According to Shakabpa, the thirteenth Dalai Lama (1876–1933) was the most effective of all the Dalai Lamas. This chapter recounts the first twenty years of his life, including his identification and his education. Even while he was still a teenager, the Dalai Lama is said to have mediated border disputes and conflicts among the nobility, launched governmental reforms, and sidestepped a magical assassination attempt authored by his former regent. In all ways, Shakabpa represents the young Dalai Lama as an extraordinary figure. This chapter provides insight into the operation of the Tibetan cabinet and the Dalai Lama’s inner circle. Shakabpa also presents a detailed account of Britain’s growing influence throughout the Himalayan region, particularly in Bhutan and Sikkim, describing a series of British spies that were sent into Tibet. Likewise, Sikkim became the site of a significant conflict between Tibetan and British forces. Spies from the British in India, from Russia, and even from Japan found their way to Lhasa during this period.\(^a\)

With the death of the twelfth Dalai Lama, customary and by now familiar inquiries were made, with miraculous signs being investigated. A boy born in Lower Dakpo to the southeast of Lhasa showed remarkable qualities even before reaching the age of six months. In due course, he was selected in accord with the unanimous determination of the oracles, the determinations of many high incarnations, and the declarations of the regent and the government. Despite the fact that there were three candidates, the Golden Urn Lottery was not performed, a clear sign that the Qing court had little real authority in Lhasa by this time. The fifth Panchen Lama (1854–1882) named him Tupten Gyatso.

The “Great Game” is a term used to describe the 19th century contest between British and Russian imperial interests for power and access to

\(^a\) See p. 641 below.
The political border of Tibet is contested. Tsering Shakya (1999) includes nine maps demonstrating that the extent of Tibet has been defined differently by many individuals with an interest in the region. Each of the possible political boundaries that might be drawn would be tendentious and could only be considered to be accurate for a limited time frame. In this map, I have depicted what might be called cultural Tibet or linguistic Tibet. Naturally, the cultural and linguistic reach of Tibet has also drifted throughout time. I based my sketch on the first map in Shakya’s book and the very fine 1998 map published by the Amnye Machen Institute depicting language groups in the Tibetan and Himalayan region. I have indicated the Indian region of Ladakh since the residents there speak of a dialect of Tibetan, but I have not shown the areas along the remainder of the Himalayan borderlands where other smaller groups speak Tibetan dialects.