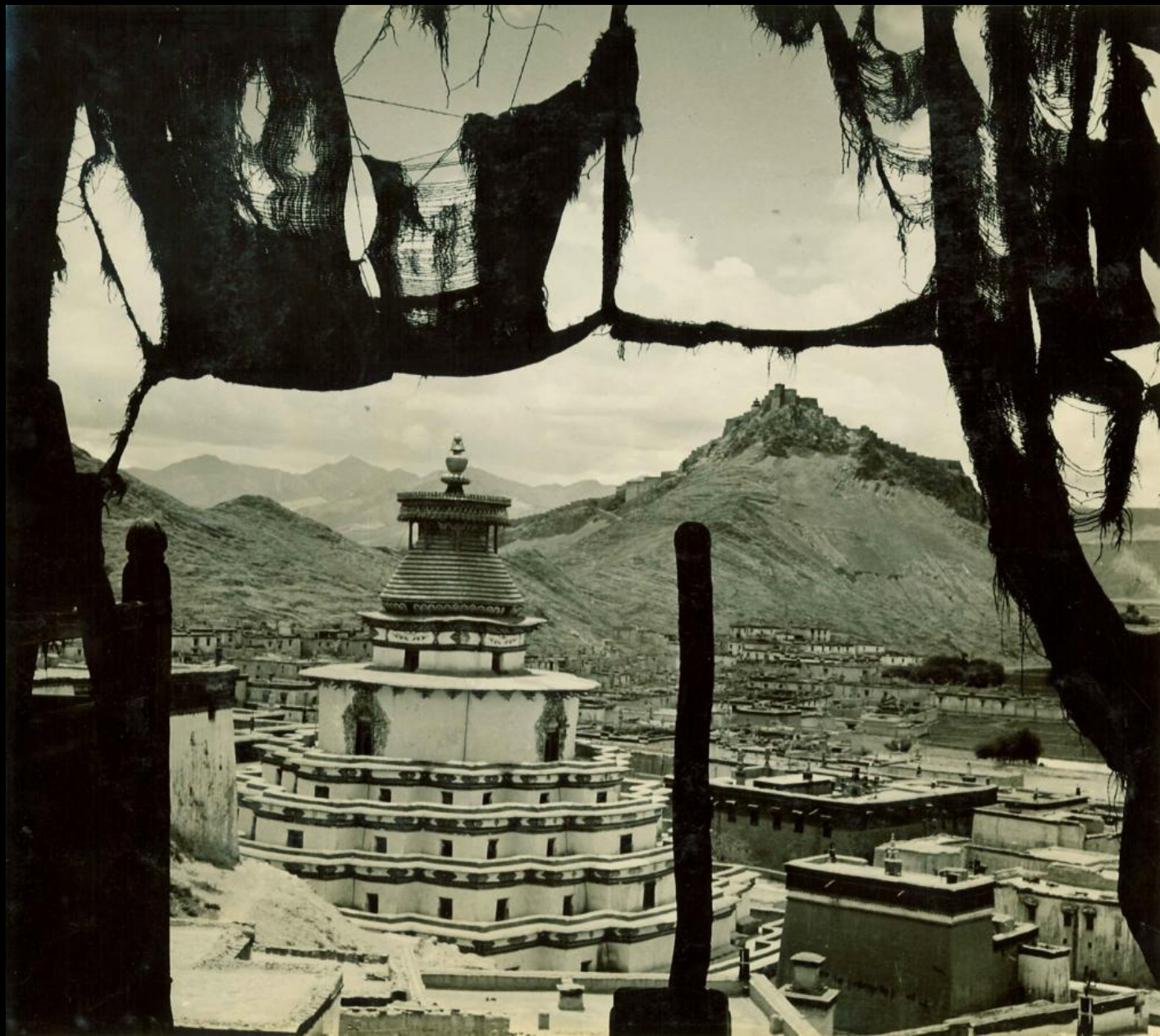
Roadside shrine



“We finally arrived at our destination, Gyantse...in time to take photographs of the *Saga Dawa* festival the next day, a celebration of the day Buddha attained enlightenment.”



The *Palkhor Chöde* monastery, built in the 14th century and its' giant stupa called *Kumbum* or "Temple of 1000 Buddhas"



“Through what the wind has left of the curtain, we see the giant stupa *Kumbum*, and in the distance the *Dzong*, or Fort, on its mountain peak.”

The *Saga Dawa* Festival

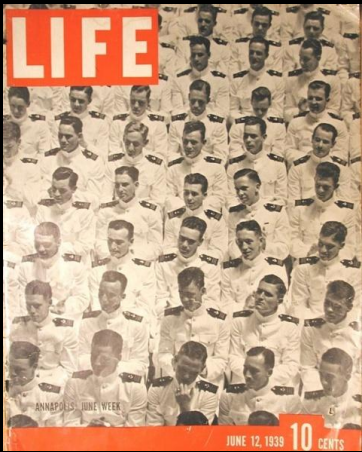
Celebrating the Day Buddha Obtained Enlightenment
15th day of the 4th lunar month



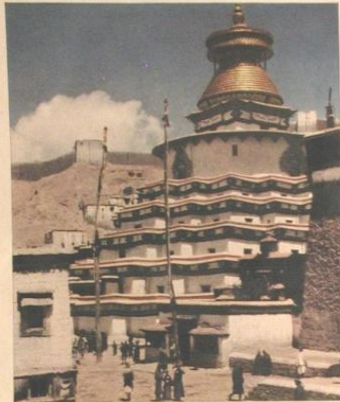
“...dawn lights up the fort just as the monks begin to unroll the great *thangka* (painting) on the pylon , inaugurating the *thangka* ceremony.”



“The great *thangka* is enormous, for it is in three sections, the center section, featuring the Buddha of Wisdom (*Manjusri*) measuring about a 100 feet square. It is made entirely of pieces of brocade which have been sewn together to make the picture.”



Tibet (continued)



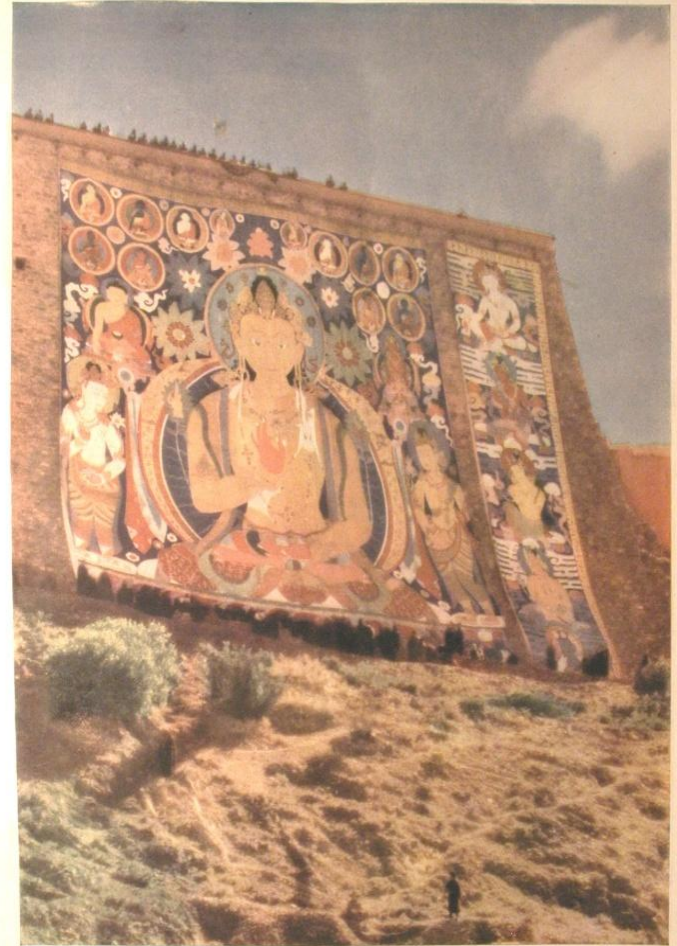
The Golden Tower, gleaming at the top of the Great Chorten, the Shrine of 100,000 Images, can be seen for miles across the flat valley. The shrine is open only at full of the moon.



The Golden Buddha, three stories high, located in Lhasa of Greater Tibet, has his silver altar burn ornate butter lamps. Fine silk gift scarves are hung about the statue.



Lord Buddha says farewell to pleasure palace built for him by his Rajah father. In the foreground princess his horse, ready to bear him off to the wilderness contemplation where Buddhism emerged. This exquisite fresco, showing unique combination of Persian and Chinese styles, was hidden for centuries, until photographed, under layers of dirt and green.



LAMAS AND VILLAGERS CROWD TO TOUCH THE HEM OF THE SACRED TANGKA. GERMANS ARE FRIGHTENED OFF BY WILLOW BRANCH RAISED AT THE TOP OF THE WALL

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

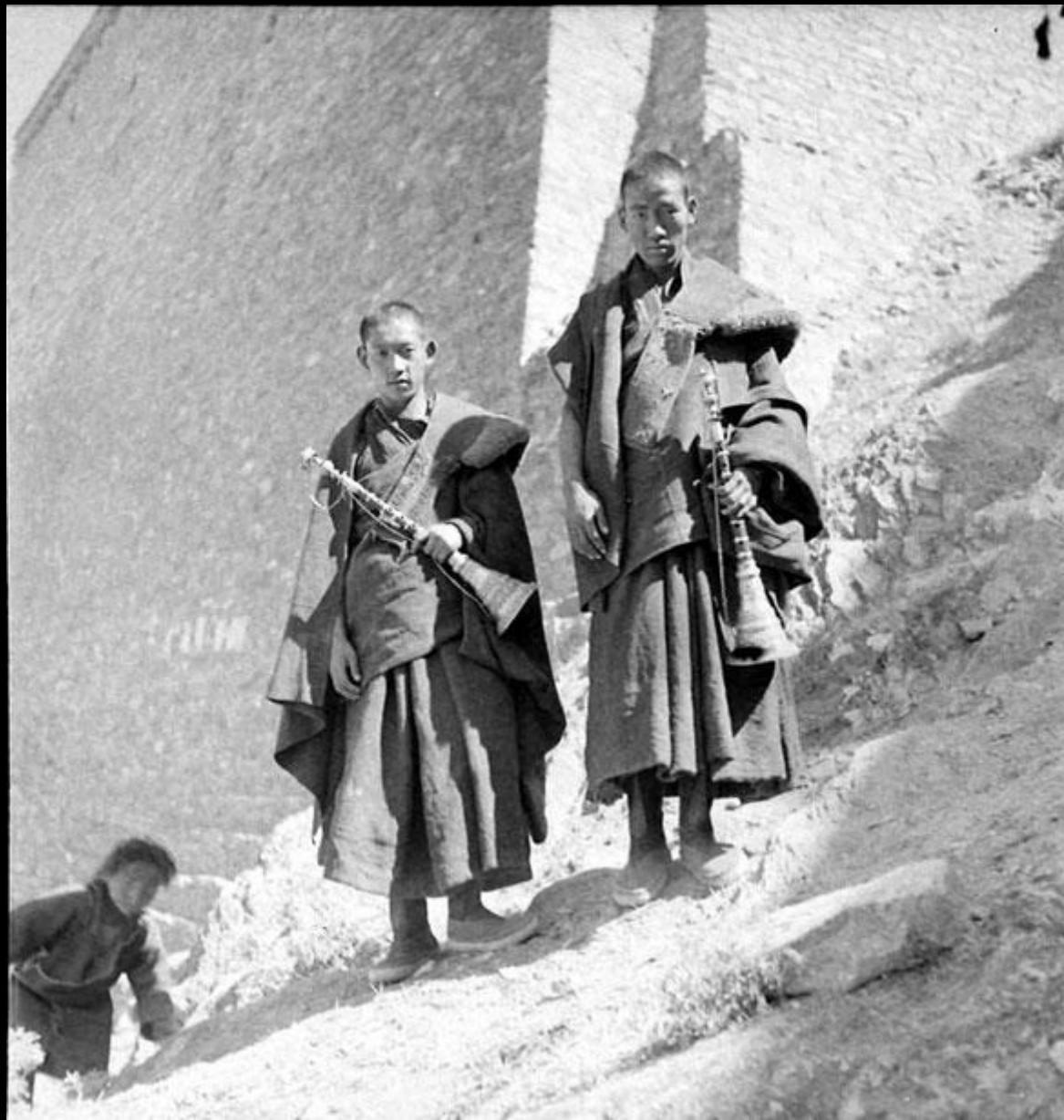
“Our photographs from that day were published in *Life* magazine a year later (June 1939), which preserved the colors of our photographs. We were among the first to capture Tibet in color. The cover of the magazine suggests that war was on the horizon.”



“The great *thangka* was only hung on the pylon for about two hours (6am – 8am) and was taken down before the sun rises. Here the folding had already begun.”



The crowd carrying the giant folded *thangka* off to storage until next year.



“Two musicians from the Monastery who had come up to the pylon to offer some musical accompaniment to the *thangka* ceremony.”



Archery competition, part of the *Saga Dawa* festivities.



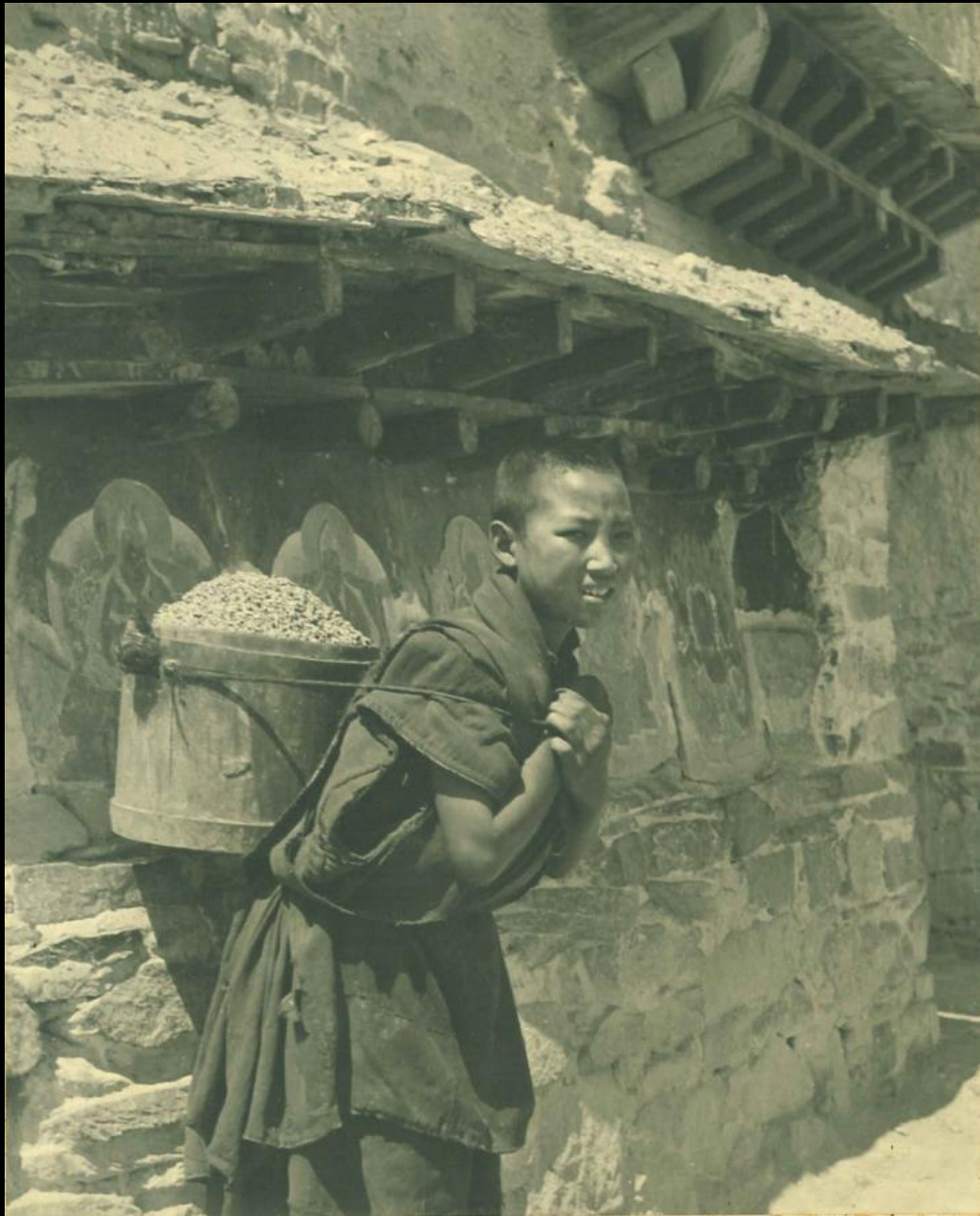
“Dancers at another imposing monastery at the lower end of the Gyantse Valley.”



“Exploring the town.”



“A typical street scene in Gyantse.”



“Boy hauling grains.”



"I think this was the Gyantse Ladies Club meeting."



“ We found this little old lady making small rugs...we learned that she was 33 years old . You would have thought she was at least 75. A hard life, but you had to admire her jolly spirit...”



“...a pot mender. You couldn't just go into a shop and buy a pot...you had it made, and this fellow would mend any holes in it.”



Pair of Butter Lamps
Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr.
Santa Barbara Museum of Art

“This was our silversmith’s home. The fellow on the right made a pair of small butter lamps from the Indian rupees we provided.”



“Outside Gyantse, we spent one day watching people making a special strong paper for currency by combining mulberry barks with ramie fibers from the lowlands.”



“Altar facing the courtyard”

Color Photography

The following color photographs are mural details portraying aspects of Buddha from the *Palkhor Chöde* monastery and *Kumbum*. Taken in 1938, these photographs are among the earliest color images from Tibet.

The 5 x 7 color- separation negatives (the only color negatives that survived the trip) were reprinted in 2011 by Ira Wunder Photographics, White Plains, NY



The birth of Buddha from Queen Maya's side



Monks adoring Buddha



Scene from Buddha's life story



Unidentified scenes most likely from stories relating to the Buddha

“We had, as if by some magic, been able to step across that dividing line and have a brief glimpse of what lay beyond. And what we saw there was of such beauty and mystery that we cannot pretend to understand, but altogether an essence that we could take away with us, something like the sacred Amrita in Tibetan paintings, the liquid of immortality, that would add richness to life in a thousand ways, and a better understanding of the world.”

-F Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr. (1913-2008)

The journals and photographs of Cummings and Vanderhoef are available online at <http://www.religion.ucsb.edu/tibetjourney1938/>.

The publication of these materials was a collaborative project by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the Department of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara.