APPENDIX ONE

KYIRONG’S 1958 HOUSEHOLD REGISTER

Europe will always retain its position as the hub of historical demographic research because the continent is home to the most extensive, reliable, and temporally rich data sets that are amenable to statistical analysis: national censuses, civil registries, and parish records (Willigan and Lynch 1982). The family reconstitution research of Gautier and Henry pioneered the use of parish records in demographic research and opened the door to an impressive array of studies. Most noteworthy are the Princeton Group’s studies that focused on Europe’s demographic transition (see Coale and Watkins 1986 for a summary of research) and the Cambridge Group’s richly detailed studies of Great Britain’s demographic history (e.g., Wrigley and Schofield 1981). In most other parts of the world, archival sources that can be used to study historical demography are equivalent neither in numbers nor quality to those found in Europe. As a result, the study of demography in much of the developing world continues to lack temporal depth (Cordell 2000).

Fortunately, our global understanding of demographic history has improved dramatically in recent years. Scholars have used novel data sources and innovative methods to study the historical demography of non-European populations, particularly those in Asia (e.g., Harrell 1995a; Lee and Wang 1999; Lee and Campbell 1997; Liu et al. 2001; Dyson 1989; Das Gupta 1995). In the process, many unsubstantiated and discernibly Eurocentric assumptions about demographic processes have come under closer scrutiny, and found to be deficient.

Dieter Schuh (1988) was the first to recognize the potential for using household registers to study Tibetan historical demography. I subsequently devised a methodology for analyzing the data contained in such documents (Childs 2004b). Therefore, the pieces are now in place to develop a more quantitative perspective on Tibetan history. Those who wish to further pursue the study of Tibetan historical demography should consult the following: Schuh’s seminal study (1988); my article outlining a methodology for estimating fertility using data from Tibetan household registers (Childs 2004b); and Chapter 3 of this book. In addition, I offer Appendixes 1 and 2 as further tools for
developing the field of Tibetan historical demography. Appendix 1 is a partial translation of the 1958 household register from Kyirong. Appendix 2 discusses how to interpret relationship terms contained within the Kyirong household register so that family structures can be accurately reconstructed.

The 1958 Kyirong Household Register

The “Earth-Dog Year [1958] Household Contract Being a Census [of Land and People] in the Nine Divisions of Kyirong District” was completed, witnessed, and sealed on the eight or ninth day of July, 1958. The document commences with a preamble in legal terminology detailing its purpose and reiterating some of the powers held by the District Commissioner (the text is reproduced in Tibetan at the end of this appendix).

To: The precious holder of the high court of law, source of welfare and holder of the two systems [i.e., the government].

Appeal: The undersigned leader and people of the state voluntarily and without any error submit this contract. The affirmation of the main points are: According to the government’s decision to nationalize all revenues from export and import taxes commencing from the Wood-Horse Year [1954], the first District Commissioners holding the fifth rank, being the monk official Gomang Özer Pelvar and the lay official Dragtönpa, are to be transferred. Their replacements are the new District Commissioners, being the monk official Serngag Tubten Dawa and the lay official Ngön-lungpa who were appointed with instructions to hand over the charge as per the inner seal document. During the transfer and at the time of working on the household register, as per order, lay official Dragtönpa alone had to undertake the responsibility of the work because the monk official Opel was demoted in the Fire-Bird Year [1957]. The precedence was taken from the Wood-Horse Year [1954] when the previous District Commissioners Ngam [rNgam ring pa?] and Chab [Chab dpal ba?]

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1 The date cited in the document’s heading is the twenty-third day of the sixth month of the Earth-Dog Year. Because there were two twenty-third days of that particular month and year (see Schuh 1973:235), it remains unclear whether the document was completed on the eight or ninth of July, 1958.

2 I am indebted to Dundul Namgyal Tsarong for translating this part of the document.

3 See Chapter 2 for a discussion on this man’s open affair with a local woman that prompted the people of Kyiromg to successfully petition the central government in Lhasa to remove him from office.