

# **CHINA'S TIBET POLICY**

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# **CHINA'S TIBET POLICY**

**Dawa Norbu**

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*For Rinchen Lhamo*



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these excessively political and commercial days, I have learned, from early on, to rely on my inner resources and those which happened to be within the reach of my small local universe. This means, for instance, as I did not have funds for necessary fieldtrips, desirable for my research, I spent the summer months from 1994 to 1999 at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharmasala (India), partly to continue my research there and partly to run away from Delhi's summer heat.

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Some of my fellow Tibetologists and others might find my resort to a social science interpretation and explanation of the major issues in the history of Sino–Tibetan relations somewhat irritating. To me social science is neither an intellectual indulgence for ego-tripping (or self-aggrandizement) nor an intellectual fashion to bandwagon. I find it the best known method of studying and analysing systematically *problems of a general nature*, of which I have had many experiences since childhood. If my formative life experiences and family background have been more favourable than they actually were, I would probably have preferred to write on art history (*thangka*).

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*Dawa Norbu*





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Map of Tibet and Her Neighbours

# Introduction

From the middle to the end of the twentieth century, the Tibet Question has been one of the most controversial international political issues. It has been heatedly debated and contested in many international forums, and polemicized from both sides. Thus, today world opinion is divided, cutting along, first of all, ideological lines and, now, increasingly along lines for/or against the People's Republic of China. And as we approach the twenty-first century, there still seems to be no structural solution to this vexed question if both sides and their respective supporters continue to argue along the same old lines. This study is an open-minded inquiry into the Tibet Question from the earliest beginnings of Sino-Tibetan relationships to the latest manifestations of the Communist power, policy and practice in occupied Tibet. The accent, however, is on a spirit of dialogue, discussion and debate, in which I have been engaged for a long time.

When an ancient civilization and old nation like China clashes with another entity which has perhaps the most documented case of ethnic differentiation with the former, Chinese intellectuals and publicists tend to historicize their views on Tibet. In this respect the Communist version has been more rigid and orthodox than their predecessor, the Republican one. When the Chinese People's Liberation Army forced their way into Tibet in 1950, the communists justified their "liberative" action with a combination of old historical claims, new Marxist mission and age-old security imperatives.

We find these justifications repeated or echoed in almost every post-1959 communist publication on Tibet. The ordering principle of this combination, however, varies from situation to situation, depending on the specific purpose or the occasion, which may call for special emphasis. But the essential message is the same because they have done their writing of the history of Sino-Tibetan relations according to the canon of Han

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nationalism or Middle Kingdom imperialism. There is neither little variation nor concession on this historicized claim: Tibet, since the eighth century (or since the Yuan dynasty in the mid-thirteenth century), has been an integral part of Imperial China. The function of state-sponsored Tibetology in Communist China is simply to substantiate and prove this truth claim.

The Tibetan side has essentially done two things to counter what they call communist propaganda. As a reaction to the Chinese nationalistic construction of historical discourse, they fell back on their own writing of Tibetan history and in particular that of Sino-Tibetan relations. Their conclusion up to 1988 is equally simplistic: that Tibet has always been independent in fact, and that Sino-Tibetan relations have been nothing more than a form of patron-priest relations, with little or no implication of country to country or state to state relations. These two conflicting views of Sino-Tibetan history today stand as stumbling blocks to a negotiated settlement between Beijing and the Dalai Lama on the future relative status of Tibet.

Secondly, the Tibetans, like any other weak and wronged people, have sought refuge in and support from International Law. This has resulted in considerable legal literature, which remains one of the more popular and respected academic approaches to the Tibet Question until now. If the communist authorities were to respect the principles of International Law and legal opinion, a number of Western and Asian international lawyers have done more than their share of work.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, Chinese Communists perceive legal indictment and intervention as one of the Western legal instruments by which the Western nations, during the Cold War, used to interfere in what Communist China regarded as its own “internal affair”. That is why I have opted for a social science approach whose value-neutral orientations and scientific generalities might have the capacity to create more of a common ground and bridge the gap that separates nationalities and cross the boundaries that are the real fuel in the Sino-Tibetan conflict. In this way, we might see the old problems in a new light.

Such controversial issues pose problems of transcultural comprehension and interpretation. When the contemporary Chinese politicians and publicists assert that Tibet has always been a part of China, are they saying that Tibet, since the middle of the thirteenth century, used to participate in the Chinese tribute-paying relations? But the tribute relations comprised a pan-Confucian international system in which most of the East, Southeast and Central Asian states or countries used to participate. It was much more general than Sino-Tibetan relations, though, as this study shows, the Chinese emperor-Tibetan lama relationship constituted a *special* type of tribute relations. Even occasional armed Chinese interventions characterized tribute relations not only with Tibet but also with Vietnam and Korea.

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There is no easy answer to such difficult transcultural problems. However, I have evolved a method of studying historical Sino–Tibetan relations over time and space which perhaps allow this to be done more systematically (or scientifically?). Chapters 1–7 represent my understanding of the history (or histories) of Sino–Tibetan relations. First, I focus on regime changes in Beijing and Lhasa. Next, I set such regime changes against the larger background of significant political/cultural developments in China and Tibet which shape a particular dynasty’s project at the centre as well as a ruling sect’s agenda in Lhasa/Sakya. In particular I pay attention to the main security concerns of Imperial China that directly or indirectly affect China’s Tibet policy. As a result of the above-mentioned processes, what sort of authority relations emerge between the Chinese emperors and Tibetan lamas? The assumption behind such methodological questions is that historical Sino–Tibetan relations were not characterized by an all-time continuity; they changed with regime changes. At the same time there was, to be sure, a degree of continuity, especially in authority relations.

Even though the essence of Sino–Tibetan relations historically may be, in an ultimate sense, generalizable in terms of power relations, power alone was seldom expressed or exercised. It was characteristically tempered and embedded in cultural symbolism and ceremonial rituals that characterized pre-modern Asian relations. This is not to mystify the strange relationship. Rather it is to point out that there is an enormous communication gap – over eight centuries between then and now. During this long period of time the Chinese exercise of power in Tibet has ranged from mild dominance, characteristic of tribute relations, to extreme forms of direct political intervention and domination, as the communists have done.

After having been cautioned about the general use of the term “sovereignty” in pre-nation-state political discourse, one must admit that Sino–Tibetan relations did share several features of tribute relations that characterized the Middle Kingdom’s hierarchical relations with other actors/players in the Sino-centric world system. This leads me to typologize the tribute relations as such and indicate the specific category under which Sino–Tibetan relations may be subsumed.

First, there emerged from the probable beginnings of Confucian civilization, a political tradition of intra-Confucian relations, based on shared commonalties such as Confucian China’s relations with Korea, Japan, Vietnam, etc. This was the typical and generic form of tribute relations from which the ideology and practice of tribute relations as such originated and emerged in feudal China. Secondly, as early China expanded and consolidated within the Han hinterland, it faced the menace of neighbouring Central Asian tribes’ raids and invasions across its borders. Thus was born the practice of Sino–barbarian relations, necessitated by problems of imperial security and usually patched up by the *ho’chin* relations (matrimonial relations). Confucian China’s relations with

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Hsiungnu, Ch'iang, pre-Buddhist Mongols exemplify this second category of necessary but not desirable tribute relations.

Tribute relations as a cultural transaction may be conceived as virtue (de) – an honouring system in which the Son of Heaven, as a cosmic figure, recognized and honoured the virtue of other rulers who may be less powerful than the Middle Kingdom. This was particularly true of intra-Confucian relations and China's relations with Buddhist countries. This brings us to the third type of tribute relations which were probably invented in the middle of the thirteenth century when the Confucian ideocracy was transformed into a multinational empire by the Mongol warriors. This added a new dimension to the Confucian institution of tribute relations and a new factor to Sino–barbarian relations. This neo-Buddhist diplomacy, with Buddhist protocols within the larger Confucian institution of tribute relations, characterize Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties' relations with Buddhist Tibet, Mongolia, Thailand, Burma, etc.

The striking thing about this form of Buddhist diplomatic relations is that Buddhism, whose penetration and diffusion in China predates the Yuan dynasty, has tended to soften, if not diffuse, the authority and power relations between the Middle Kingdom and Buddhist dependencies. This was particularly true of Tibet, which since the twelfth century was progressively projected and perceived as *the* Vatican of Mahayana Buddhism. We find no parallels in Chinese history to the highest-level state receptions accorded to the Vth Dalai Lama by the Qing Emperor, to the Sakya Lama (Phagpa) by the Yuan Emperor and to the Vth Karmapa Lama (Dezhin Shakpa) by the Ming Emperor. None of these Tibetan Lamas had to kowtow before the emperor; kowtow culture was transformed into mutual respect. Nor was the custom of conferring titles the only imperial prerogative; the Dalai Lamas exchanged titles with several Qing emperors.

In short, the high level state receptions accorded to and the deep respect, if not veneration, with which the High Lamas of Tibet were received by successive Chinese emperors in Beijing were not extended even to the Confucian monarchs (*Wang*) of Korea, Vietnam and Japan. This might suggest that the lamaist type of tribute relations was elevated to a higher level than intra-Confucian relations. As a result, most emperors treated the High Lamas as near-equals even within the Confucian culture of hierarchy. This suggests that Sino–Tibetan relations perhaps constituted a special type of relationship among intra-Confucian relations as well as within Sino–barbarian relations. That is why even the Communist leaders signed an agreement in 1951 with the Tibetan “local” government only, not with any other minority nationalities in the People's Republic of China (Chapter 12).

What does tribute relations mean in our age? Do we have a functional equivalent? According to Mark Mancall, we do: “The issuance of patents of office by the emperor of China to his tributaries was roughly equivalent to modern diplomatic recognition in the West, where political entities that

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have no international diplomatic status are not considered to exist legally.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, if the present day United Nations is a great power-centric international system which renders diplomatic representation and recognition to lesser powers, the tribute relations was a Sino-centric international system in which lesser powers were given diplomatic recognition and representation to act in the said international system. The symbolic participation in this international system by other actors did not “affect the constitutional structure of the tributary societies”.<sup>3</sup> This was understandable. Since the whole tribute relations system was conceived in symbolic hierarchical relations, and not in the modern doctrine of equality, the requirement of the system was really symbolic gradation in which Buddhist Tibet figured rather highly. The Sino-centric dominance did not usually translate itself into hardcore political domination or military intervention (unless requested by the non-coercive lamaist regime). Symbolic acts and ceremonial relations were enough from both sides for most of the time. A tributary relationship was not only symbolic but was characterized by ceremonialism rather than political domination. Such inter-state ceremonies suggest that the emperors of China treated the leading lamas of Tibet as near-equals. It was in such a spirit of mutual respect and concern that imperial China rendered military assistance, when necessary, to protect the non-coercive regime in Tibet.

But the present fact is that all those Confucian societies who had historically engaged in intra-Confucian tribute relations and even most of those Central Asian societies who had historically participated in the Sino-barbarian tribute relations, have by now *graduated* from dependency to independence. Tibet alone remains one of those vanished and failed states. The reasons for this are complex. They may be simplified as an antiquated political system’s inability to change, a conservative monastic community’s resistance to modernity and the ruling classes’ general failure to change and adapt to modern conditions. Apart from these internal reasons, there is a larger reason that springs from Tibet’s geopolitical and geostrategic location, which by 1950 created a strategic dilemma for the communists. Is, then, a communist “liberation” of Tibet an historically justified action? Or is it really a security imperative? (Chapter 14).

The Song dynasty did not touch Tibet itself where a Buddhist Revolution was in progress. It, however, interfered and intervened in Amdo affairs because the latter figured largely in the Song strategy against Xixia, a frontier state then situated between Song China and Eastern Tibet. The dynasty used Amdowa warriors in its defensive fight against the expanding Xixia state, and in the process it tried to set up a regional Amdo regime in Eastern Tibet.

The Ming dynasty’s major security concern was the Mongols, not the Tibetans. However, since its main dynastic preoccupation was the Confucian restoration, it emphasized tribute relations with all its neighbours, and even



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beyond, as a symbol of its greatness. This expansion of tribute relations included Tibet as well, where a number of leading lamas were honoured with titles of “Prince of Dharma” (*chos-rgyal*). But it was not accompanied or followed by Chinese intervention nor even indirect rule. Tibet was then ruled by successive regional chieftains who struggled for hegemonic power in Central and Western Tibet.

Tibet experienced more organized structures of domination under Mongol (Yuan) and Manchu (Qing) dynasties. This may lead one to think that most political domination results from good intentions. Both of these dynasties started with considerable Buddhist influences, which continued to be felt in both China and Tibet. Sino-Tibetan relations were more patterned, and the institutions of indirect rule were firmly established during these two periods. But neither the Mongol-Sakya rule for 85 years nor the Manchu-Gelugpa rule for 300 years experienced significant peasant revolts or popular protests in Tibet. This might have a lot to do with the legitimacy that the Lama rule enjoyed for good or evil, depending upon the prevailing epochal rationality.

The concept of legitimacy is not the creation of conservative political scientists. Legitimacy makes one ruler’s rule acceptable to the ruled, with minimum use of legitimate force. Without legitimacy, one could force one’s rule for sometime with the frequent threat or the actual use of force, but would, in the long run, find it difficult, if not impossible, to make it acceptable to the ruled at large. It is in this context that Communist China faces a serious legitimization crisis in Tibet, unprecedented in the history of Sino-Tibetan relations of indirect rule (Chapter 19).

Notions of legitimacy such as the Son of Heaven were fairly well-developed in Tang China but not so *btsan* Tibet. In Tibet, during the same period, an individual’s military prowess seems to have been the main criterion for leadership. Whoever was powerful, invented his own sense of legitimacy. Such were the *btsanpos*. But the Buddhist Revolution in Tibet (842–1247) created not only new structures of social order but also a new concept of legitimacy. Ever since then, no subsequent lay ruler, without this lamaist legitimization, could recover the power and glory enjoyed by the *btsan* rulers, nor establish any sustainable legitimate rule in Tibet for long. The role of high lamas in post-twelfth century Tibetan history may be understood in this context. The rise of Sakya Lamas signified the end of the *btsan* rule and the interregnum period of chaotic but creative conditions. It also signified the beginning of lama-rulers whose social acceptance, popular influence – in short whose legitimacy – were made possible by the Buddhist Revolution in Tibet.

The Grand Lamas were the sources of legitimization not only in Tibet. The Sakya and the Dalai Lamas were responsible for lending moral support to and legitimating the two barbarian dynasties (Yuan and Qing) in China till the latter were Sinicized in the gradual process of Chinese bureaucratic



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administration (Chapter 10). After that the Sakya regime in Tibet and the Yuan dynasty in China, the Dalai Lama rule in Lhasa and the Qing dynasty in China, exchanged mutually reinforcing mechanisms of indirect rule, legitimacy and prestige systems.

The relative peace and social stability that prevailed during the Dalai and Sakya Lamas' rule are clear indications of the great sense of legitimacy the lama rule enjoyed. In modern terms, we might say that popular culture and political structures were congruent to each other despite incongruous economic and political disparities. We have described these two periods of lama rule as classic examples of indirect rule (Chapters 4, 6 and 10). The success of such indirect rule resides in the ingenuous ways and the manner in which the mandarins deliberately kept the popular sense of legitimacy and the routine administration in Tibetan hands. Indirect rule failed whenever the Chinese authorities took direct political action in Lhasa such as happened in the mid-seventeenth century and in the mid-twentieth century when the Chinese Communists took direct armed intervention in Tibet. In both cases Tibetans revolted against China (Chapters 6 and 13).

Since 1950 and especially after 1959, the Communists have attempted to create a "revolutionary" sense of legitimation based on proclaimed social justice. Their self-appointed mission in Tibet is proclaimed to be the "liberation" of Tibetan serfs from feudalism and the region from imperialist aggression. These slogans did not make much sense to the conservative Buddhist communities rooted in their own indigenous sense of identity and nationhood (in the traditional sense of the term). Therefore, the revolutionary sense of legitimacy can be obtained primarily from the Communist economic performance in Tibet. But so far this economic mission is undercut, if not systematically undermined, by the Chinese informal practice of internal colonialism and their state policy of population transfer (Chapters 7 and 8). Moreover, the recent powerful waves of democracy and freedom sweeping the world, especially the former Communist world, have affected and might continue to affect China and Tibet. Such emerging situations make it clear that Chinese Communists would find it extremely difficult to gain Tibetan social acceptance of what appears to most Tibetans to be illegitimate Communist domination.

The Communist sense of legitimacy runs thin in the face of Tibetan cultural identity, embedded in their specific culture, territoriality and social history, which have, for centuries, taken an autonomous course of development which differed from Han China. Thus, the same revolutionary legitimacy that the early Chinese Communists might have enjoyed in China proper did not apply to Tibet. The Communists have, for the past 50 years, imposed their revolution upon unwilling Tibetan peasants and nomads, and have "ruled" Tibet by the threat, or often the actual use, of force. But force alone cannot, in the long-run, sustain an illegitimate domination. The history of Sino-Tibetan relations reveals that indirect rule can enjoy

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maximal Tibetan legitimacy while securing vital Chinese interests in Tibet.

Imperial security considerations and barbarian fear appear to have played an important role in Confucian and Imperial China's policy towards Tibet. During the Tang dynasty it appears to me (Chapter 2) that it was not so much the Tibetan *btsan* threat to invade China proper, but it was probably the Tibetan takeover of several small frontier states – which then constituted buffer states between the Chinese and Tibetan empires – that compelled Tang China to engage in several conflicts with *btsan* Tibet.

Since the Song dynasty's main security problem was with the Xixia state, its mandarins pursued the policy of using “barbarians to fight against barbarians”. They instigated the Amdowa (Tibetan) warriors in Amdo to fight against the Xixia state which was then expanding in the Southwest at the expense of Song China and therefore posing a threat to the latter. In Tibet a Buddhist revival was underway, and Tibet was not in a position to pose any security threat to Song China. Therefore, the Song dynasty showed no signs of intervention and expansion into Tibet, even though the internal chaotic situation in Tibet was highly favourable for an easy Chinese takeover.

The Mongols had perhaps posed one of the most persistent and greatest threats to the security of the Chinese empire before the nineteenth century. In the mid-thirteenth century this resulted in the Mongol conquest of China and the establishment of the Yuan dynasty. This almost automatically reduced the Mongol threat to China until the Ming dynasty. Coupled with this was the Sakya Lamas' conversion of the most fierce Mongol warriors into Tibetan Buddhism, thereby reducing the Mongol threat as such to the Chinese Empire. The security practice of Mongol emperors was to deploy the Tibetan lamas to disarm any rival Mongol threats to the Yuan empire and to use such High Lamas as the instruments of indirect rule in Tibet.

Mongol threats again appeared before the next dynasty, the Ming. The Ming strategy was to prevent any probable alliance between the Mongol warriors and the Tibetan lamas, an unholy alliance that led to Khubilai Khan's conquest of China. This appeasement policy found expression in the Ming tea trade with Tibet and the proliferation of honouring leading Tibetan lamas with titles and patents (Chapter 5). But it should be noted that, like the Song dynasty, the Ming dynasty did not engage in armed intervention in Tibet, even though the domestic situation in Tibet at that time – as it had been in the post-*btsan* period, was highly favourable to an easy Chinese takeover.

During the Manchu dynasty, whose close relations with the Dalai Lamas led to a longer spell of indirect rule, it was again another Mongol tribe's (Zhunghars) intrigues in Lhasa that led to Qing China's armed intervention in Tibet. Otherwise, for the most part, the 300 years of Gelugpa rule were relatively peaceful and stable.

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In the twentieth century Chinese perceptions of threat were intensified and greatly magnified. During the “Great Game” in Central Asia unfolding at the turn of the last century, British India *perceived* Russian expansionist threats to the security of their empire in India, and despatched the Younghusband Expedition to Lhasa in 1903/4. Zhao Erfeng’s military campaign in Kham was a Chinese response to the British armed “expedition”. It was during this period that the popular Chinese image of Tibet as a holy place was transformed into a high security zone, a dangerous perception that persists up to the present day (Chapters 11 and 14).

By 1950 when the Cold War was boiling, the nascent communist regime in Beijing faced a security or strategic dilemma in a defenceless Tibet (Chapter 16). The threat perceptions from the then American-led bloc and South Asia might have reinforced, if not compelled, the Communist leaders to take over Tibet by military and other means. Again, in the early 1970s, it was the close Indo–Soviet cooperation in South Asia that led to the Chinese establishment of nuclear facilities in Eastern Tibet (Chapter 14).

With the end of Cold War tensions (Chapter 15), however, one sees some favourable global and regional developments which might encourage a reduction of the tensions and suspicions that had *originally* compelled the communist armed intervention and direct political action in Tibet. With improvements in the overall security environment in Asia and with the start of “strategic dialogue” between China and India (6–7 March 2000)<sup>4</sup> the communist leaders might be in a more relaxed and confident position to grant the Tibetan people higher degrees of autonomy (Chapter 8), without the paranoid fear of external conspiracies in “China’s Tibet”. The recent record of Sino–Tibetan dialogue reveals that Communist China desires a 100 per cent security guarantee (Chapters 14 and 18). Such a definite objective might be neither desirable in the post-Communist era nor feasible in the post-Cold War unipolar international system. China may have to be contented with the relative security that the resolution of the Tibet Question would bring about.

Our brief survey of the complex history of Sino–Tibetan relations has an unusual implication which one hesitates to state. Imperialism is not inherent within the autochthonous structure of Confucian culture, which is sedentary and culture-bound. We note the early spread of Confucian culture in East and Southeast Asia which *followed* the diffusion of Yellow River agricultural techniques. Nor is imperialism inherent within the broader patterns of Han history, which are preoccupied with boundary consciousness and boundary maintenance of what Confucian culture defines as its sacred space. Tang China’s wars with *btsan* Tibet were mostly defensive in nature, and fit this broader pattern of Han history. Moreover, pure Han dynasties, such as the Song and Ming, showed no signs of expansionism into Tibet; they were contented with the Confucian tradition of tribute relations with Tibet.

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What transformed this sedentary culture into an agent of imperialism are two external influences which are alien to Confucian culture as such. The Mongol warriors in the thirteenth century gave China the *imperial* idea which would transform the Confucian ideocracy into a multinational empire. From that time Confucian China's relations with non-Confucian and non-Han peoples would never be the same. Finally, in the mid-twentieth century, the Marxist-Leninist ideology of "national liberation" provided unprecedented motivation and organizational abilities for expansionism into non-Han areas which have now turned into clear cases of unintended imperialism (Chapter 7). Even now I believe if Communist China had turned expansionist, it is the theoretical logic and dialectics of frontier security, which has led Confucian China from the Han hinterland to the Inner Asian frontiers. The historically unprecedented Han state power has now enabled Communist China to make the frontier state into an integral part of the communist empire. The critical question is whether the conscience of the world and the great powers will continue to tolerate the expansion of the Han State at the expense of the powerless Tibetan people in the twenty-first century (Chapters 11, 15 and 16).

One of the tragedies of the Chinese Revolution is that there was neither a revolutionary situation nor a Han race nor a Confucian culture in Tibet. This is in stark contrast to the Chinese Revolution in China where, in its formative stages, it virtually grew out of the sons and soil of the Chinese earth. Revolution in Tibet has to be exported and imposed, and the Maoists did it with force (Chapter 12). This fact may be understood from the perspective of Tibetan cultural development and social history, which run their own independent course, differing from China. When the Chinese People's Liberation Army were marching into Tibet in 1950, Mao Zedong instructed his generals to be careful in Tibet because "we don't have any social basis" there.<sup>5</sup> Again when Mao launched his anti-Confucius campaign in China in 1972, he had to give the campaign a Tibetan orientation – anti-Dalai and anti-Panchen Lamas. For no Tibetan knew about Confucius. This popular ignorance of Confucian culture and the Han race in Tibet calls for an explanation.

In the earlier formative phases of their histories, different ecological and economic conditions in China and Tibet gave rise to two different types of economy and society, as we will note in Chapter 1. In the eighth century when the Tibetan King Song-tsen Gampo married a Chinese princess (Weng Chen), she *attempted* to introduce some elements of Chinese culture and agricultural techniques. But her lonely attempts at the Confucianization of Tibet were soon swept away by the socially vigorous Buddhist Revolution that followed the fall of *btsan* rulers. Because of the crucible-like nature of the Tibetan Plateau, relatively isolated and insulated from neighbouring South and East Asian countries, Mahayana Buddhism, once introduced, was soon internalized, consolidated and Tibetanized so that by

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the time of the Younghusband Expedition (1903) it was called “Lamaism”,<sup>6</sup> different from Chinese forms or Indian origins. This “Tibetanness” is even more pervasive and pronounced in rural Tibet than urban areas like Lhasa where some Sinic influences such as diet, dress and paintings persisted. But the majority of Tibetan peasants and nomads had never seen a Chinese before the 1950 takeover. Any Chinese presence was confined to Lhasa and some border towns in the Sino–Tibetan borders in Kham and Amdo. Thus the previous Panchen Lama reported to Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in his 70,000 characters report, “Although Tibet has been under the jurisdiction of the motherland for several hundred years, because of methods of rule and ways of managing its internal affairs are different from those of other minorities within the motherland, *most of the people in every strata strongly perceive themselves as Tibetan, and have a weak perception of the motherland.*”<sup>7</sup>

This popular social sovereignty and the relative autonomy of *cultural identity* were not only what ordinary Tibetans socially and historically experienced before 1950 but such social Tibetan sovereignty and cultural identity were almost automatically ensured by the policy and practice of indirect rule for nearly 400 years. Thus, the popular Tibetan perception of Chinese “liberation” as “invasion” may be understood in such a social context. This is proved by the spontaneous nature and mass character of the Tibetan revolts of 1956, 1959 and 1987, in which no members of the ruling class were involved (Chapter 13). Tibetan social history provides a paradoxical and ironic lesson to the Marxists. It is the ordinary Tibetan nomads and peasants who have given sufficient evidence of the Tibetan will to self-determination (Chapter 20); and it is always the Tibetan elites (including the Dalai Lama) who are ready to make compromises and reach a negotiated settlement with the Chinese (Chapter 18). This elite realism was demonstrated in the 1951 Sino–Tibetan agreement (Chapter 12) and again in 1979 (Chapter 18).

When the Dalai Lama agreed to start negotiations with Deng’s China in 1979 on autonomy (Chapter 8), the exiled administration had to dispatch officials from Dharamsala to different settlements in India and Nepal to pacify and explain to the Tibetan commoners why the Dalai Lama had to scale down the Tibetan demand from *rang-btsan* (Independence) to *rang-skyong-ljongs* (autonomy). In such an ironic situation the Dalai Lama functioned as a mediator and buffer between the Tibetan masses who demand *rang-btsan* or self-determination, based on their social experience, and the Tibetan educated elites who reason that such mass aspirations are, under the given circumstances, unrealistic. The Lama, therefore, might be in a unique position to mediate between the Chinese masters and the Tibetan masses, as has been the historical pattern and function.



## PART I

# Patterns of the Sino–Tibetan Past and Current Political Realities

*“The fascination of sociology lies in the fact that its perspective makes us see in a new light the very world in which we have lived all of our lives. This also constitutes a transformation of consciousness.”*

Peter L. Berger<sup>1</sup>

*“The issuance of patents of office by the emperor of China to his tributaries was roughly equivalent to modern diplomatic recognition in the West, where political entities that have no international diplomatic status are not considered to exist legally. However, the imperial patents did not themselves affect the constitutional structure of the tributary societies.”*

Mark Mancall<sup>2</sup>

*“So you see how data dictate theory.”*

K. C. Chang<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James M. Henslin, (ed.) *Down to Earth Sociology* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Mancall, *China at the Centre* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> K. C. Chang, *Current Anthropology* Vol. 36, No. 62. (April 1995), p. 311.





## Chapter 1

# The Origins of Tribute Relations and the Buddhist Factor in Sino–Barbarian Relations

In this first part, I present some of the main findings of my study. I do so by surveying the recorded history of Sino–Tibetan relations from the seventh to the mid-twentieth centuries, highlighting the turning-points and different stages in the evolution of those relations. The purpose of this seemingly sweeping survey is to unearth different historical structures and degrees of domination of Tibet by imperial China implicit in the Sino–Tibetan relations over time. In this way, we will see glimpses of historical structures and religio-political mechanisms by which pre-modern China, directly or indirectly, exercised varying degrees and types of political influence over traditional Tibet. This exercise of power (or more appropriately influence) was expressed through rituals and ceremonies in their periodic bilateral relations.

However, by the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, the symbolic domination and ceremonial relations fundamentally changed with the emergence of modern political ideas of Chinese nationalism and nation-state within which the Chinese Nationalists first and then the Communists sought to integrate Tibet, based upon a unitary conception of a Han-dominated state. But the Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Party differed on the degrees of integration and areas or spheres to be included in integration. This is not trivial; it is rather pertinent to the present Sino–Tibetan discourse and dialogue. For between the degrees of and areas for integration may reside the Tibetan aspiration for a genuine autonomy.

Any search for the origins of prehistoric Chinese economy and culture must begin with some speculations and assumptions. I do so along the lines suggested by Owen Lattimore.<sup>1</sup> Lattimore's thesis has great heuristic value for our prologue. It demonstrates and explains convincingly why from the earliest beginnings of Chinese history until the end of the nineteenth century, there was never any decisive spread of Chinese culture in Inner

Asia, either by colonization or by the assimilation of the steppe people. For centuries, the Chinese hinterland and Inner Asia, though geographically contiguous to each other, stood worlds apart, divided more by two antagonistic types of economy and society than by the Great Wall. In order to understand this historical fact, we must transport ourselves from the present high-tech world which has practically conquered the forces of nature to the primitive era of Yellow River loess communities whose struggle for existence largely depended on the givens of geography and whims of nature. It is at such a tender age of man's existence that a materialist interpretation of history makes sense.

The earliest signs of Han culture began in regions where intensive agriculture based on irrigation was possible. Therefore, the primary focus of Chinese prehistory was in the middle Yellow River valley and secondarily in the middle Yangtze valley. The lower Yellow River, flowing across the Great Plain of northern and middle China, frequently flooded and changed its course. Such challenges posed by geography necessitated organized social labour such as clearing, draining and tinkering that went beyond the isolated primitive man's lonely effort and struggle for survival. From the Yellow River valley, the early Chinese spread to the Yangtze valley where they found even more favourable conditions for intensive agriculture. This agricultural technique spread predominantly from north to south and west to east along with migration and conquest.<sup>2</sup> All this, it should be noted, took place within the agricultural core of ancient China: the Jing and Wei rivers in Shaanxi, the Fen River in Shaanxi, and the lower Yellow River. Where conditions for irrigation-based intensive agriculture were not favourable such as the Mongolian steppes, or Tibetan wasteland, neither migration nor conquest took place.

In fact Lattimore demonstrates that the first known case of distinction between Chinese and "barbarians" appeared among the Chinese themselves, referring to the same ethnic stock (Han) but to those whose agricultural technique was less evolved. Similarly the so-called barbarian wars in Sheng Shang China were not nomadic conquests from the steppes but internal wars among different social groups belonging to essentially the same ethnic stock – Han. They differed on the lines of agricultural technique and economic development. The social cohesion made possible by intensive agriculture led to a wide expansion of the groups who practised it. These groups became "Chinese" co-terminus with civilization.<sup>3</sup> Any other group in the Chinese hinterland not familiar with the Yellow River technique became "barbarians". Therefore, in the ultimate analysis, the distinction between civility and barbarity in ancient China depended on a geographical accident: which side of the loess highlands you were. The eastern side was more fertile than the western side. The internal barbarians were in fact regarded as detachments lingering in territories into which the Yellow River culture was expanding.

They may not have been ethnically distinct from the Chinese. Possibly, and even probably they were backward, less developed groups of the same stock as that from which the Chinese had evolved – a stock anciently holding the whole of North China, both the loess Highlands in the west and the Great Plain in the east.<sup>4</sup>

In short, the early Chinese, after developing their ingenious agricultural technique in the Yellow River basin and after perfecting it in the Yangtze valley, expanded all over the Chinese mainland except the north. Subsequently, their migration and diffusion extended beyond China proper to regions or islands where the objective conditions for intensive agriculture were favourable such as the Korean Peninsula, the Japanese islands and the Indo-China region by the first century AD. This meant that if the environment was suitable for intensive agriculture, they, especially the Southern Chinese, dared to cross the seas and set up colonies by conquest and assimilation, migration and diffusion. But not to the Inner Asian steppes, even though such steppes were contiguous to China. In this region the Chinese agriculturists encountered an altogether different world, the world of nomadic pastoralism which produced a society and economy entirely different from the Chinese. Here the pre-modern Chinese expansion stopped. “The major environment that resisted Chinese penetration was steppe, and the steppe society was obdurate in setting itself against the society of China.”<sup>5</sup> Reasons were rooted in their different economies and societies as well as in their early formative adaptation patterns. If the Chinese gravitated towards intensive agriculture, which in turn encouraged the closeness of society and therefore high degrees of social cohesion, the Inner Asian nomads’ way of life and economy were dependent on mobility and dispersal. The former conditions prevailed in the Chinese hinterland; and the latter, in the steppes.

Primitive man was really at the mercy of nature, and his adaptation to his environment, most of the time, followed the laws of nature: lines of least resistance. Geography virtually put such major ethnic groups in their ecological niche which shaped their formative characteristics and psychological pre-dispositions. Such early influences predate that of world religions. All this might sound like an unnecessary academic exercise in antiquity. However, the Sinic world of Han peasants, and the Inner Asian world of nomads and semi-nomads continued to be worlds apart for nearly 3,000 years; today their prehistoric legacies weigh heavily as they, especially the Central Asian peoples, struggle for their identity and freedom in the modern world. Their reluctance to identify themselves with either the Russian or the Chinese Revolution in the twentieth century is neither ideological nor purely political. It is essentially rooted in their ancient legacy of two radically different types of economy and society, which, for centuries, functioned antagonistically, resulting in the formation of two distinct categories of culture: Sinic and Inner Asian types.

Along with intensive agriculture there developed in the same regions – the Yellow River basin and the Yangtze valley – some of the defining characteristics and peculiar institutions of what we today call Confucian civilization. This Confucian–Taoist culture tended to follow wherever the Chinese intensive agriculture techniques spread, first over the Chinese Mainland, then gradually, through migration and partial conquest, to the islands to the Northeast and finally to Indo-China. Intensive agriculture provided the economic foundations for a trans-border Confucian cultural ideocracy, based on shared Confucian cosmological beliefs, ancestor worship, a pictographic writing system and similar bureaucratic institutions. It appears that this Confucian ideocracy did not, in its early and pure form, include those regions which, even though contiguous to China, such as Inner Asia, lacked the necessary conditions for intensive agriculture based on irrigation. Confucian culture spread along with their agricultural technique, thereby providing both a common economic base as well as a cultural common ground for the wide acceptance of the Son of Heaven (*tianzi*) as the legitimate overlord who reigned the Confucian commonwealth or trans-border ideocracy that extended from Northeast Asia to the greater part of Southeast Asia, with regional variations.

Just as the early Chinese intensive agricultural technique was a typical product of the agro-friendly environment of the Yellow River basin and the Yangtze valley, the Taoist–Confucian culture was a typical early Chinese response to the Sinic agrarian world. The main characteristic of the Confucian civilization, as it evolved gradually from the Yellow River days to the present day fast-growing economies of East Asia, is not its profundity or its originality. Its unique feature lies in its confrontation with and meditation on the concreteness and facticity of man and his territoriality which constitutes his universe. What is amazing is its carefully nurtured antiquity such as ancestor worship, a pictographic writing system, its longevity and its sheer retention capacity whereby an incremental achievement of one generation or era – ranging from an agricultural technique to painting – is intensively practised and retained within the Great Wall of China before exporting it to similar environments. And if any metaphysical speculations developed at all such as the concept of *tian* necessary for the legitimation of Confucian order, it proceeded from the notions of simple man that divinity resides high in the “skies”, which constitutes the centrality of the Chinese belief-system.

What are the generic traits of Confucian culture that continue to influence the ways of thinking of millions of Chinese (Han), Koreans, Japanese and Vietnamese? We should discuss such traits as they developed within the agricultural core of China and subsequent regional variations, based on the Chinese pattern in Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

In China intensive agriculture tended to favour the closeness of community and such closeness drew early Chinese attention to the

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characteristically Chinese objects of meditation which are concrete and immediate: the ancestor, the family, the clan. Therefore, the early Chinese religious ideas “centered on the clan and its deities, often identified as ancestors”,<sup>6</sup> and ancestor worship has been one of the oldest religious beliefs of Confucian culture.<sup>7</sup> This ancestor worship is directly related to another equally potent feature of the Confucian culture: an extraordinary sense of territoriality. Ancient Chinese families drew fences around their houses and walls, and early Chinese states built walls to defend their territories culminating in the construction of the Great Wall of China. The belief is that the spirits of their ancestors reside in the ancestral land where their bodies are buried. In other words, ancestor worship, focused as it is on one’s ancestral land, tends to sanctify territory. In the present era, Chinese and Vietnamese Communists displayed strong territoriality in their nationalisms. This characteristically Confucian sense of territoriality contrasts sharply with the Central Asian nomads’ sense of almost borderless open space.

In feudal China (pre-300 BC) some of the core Confucian political doctrines and institutions germinated which were subsequently extended to the Confucian culture areas outside China, to govern centre–periphery relations within the Confucian commonwealth. Feudalism as such is often understood as essentially unegalitarian property relations with a consequent involvement of exploitation. Such a normative or economic approach misses the political characteristics of feudalism. Politically, feudalism may be defined as the absence or weakening of a centralized state with consequent war among feudal lords being the permanent condition of feudalism. From 1000 BC to the wars of ever increasing intensity in fifth, fourth and third centuries BC; the so-called barbarian wars and the warring states conflicts created much social disorder and dislocation: a popular hunger for peace grew. Chinese social response, as typified by Confucius (551–479 BC), was to create a supra-regional order among the warring feudal states by emphasizing “ancient religious conceptions of a high god, Shang-ti, the Lord on High, presiding over the fate of man, especially of those called to put the world in order”. As Robert Krammer continues:

The highest power is also often referred to as *tian* heaven, and it takes precedence over all other gods who are honoured with the cult. It chooses the sovereigns to bring civilization to the people and to instruct them in the correct human relationships. The ruler’s charisma is sanctioned by the mandate they receive from the *tianming* and it is by this sanction that they exercise their power and ensure a ritual order in the symbiosis of gods, ancestors, and men in which each has proper station.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, central to the Confucian political cosmology which sanctions and legitimates the reign, if not the rule, of the “Son of Heaven” (*tianzi*)

over “all under heaven” (*tianxi*) is the ancient pre-world religion concept of and belief in *tian* usually translated as heaven: *tian* may be considered as the ancient Chinese equivalent of god expressed in typically Chinese concrete geographical space terms, the sky above the earth. It predates any of the world religions. The emperor or king is conceived as the son of *tian* reigning over his earthly kingdom expressed as “all under heaven” (*tianxi*). Therefore, the imperial sounding term “all under heaven” is neither a geographical concept in the sense “the Ch’in or Han Chinese still subscribed to the view that China embraced the whole world”,<sup>9</sup> nor is it really an imperial concept in the sense that the “Son of Heaven” ruled over non-Confucian culture areas and non-Han peoples who did not believe in *tian*. It is essentially a cultural concept with limited political implications. It refers to the extent of areas or regions, originally within China proper, where the Yellow River agricultural technique and Taoist-Confucian culture had spread; and subsequently to the Northeast Asian islands and the Southeast Asian region where such techniques and culture spread through Chinese migration and cultural diffusion, or through partial conquest and assimilation.

“All under heaven” referred originally and essentially to what I have called the Confucian trans-border cultural ideocracy whose members shared (and still subconsciously share) several vital commonalities such as culture, a writing-system, political institutions and racial affinity. But to the Buddhists and Muslims of Central Asia, some of whom later came under the sway of “all under heaven” since the Yuan dynasty or Mongol empire, *tian* meant sky without its Confucian-Taoist religious connotation – heaven. Tibetan language, for instance, has another term for heaven, *lha-yul*, which was not used to translate *tian*, it was simply translated as *gnam*, meaning sky.<sup>10</sup>

In order to trace the ancient roots of the “Confucian world” order, I have isolated some primary ideas and institutions in the pre-world religion and prehistory of China which had moulded the Chinese worldview in its most formative period before its encounter with some of the world religions, particularly Buddhism. At that time the picture becomes more complex; but before that, as we have argued already, the essential events of the Confucian political cosmology such as shamanistic or Taoist beliefs (*tian*)<sup>11</sup> and pre-Confucius Confucian ideas that reached their maturation and codification during the Warring States, Qin and Han periods – fundamentally shaped the Chinese worldview. In particular, philosophical speculations during the Warring States “reshaped the long-established religious and ritual elements of the concept of kingship and government”.<sup>12</sup>

Such a concept of kingship and government was most readily accepted within China where the Confucian culture was most concentrated; it was less accepted in secondary derivative Confucian culture areas; and practically not at all accepted in non-Confucian culture areas in Inner Asia before the Yuan dynasty.

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My generalization of Confucian cultural ideocracy and Confucian culture areas or regions should not be misconstrued as a monolith. As already hinted before, the historical process of primary civilization-diffusion and resultant cultural by-products in secondary civilizations is an extremely complex one which I have tried to delineate elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> For the present purpose I might be permitted to summarize that complex process. The Confucian culture that originated in China and was then exported to Korea, Japan and Vietnam is neither the Chinese original nor purely Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese creations. It is, in most cases, the Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese versions or variations on the Confucian civilizational pattern. This appears to be necessarily so because the Confucian universal was, in the course of history, mediated and negotiated by the specificities of Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese local cultures, and particular national trajectories of history. That is why the transition from trans-border Confucian ideocracy to the “Middle Kingdom” (*zhong’uo*) was relatively easy. It was premised upon shared culture and language, similar political institutions and racial affinity. Nor was it strictly an imperial concept by origin and intention, for an empire is a centralized political system that rules over many different nations and nationalities, differing in race, language and culture. The historical formation of nation-states in Japan, Korea and Vietnam was fairly easy, though not entirely painless. What becomes foregrounded in the course of nation-building and national identity projection are local/national variations, not the original prototypes which tend to fade into the background during nationalist movements.

The Confucian trans-border ideocracy predates the concept of nation-state in the sense of a loose confederation of like-minded nations which virtually surrender their local sovereignties to a higher central deity (*tian*) located in the feudal origins of tribute relations that later governed the inter-state relations within the Confucian commonwealth.

Feudal China, especially during the spring and autumn period (722–481 BC) witnessed the growth of a number of independent states which some contemporary writers have conceptualized as an international system of multiple states. This contemporary analogy is quite misleading. For those analogies may be closer to the medieval Christendom in Europe before the emergence of nation-states or the twentieth century Soviet transnational ideocracy based on a common ideology. It was the Mongol warriors, not Confucian literati, who transformed the Confucian ideocracy into an *imperial* concept.

Now we must turn to the ancient states which belonged essentially to the same Han race and the Confucian–Taoist culture but which did not always develop that culture and its institutions at the same rate or level of growth. Such internal differential growth rates gave rise to hierarchical inter-state relations as well as frequent inter-state conflict in feudal China. As Owen Lattimore comments,

In feudal China, as in feudal Europe, the real unit of sovereignty was not the nation but the domain of the feudal lord. The Chou “emperors” represented the center of gravity of a widely spread culture but they did not rule an integrated empire by direct administration of each territory that composed it. All that they could claim was the allegiance, within the limits of feudalism, of a number of great nobles each of whom claimed in a similar way the allegiance of minor nobles.<sup>14</sup>

Yu Yin-Shih takes great pains to emphasize “the order of the world as a whole was never their [Han rulers’] concern; rather they were concerned with the establishment and maintenance of the Chinese world order, which was by definition sinocentric.”<sup>15</sup> The concept of “all under heaven” may not even have included the geographical world known to the Han literati at that time; it essentially indicated those areas and regions within the Chinese Plains where the Yellow River agricultural technique and Confucian culture had spread. It is, in other words, a Confucian–Taoist metaphor for the limited Confucian world inhabited by Han people who shared the Confucian cosmological beliefs such as *tian*. Within such a Confucian universe there developed a hierarchical tradition of inter-state relations originally among the Chinese feudal states themselves and subsequently applied to foreign relations with similar Confucian culture countries and states in East Asia and Southeast Asia.

The Confucian conception of inter-state relations differed from the European concept which is based on the legal equality of sovereign states. Since it grew in a domestic milieu which was feudal, the Confucian world order was deliberately feudal, and hierarchical order may be considered as a miniature and forerunner of the Confucian model of traditional inter-state relations. It was fundamentally *feudal* in the sense that the supra-regional order was conceived and constituted with a strong and strict sense of political *hierarchy*. The hierarchy was not expressed in vertical terms, though in conception and in praxis it was essentially hierarchical. With their characteristic concrete geographic sense, the early Chinese perceived their supra-regional order in concentric cycles in which Chineseness (*chu-hsia*) and Confucian influence (*de*) are the strongest at the centre of the Confucian universe (*zhong’uo*) and decrease in almost direct proportion to the distance one travels from the centre to the periphery. In other words, sister satellite states orbit around the Middle Kingdom. This supra-regional order expressed in concentric cycles is best exemplified by the Han rulers’ “foreign” relations within China itself.

The Han zone (*tianfu*) was the royal domain, under the direct rule of the King. The royal domain was immediately surrounded by the lords’ zone (*honfu*), territories apportioned by the King for his feudal lords. Next to the *honfu* were the Chinese states conquered and converted by the reigning dynasty, known as *suifu* or *pinfu*. They were called collectively pacified or



guest zone. The last two zones were reserved for the barbarians, probably Han tribes yet to be converted to Shang culture and Yellow River agricultural techniques. The man and *I* barbarians lived outside the *sui*fu in the so-called controlled zone (*yaofu*). Finally beyond the controlled zone lay the Jung and Ti barbarians who were their own masters in the wild zone (*huangfu*).<sup>16</sup>

This supra-regional order expressed in Confucian cosmic terms was maintained largely by the so-called tribute relations. The tribute relations originated in the *Zhou* gift-giving system which continued to represent legitimation and status in inter-state relations during the feudal period.<sup>17</sup> The rituals of diplomacy – the feasts (*hsiang/hang*) and covenants (*meng*) – derived from the *Zhou* gift-giving ceremony and associated mortuary feasts. Such shamanistic rituals symbolized the *Zhou* king's mystic power (*de*) to “charge” (*ming*) a gift recipient (local lord?) thereby empowering and legitimating the latter to rule his limited domain with *ming*. “Tied by marriage (human gifts) into kinship affiliates, lords feasted with each other like “fathers and older brothers”.<sup>18</sup>

The Chun Qiu inscriptions reveal several local versions of the *Zhou* concept of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*) which was manipulated by local lords to legitimate their own identities and domains. They suggest two basic types of authority relations and legitimation mechanism: matrimonial alliances and “charged” cases. The latter was represented by inscribed bronze vessels which were considered “the ultimate symbols of prestige and contract in the earlier *Zhou* gift-giving system”.<sup>19</sup> The bronze text functioned “as a contract between ancestral or spiritual authorities, the host or gift-giver and the guest or gift recipient”.<sup>20</sup>

A prototype of tribute practices can be traced to the Shang period during which more than 100 tribute-paying areas have been identified.<sup>21</sup> Central to the tribute relations system remained the gift-giving ceremony or gift-exchange, a characteristically Chinese polite way of persuading the less powerful to submit symbolically to the more powerful. This essence was solidified and later hierarchicized into a feudal order with due consideration and with the modern character of the Confucian civilization. “Thus, the (Han) king received tribute from the central zone on a daily basis, from the lords' zone monthly, from the pacified zone trimonthly, from the controlled zone annually, and from the wild zone only once.”<sup>22</sup>

Professor Fairbank's account further confirms the feudal origins of tribute relations applied originally to the king's relations with various feudatories within China before Ch'in unification. The Chinese term for tribute “pung” (*gong*) originally meant “tribute rice” (*tsao-mil/kungmi*) shipped annually from the Lower Yangtze region to Beijing. In feudal China (403–221 BC) numerous walled centres of local power existed that functioned as mini-states of almost equal status but most of them regarding the *Zhou* king as the Son of Heaven. The king/emperor invested/charged (*feng*) a number of hereditary vassals (*fan*) who in turn presented him with

tribute. Such vassals included “clan-vassals” or “clan-feudatories”. The Chinese term for vassals (*fan*) means “hedge, a boundary, a frontier”,<sup>23</sup> which suggests political fragmentation characteristic of feudalism as well as a very Chinese characteristic – territoriality. Each of the feudal domains was hedged, walled or bounded to demarcate its boundary. Out of such feudal conditions the idea and practice of tribute relations originated, grew and diffused, initially all over China, and later extended to the Confucian culture areas in East Asia and Southeast Asia.

As the cultural unification and political centralization of China progressed after 221 BC, tribute relations, which used to govern feudal relations within China, were extended and applied, with some modification, to China’s external relations with her neighbouring states. Its structure remained feudal and its mode of communication, gift-exchange. “Despite all the rhetoric concerning China’s superiority over neighbouring tributary states, most of the time Chinese writers had to recognize that the China-centred world order was basically similar to the feudal overlord-vassal relationship of ancient times.”<sup>24</sup>

Concepts like “all under heaven”, the “Son of heaven” and the “Mandate of Heaven” are culture-specific. Their validity, applicability and acceptability decreased as the early Chinese pioneers crossed the Inner Asian Frontiers of China. Here “all under heaven” stopped, and foreign relations really began. The Han dynasty, for example, had such relations with non-Han peoples like Hsiung-nu and Ch’iang, the Tibetan ancestors who lay “outside Han territory”.<sup>25</sup> Where the Confucian cosmological beliefs and assumptions were neither understood nor accepted, the Han rulers emphasized the filial or kinship aspects of the Confucian philosophy. It was called *ho-ch’in* or harmonious kinship, and is really a matrimonial alliance through which a hostile foreign power is transformed into a “brotherly state”. The first such *ho-ch’in* treaty was concluded in 198 BC between Han China and a Xiongnu (Huns) ruler, called in Chinese Shanyu. It included the following four terms of agreement: first, a Han princess would be given in marriage to Shanyu; secondly, the Han king would send “gifts” to the Xiongnu ruler; thirdly, Han China and Xiongnu would become “brotherly states” equal in status; fourthly, neither side would venture beyond each other’s boundary<sup>26</sup> as signified by the Great Wall. This ingenious human transaction would compel a foreign or non-Confucian ruler to engage in the tribute relations system. On the pretext of the Han princess married to the foreign king, the Han court, without losing its face or dignity, would send “gifts” which must be, in turn, reciprocated. The return gifts were perceived and recorded by Han chroniclers as “tribute”.<sup>27</sup> This shows the extent to which the early Han rulers went in order to extract tributes from lesser rulers by clever manipulation.

Such matrimonial practices continued to be a key feature of successive Chinese dynasties’ foreign policy in dealing with non-Confucian peoples

and states in Central Asia. The eighth century Tibetan king Songtsen Gambo's marriage to a Tang princess should be seen in this perspective.

Equality was alien to the Confucian world order, as in most pre-modern cultures. Yet sometimes the Son of Heaven had "come to terms with the geographic fact of nomadic Inner Asian fighting power".<sup>28</sup> *Ho-ch'in* was a practice that enabled the Chinese emperors to accept other powers on a more or less equal basis, because kinship ties eases the problems of hierarchy and might transform them into fraternity.

As Lien-sheng Yang writes, "Politically and militarily in several periods, China recognized the neighbouring peoples as equal adversaries (*liguo*)."<sup>29</sup> Examples include Han and Xiongnu, Tang and Tibet, Sung and Liao, Yuan and Chin. In these relations, kinship terms were often used. Thus, the Sung emperor and Liao emperor were called elder and younger brothers respectively. To make peace with China in 1138, the founder of the Southern Sung dynasty had to accept the status of a vassal (*ch'en*). But his successor improved the status to that of a nephew (*chih*) and addressed the Chin emperor as young uncle (*shu*). The 821 AD Sino-Tibetan treaty refers to the rulers of Tang China and Tibet in similar terms; uncle and nephew.

Where Confucian cosmological beliefs were not understood or accepted, early Chinese rulers tried to relate to non-Confucian rulers in Central Asia on a *human* level, and matrimonial alliance is a classic example of this. Through harmonious relations (*ho-ch'in*) "brotherly states"<sup>30</sup> can form an "alliance of brotherhood",<sup>31</sup> while maintaining the territorial integrity and cultural identity of such brotherly member states. Thus, under the redefined tribute relations based on *ho-ch'in*, the "Hsiung-nu still maintained an independent state in every sense of the word, with full territorial integrity".<sup>32</sup> Jing-shen Tao writes

Even in the Tiang, Sino-Turkish and Sino-Tibetan relations were often marked by a sense of equality between the parties ... rational diplomatic practices were specified in detail, kinship relations were established, and both emperors were to have the title of the Great Emperor.<sup>33</sup>

From the Han dynasty (former, 206 BC) to the Song dynasty (southern, 1279 AD), Confucian China confined its tribute relations essentially to the members of its Confucian commonwealth. The fact that shared culture – embodied in the Chinese ideographic writing system, the Confucian classical teachings about family and social order, a state-run examination system and bureaucratic institutions and a similar life style – was a *cementing* and reinforcing factor in this special, though hierarchically arranged, relationship is beyond doubt. Thus, the king of Vietnam submitted humbly before the Han emperor Huangai edict in 179 BC, even though it meant, in modern terms, national humiliation.<sup>34</sup> Thus, "Korea was not fully devoted to the Ch'ing dynasty, whereas she had highly

respected the Ming, not only because the Ming had given help during the Japanese invasions of the sixteenth century but *also because Confucian culture had flourished in Ming China*.”<sup>35</sup> China also tried to maintain some sort of tribute relations with her neighbouring non-Han social groups and non-Confucian states on the west and north, such as the Xiongnu and the Jiang. But this relationship was not based on shared culture, and therefore became problematic through the centuries. It was based on national security needs.

Perhaps no state in the ancient world had nurtured such an extraordinary sense of territoriality and boundary-consciousness as the Chinese state had demonstrated by building walls, maintaining frontier-guards and establishing command posts on the frontiers. It was such strategic considerations that led to Sino-barbarian relations on the Inner Asian frontiers of China, based on twisted tribute relations plus the *ho-ch'in* system. To the Central Asian peoples and their chieftains, tribute did not mean submission before the Son of Heaven; it was a commercially profitable transaction, as Mark Mancall and Yu Ying-shih reveal.<sup>36</sup> Such peoples and states remained outside the territorial limits of Han China, and were not members of the trans-border Confucian ideocracy based on shared culture. They might have constituted *waiguo* (foreign countries) which “did not originate in this nineteenth century but had a long history going back to the Han dynasty”.<sup>37</sup>

When the Mongols conquered China in the thirteenth century, it was part of their world conquest that included, apart from China, most of the states in East Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and parts of the Middle East. The Mongol empire stretched as far as Eastern Europe including Hungary, northern Poland, southern Romania and Russia. But it was in China that the Mongol emperors stayed the longest (1271–1368), because of the existing infrastructure, the availability of human and material resources, and their familiarity with local people and their culture.

Mongol imperial rule marked a clean departure from the conventional Confucian tribute relations which transformed the Confucian ideocracy into a multinational empire. First, they continued to retain and rule the former Confucian states on the East Asian islands and in the Southeast Asian region. Since willing submission to their rule was not forthcoming due to lack of Confucian legitimacy, they reinforced domination with the threat and actual use of force “whenever feasible or necessary”. There was “no system of foreign relations here, merely the extension of the Mongol empire as far as possible”.<sup>38</sup> Secondly, in addition to the member states of this Confucian ideocracy, the Mongol emperors included their freshly conquered states and peoples of Central Asia into the Chinese empire. In fact, the Yuan dynasty’s lasting contribution to China as such is that the Mongol emperors were able to bring the non-Han social groups and non-Confucian states of Central Asia, who had resisted Chinese penetration for

centuries, under varying degrees of Chinese control. This focus on Central Asia was further continued by the Manchu dynasty:

Central Asia, and not sedentary Southeast Asia, was the primary focus of dynastic foreign policy, at least until the early nineteenth century. China constantly sought to dominate the Central Asian steppes and deserts by demonstrating her military strength, trying to force the barbarians to recognize it by performing the prescribed Confucian rituals.<sup>39</sup>

It is an irony of history that the Mongol and Manchu emperors who shared more commonalities with the peoples of Central Asia were precisely responsible for making the Inner Asian states and peoples part of the Chinese empire. As we might recall, the earlier Han rulers up to the thirteenth century confined themselves to the Confucian culture areas in East Asia and Southeast Asia. Today it is this Mongol and Manchu political legacy that forms the basis of the Chinese Communists' and Nationalists' (KMT) claim over Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang. In fact, it appears that subsequent Han rulers such as the Ming dynasty hesitated or refused to recognize the Mongol empire which included not only the Confucian culture areas but also non-Confucian culture areas in Central Asia. As Professor Wang Gungwu writes,

Ming historians found it wiser not to comment on any of the events of the Mongol empire at all. It was as if the whole Mongol imperial experience was beyond rationalization.<sup>40</sup>

Tibet's historical relations with China, starting from the Tang Dynasty and ending with the Ching Dynasty, seems to pose an intellectual challenge to the Fairbankian concept of Chinese world order and its concomitant tribute relations. For Tibet did not share the Confucian culture, and at no point of Chinese history until the mid-twentieth century, did the Chinese ever try to enculturate the Tibetans into the Confucian civilizational mould. Therefore, Tibet's relations with Imperial China differed from typical tribute relations characterized by Sino-Korean and Sino-Vietnamese relations. Nor did Tibet pose, after the *btsan* period and subsequent Buddhist Revolution in the country, any security problem to the Chinese empire. Therefore medieval Chinese perceptions of Tibetans differed from those of Mongols and Turks. What my comparative analysis suggests is a third category of Imperial Chinese foreign relations, which will be briefly surveyed in this section.

For a long time the four or five concentric zones theory<sup>41</sup> has been widely accepted as constitutive of Chinese world order and foreign relations. However, from the perspective of Owen Lattimore's thesis, on which we have largely based the preceding section, this concentric and Sino-centric worldview might have been the early Han idealized views of Confucian

world order and worldview as they were then evolving in Han culture areas under the feudal conditions within China proper. Such views reflected the extent of the world *known* to the early Han at that time. Their dichotomization of “barbarians” and civilized Hans were well formed within China itself due to different rates of material and cultural growth before such notions were extended beyond China. But this extension was not random; it was applied to particular areas where the Yellow River agricultural technique had spread and where Confucian culture had diffused. Thus, during the Chin and Han dynasties, this Sino-centric Confucian world order was extended and applied to the Korean Peninsula, Indo-China and the Japanese islands.

In other words, this Confucian world order and its concomitant tribute relations constituted essentially an intra-Confucian states system operative in Han areas within early China, and later made acceptable to Confucian states outside China who shared the basic Confucian political cosmology and other values. This system of inter-state relations was feudal in origin, remained hierarchical throughout its history. The idea of equality was alien to its theory and praxis.

Such a system can operate only on two conditions: (1) that its members share the same culture, especially its political cosmology that legitimates this hierarchical subordination or (2) the threat and actual use of force to enforce the system across nations. Generally enculturation was preferred to the use of force primarily because the pre-modern Chinese state’s military resources were rather limited and also because the central Confucian teaching believed in the spread of influence through virtuous behaviour. Thus, even though some of the indigenous dynasties such as Han, Tang and Ming attempted to apply and extend the tribute relations to the non-Chinese states in Central Asia, it hardly worked. “Thus, the Chinese culture-based theory of the Son of Heaven’s supremacy had to come to terms with the geographic fact of nomadic Inner Asian fighting power.”<sup>42</sup> In general the Son of Heaven’s mandate to rule “all under heaven” did not include non-Confucian states and non-Han peoples, who, in the case of Inner Asia, had the fighting power to resist it. It is this form of Imperial China’s foreign relations that should be problematized and made the focus of analysis.

Thus far, we have been making the central framework of our analysis what the early mandarin predecessors had said about their views of the Confucian world order. Such subjective views can, at best, be treated as early Chinese perceptions of the world order which ought to be subjected to critical analysis, and we should not habitually accept it as ready-made framework of analysis. We should analyse not only early Chinese perceptions of their world order but also more importantly the *history* of early China’s *historical* experience of dealing with and relating to non-Han peoples living in areas, regions or countries with non-Confucian cultures.

For history is, to simplify it, a record of what man *did*, and not so much what man *said*. It is in this sense that Ch'in and Han dynasties', for example, historical experience of dealing with and relating to non-Han people such as Xiongnu and Jiang, constitutes early China's *foreign relations* in the true sense of the term. This category of foreign relations, not so much the tribute relations, constitutes the core of early Chinese foreign policy in the true sense of the term. For the tribute relations was an extension of the feudal domestic order to familiar, if not intimate, terrains where the Confucian cosmological assumptions were not questioned and where similar life styles, based on intensive agriculture prevailed.

The preceding remarks might sound unnecessarily long-winded and academically ambitious. However, my purpose is limited. I am trying to locate historical Sino-Tibetan relations within the context of Chinese world order and tribute relations. In so doing, I have encountered three major types of tribute relations which differ from each other substantially and among which Tibet forms the third category.

Han, Tang and Ming dynasties' relations with Korea, Vietnam and Japan may be cited as classic examples of true tribute relations. Such relations may be considered Confucian China's "fraternal" relations with the members of the Confucian commonwealth, in which the relationship was based on shared culture; and the symbolic subordination of member states to the Middle kingdom was *generally* accepted. Since the authority of the Son of Heaven was generally or usually accepted, the intra-Confucian states relations were not generally characterized by zero sum strategic *parabellum*, and the use of force was an exception rather than the rule. They were governed by the Confucian-Mencian model of "enculturation, good government, and minimal use of violence for the righteous defense of a morally correct political order".<sup>43</sup> The nearest analogy to the fraternal relations among the member states of the Confucian commonwealth may be the British Dominions such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand who shared racial affinity, a common culture and liberal democratic institutions.

However, it would be misleading to assume that all was peaceful in the intra-Confucian states' relations with Imperial China. Enculturated Vietnam's relations with several reigning dynasties in the Middle Kingdom is a good example. There was evidence of local/regional/national kings' tendencies to assert their national identities and to exercise their authority in their domains independently of Imperial China. Such nationalistic tendencies increased as they approached and encountered the modern era, especially in the nineteenth century. The historical process was similar to the medieval European one in which nations emerged with the breakdown of Christendom. Korean and Vietnamese tribute relations with the Qing dynasty began to loosen in the nineteenth century and finally broke free at the beginning of twentieth century.

The Ch'in and Han dynasties' relations with the Hsiung-nu (Xiangnu) and the Chi'ang; the Tang dynasty's relations with the Tibetans and Turks; and the Ming dynasty's relations with the Mongols, etc. constitute the second category of Imperial China's foreign relations. These non-Chinese states were neither Han in race nor Confucian in culture, and they posed the greatest threat to the security of pre-modern China. Their relations with traditional China were not marked by tribute-paying missions but by frequent conflicts and treaty-making events which were practically unknown in intra-Confucian relations with Korea, Japan or Vietnam. Out of this historical experience of dealing with non-Han peoples and non-Confucian states in Inner Asia developed the *realpolitik* tradition of Chinese foreign policy, which Alastair Johnston calls "cultural realism" or the *parabellum* paradigm. It assumes that "conflict is a constant feature of human affairs, that it is due largely to the rapacious or threatening nature of the adversary, and that in this zero-sum context the application of violence is highly efficacious for dealing with the enemy."<sup>44</sup>

This *realpolitik* tradition probably originated during the spring and autumn and Warring States periods (770–221 BC) when relations among the feudal states of central China were characterized by anarchical multipolar states. "But *realpolitik* axioms persisted across the rise of unipolar imperial states"<sup>45</sup> interacting with weaker but none the less threatening nomadic and semi-nomadic states in Inner Asia. This *parabellum* paradigm entailed a combination of a deployment of force and the pursuit of *ho-chin* policy, as explained earlier. This, and not the classical tribute relations, constitute the foreign relations and policy of traditional China in the true sense of the term. In such cases, the Son of Heaven and his mandarin advisers were compelled to recognize the reality of Inner Asian fighting power, and came to terms with the Turks, the Mongols and the Tibetans, and recognized them as "equal adversary" states.

The third type of relationship differs fundamentally from the second type, and less so from the first case. The first model's centrality is shared culture which was enculturated over a long period of time through migration and cultural diffusion, partial conquests and consequent assimilation achieved before the emergence of world religions and the modern world capitalist system. The third type of relationship has a certain resemblance with the first case in the sense that if it was Confucian culture that bound East Asian and Southeast Asian states to the Son of Heaven situated in China – as in the case of post-Song Sino-Tibetan relations – it was Buddhism that built the bridge between Imperial China and Buddhist Tibet, engendering a lamaist form of tribute relations.

The core of the second model of relationship focused on Chinese security needs, as the Turks, the *btsan* Tibetans and the Mongols threatened border security and sometimes the very existence of the Chinese state. Therefore, the latter's relations with the former marked a significant departure from



the classical Confucian tribute relations. They were characterized by cultural realism and realpolitik, based on strategic thinking and calculated policy that impelled the Chinese emperors to recognize their neighbouring non-Confucian states in Inner Asia as more or less equals.<sup>46</sup> The threat to use and the actual use of force was the essence of this Sino-Central Asian relationship from both sides.

The third model, which seeks neither enculturation as the basis of bilateral relationship nor strategic zero-sum coercion as the dynamic of foreign relations, is best represented by Imperial China's relations with Buddhist Tibet and Mongolia. This policy originated with the Yuan dynasty (1279-1370), and thereafter the Ming and Qing dynasties continued it with some modifications. The calculus of this policy was Imperial China's recognition of a new historical reality in Central Asia: the Buddhist Revolution in Tibet (840s-1240s) and its implications for Chinese foreign policy. That revolution threw up certain charismatic High Lamas into prominence and popularity in Inner Asian politics and societies, in particular such lamas who had exercised a pacifying effect on Central Asian warriors who threatened Chinese security for centuries. The core calculus of this imperial policy was to use some of the most prominent lamas as instruments of indirect rule and of imperial influence in the Buddhist regions such as Tibet, Mongolia and the Himalayan states. Apart from such instrumentalities, there was a piety involved in the Emperor-Lama relationship, as most of the Yuan, Qing and even early Ming Emperors who initiated and sustained this relationship were either Buddhists themselves or had Buddhist credentials.

This led to the development of a lamaist form of tribute relations in which Buddhist items replaced the typical Confucian tribute offerings such as local products. The lamaist tribute offerings consisted of an image of the Buddha, Buddhist texts and a miniature temple or *stupa*. As we shall document in Chapters 4 and 6, High Lamas did not usually perform the customary *kowtow* before the Emperor. This was a special priest-patron relationship which in its purest form was viewed as a guru-disciple relationship: emperors as powerful patrons of Tibetan Buddhism and extraordinary followers of Buddhism which the Tibetan High Lamas taught. The actual reality was much more complex than this ideal-type as I will try to show in Chapter 10. However, my intention at this stage is to show how this lamaist form of tribute relations differed, both in letter and in spirit, from typical intra-Confucian states tribute relations in which the super-ordination-subordination question was well settled and generally accepted.

One of the central problematics of the Confucian world order and its tribute relations has been, throughout its history, the question of super-ordination-subordination. In his relations with the Confucian member states, the Son of Heaven was able to maintain almost absolute superiority

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and supremacy over the king of Korea or Vietnam, who almost willingly subordinated himself and therefore his country to the Chinese emperor. The same cannot, however, be said of the Chinese relations with Central Asian warrior nations which, not being Confucianized, did not accept the authority of the Son of Heaven, and which had the fighting power to resist Chinese supremacy. The patron-priest relations, like the kinship (*ho-chin*) relations, represents an ingenuous attempt by the mandarins to resolve this central problematic inherent in the Confucian world order: superordination-subordination or the symbolic supremacy of the Chinese emperor in the "world". It indicates that only through the invention of *ho-chin* and *tisri* systems could the Emperor still maintain relative superiority while conceding high degree of respect and autonomy to the non-Confucian states and non-Han peoples in Central Asia. In this way, superiority is transformed into seniority which, by its kinship nature, is more acceptable than the brute and simple subordination that classic Confucian tribute relations imply.

The patron-priest relations or the *lamaist* form of tribute relations with no significant implications to impact either on the internal functioning or the political structure of Tibet continued as long as such sacred territories did not constitute a threat to the security of the Chinese empire. However, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the "Great Game" in Central Asia and in particular British India's policy activities in Tibet tended to create a great deal of suspicion in the Chinese mind. In this way, the "sacred realm" was unwittingly transformed into a high security zone. This was a political process, the consequences of which continue to haunt the Tibetan Question up to the present day.

## Chapter 2

# The Warrior Kings of Tibet (624–842 AD) and Tang China (618–756 AD): The Strategic Factor

Sino-Tibetan relations during the period 618–842 AD were characterized by almost constant conflict and periodic attempts at peace-making. Between 637 and 801 AD there were fifteen conflicts (see Table 2.1) mostly initiated by Tibet, as well as seven or eight treaties (see Table 2.2) signed between China and Tibet during the period 706–822 AD. Thus, Professor Yihong Pan writes that Tibet (Tufan) “posed severe problems to the Chinese, challenging more severely than any other non-Chinese state in the Tang period Chinese security and sense of superiority”, and “more than any other nomadic tribes, Tibetans competed against China for territorial expansion”.<sup>1</sup> For more than 160 years Tibet appeared as the most powerful and antagonistic rival power to Tang China, keeping the latter engaged in the battlefield most of the time and at other times at the negotiating table. This is what essentially characterizes Tang-Tibet relations during the period, even though Princess Weng Chen (married to Sron-*btsan* Sgampo) tried to introduce certain aspects of Confucian culture which unfortunately did not have much lasting impact on the evolution of Tibetan civilization.<sup>2</sup>

Tibetan ancestors, then called Jiang in Chinese, were the warriors who threatened the security of the Han and Ch'in dynasties. “Throughout the Han period”, writes Professor Yu Ying-shih, “Turfan (Tibet) owing to its proximity to the Hsiung-nu, proved to be the most intractable of the Western states.”<sup>3</sup> But it took Sron-*btsan* Sgampo's (618–41) leadership and organizational abilities, which the Jiang lacked, to transform this martial prowess into a great military power in Central Asia. He came to the throne at about the same time as the inauguration of the Tang dynasty in 618. “Thereafter the Tibetan kingdom appeared on the Tang frontier as a new type of threatening force.”<sup>4</sup>

Tibetan expansion during the *btsan* period was not, at least initially and by original intention, it appears to me, towards China *per se*. As Tibetan

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**Table 2.1** Sino-Tibetan conflicts 637–801 AD

<i>Sl. No</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	637 or 638	Tu-Yu-Hun	
2	12 September 638	Tibet raids Sung Zchou	Chinese border town
3	660	Tibet defeats Tsu-yii-hun	Tibet's takeover of Aza
4	3 May 670	T'ang-Tibetan battle for four garrisons	Near Kokonor
5	3 October 678	T'ang and Tibetan armies	Across Kokokor
6	685–689	Tibetan-Tang battles over Guzan	Gurzan was Tuskie country
7	mid 691	Tang Army attack Tibet	Near Wu-wei
8	mid 763	Tibetan army capture Ch'ang-an	Chiang-an was Tang capital
9	758–764	Tibetan army raid and take over Liang zhou	Zhou is a prefecture
10	10 December 786	Tibetan army take over Yen, Hsia, Lin and Yin zhou.	
11	787	Tibet captures Tun-huang	
12	790	Tang-Tibetan battle over Yang Hsi-ku	Tibetan and western allies kill half Chinese forces
13	791 or 792	Tibetan takeover of Khotan	
14	792	Sino-Uyghur forces destroy Tibetan army	Around Qacho
15	801	Tibetan fight with Nan-chao and Chinese forces	

*Sources:* Christopher I. Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia* (Princeton: University Press, 1987) pp. 22–157); *Than-yig gsar-rnyuin-las byuin-b' bod-chen-po' gsrld-lugs*, Qinghai Nationalities Press, 1983, pp. 10–62; Dawa Norbu, "Bstann, Blama-Dponpo and Sprul-Spu: Changing Notions of Authority and Shifting Basis of Power, and their Combined Impact on Political Development in Tibet, 600–1950", pp. 7–22, a paper presented and read at the ninth Wisconsin Conference on South Asia held on 7–9 November 1980 at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA.

*btsan*<sup>5</sup> power increased, it began to expand towards what the Chinese call "western regions" where a number of minor frontier states lay between China and Tibet. Throughout recorded history, such frontier states had functioned as buffer states to minimize direct Sino-Tibetan confrontation, in addition to acting as bridges of commerce and trade between China and Tibet. Examples include Hsiungnu and Ch'iang during the Han dynasty; T'u-yu-Hun, 'Aza, Khotan, Tun-Huang, Nan-Chao, Turkistan, Kokonor

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**Table 2.2** Sino-Tibetan treaties, 706–822 AD

<i>Year</i>	<i>Treaty</i>	<i>Content</i>
706 AD	First Treaty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demarcation of the boundary between China and Tibet.</li> <li>2. Following the signing of the treaty, Princess Wencheng was given in marriage to the Tibetan king – marriage alliance.</li> </ol>
732 AD	Second Treaty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After years of wars between Tang and Tibet peace treaty.</li> <li>2. China and Tibet set up their own stone stele.</li> </ol>
762 AD	Third Treaty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tibet compels Tang to accept Tibetan ritual practice at the swearing ceremony.</li> <li>2. Tibet makes the Chinese emperor Suzong to pay yearly tribute of 50,000 rolls of silk.</li> </ol>
765 AD	Fourth Treaty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tibet requested Sino-Tibetan peace settlements.</li> </ol>
767 AD	Fifth Treaty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To “restore farmer friendship” peace treaty.</li> </ol>
783 AD	Sixth Treaty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tang initiated peace process in order to relieve pressure on the Chinese frontier by Nanzhao-Tibetan alliance and thus concentrate on suppressing internal rebellions.</li> <li>2. West of Lingzhou, the Helam Mountain should the border demarcation line.</li> <li>3. Tibetan demand that Tibet should be treated as a rival or equal power.</li> </ol>
821/822 AD	Seventh Treaty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tibet should return three Chinese prefectures of Qinzhou, Yuanzhou and Anlezhou.</li> <li>2. Tang and Tibet recognized each other as equal.</li> </ol>
787 AD	False Treaty of Pinliang	<p>On the Tang refusal to cede territory, the Tibetans retaliated by military force, and then proposed this peace treaty. But on the day of the oath-swearing ceremony in 787 Tibetan forces ambushed and kidnapped more than 60 Chinese officials. Hence, the “False Treaty”.</p>

*Source:* H. E. Richardson, *Ancient Historical Edicts at Lhasa and The Mu Tsung/Khri Ytsug Lde Brtsan Treaty of 821–822 AD from the Inscription At Lhasa* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1952); Yihong Pan, “The Sino-Tibetan Treaties in the Tang Dynasty”, *T’oung Pao* LXXVIII (1992).

etc. during the Tang dynasty; Gusiluo and Xixia during the Song dynasty. As can be observed, the greatest proliferation of minor frontier states had occurred just before the rise of the *btsan* rulers to power; and the latter’s takeover of the former had immediate strategic implications to the security

of the Tang state. Thus, what was initially Tibetan expansion into the Tarim Basin countries led to intense Sino-Tibetan struggles for spheres of influence or occupation of the western regions and often, and finally, to direct Sino-Tibetan conflicts within the Chinese territory. Of the fifteen conflicts recorded in Table 2.1, nearly half were fought between Tibet and Tarim Basin countries, and the other half between China and Tibet.

The problems caused by the rise of *btsan* power in Tibet and its consequent expansion into the western frontier states and the subsequent implications for neighbouring power(s) were to be mirrored in the mid-twentieth century. The rise of Communist power in China led to Chinese expansion into Tibet. This has had immediate objective implications to the security of the major South Asian powers because Tibet's disappearance signifies the disappearance of a functioning buffer between India and China. As in the ancient *btsan* case, a Communist takeover of Tibet was not initially designed as a stepping stone to Chinese expansion into the cis-Himalayan countries, but it has brought the two Asian giants physically of China and India closer to each other, thereby engendering Sino-Indian rivalry in the Himalayan states. The dynamics of this incessant rivalry, not so much the subjective goodwill from either or both sides, generates much suspicion, tension and periodic conflicts such as those of 1962 and 1967.

Our observation that the *btsan* expansionists probably did not intend to expand into Han territory is largely confirmed by the Sino-Tibetan treaties signed during the period. Between 706 and 822 AD seven or eight bilateral treaties were concluded between China and Tibet, of which five or six focused on Sino-Tibetan boundary settlements (see Table 2.2). The treaty of 732 states, "Accordingly, in order to show the border that was established beyond Chilling, agreeing in every respect with what was previously settled". The treaty of 783 makes the most comprehensive boundary demarcations:

Now the frontiers that the Chinese state holds to the West of Jingzhou as far as the Western mouth of the Tangzheng strait, west of Longzhou as far as Qingshui country; west of Fenzheng as far as Tonggu county, and on to the Western Mountains of Jiannan and eastern banks of the Dadu River shall be the Han territory. The garrisons which the Tibetan nation holds in [the prefectures of] Lan, Wei and Hui; west as far as Lintao, and east to Chengzhou, reaching the Masuo and various Man on the western frontiers of Jiannan and the southwest of the Dadu River, shall be the Tibetan territory. . . . As for what is presently under control, Tan is the sovereign and as for the whole region of the western frontiers, Great Tibet is the ruler.<sup>6</sup>

This eighth-century treaty on the Sino-Tibetan boundary demarcations in the East is much more specific and clearer than the twentieth-century Sino-Indian border dispute. And finally the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 821/822

concludes, "All to the east is the country of Great China. All to *the west* is assuredly the country of Great Tibet."<sup>7</sup>

If the primary Tibetan motive was territorial expansion into the western regions and consequent Sino-Tibetan boundary disputes, the secondary motive appears to have been the *btsan* prestige. Sron-*btsan* Sgampo had learnt from a Chinese envoy Feng De Xia that both the Turks and the Tu-yuhun had received Chinese princesses in marriage alliances. He decided to do likewise, but his marriage proposal was turned down. He was "duly offended", and with his huge army "attacked and easily defeated" the Tu-yuhun.<sup>8</sup> Two or three years later, in 640, Princess Wencheng was given in marriage to Sron-*btsan* Sgampo. The Tang emperor's first rejection of the Tibetan king's marriage proposal was determined by China's relations with Tu-yuhun. In 634 Tang and Tu-yuhun were at war, and the emperor would have agreed on a matrimonial alliance with Tibet against Tu-yuhun. But from 634 to 636 the situation had changed with the establishment of a pro-Tibetan regime in Tu-yuhun, and the need to ally with Tibet had disappeared. Therefore, it was largely Tibetan fighting power and determination that compelled the Tang ruler to give Princess Wencheng to Sron-*btsan* Sgampo. Once given, the Chinese made best use of the marriage connection.

The episode demonstrates how matrimonial alliances were intricately connected with the strategic problems of war and peace. Usually a Tang princess was given in marriage to a barbarian chieftain whose fighting power the Chinese could not match. This was called, as we might recall, *ho-chin* policy, which was designed to resolve problems of war and inequality in inter-state relations. By establishing kinship ties with a barbarian power, the latter's fighting power against China was subdued. In so doing, it also resolved one of the major problematics of Confucian inter-state relations which insisted on the superiority of the Han state over all other states.

After Princess Wencheng's marriage with Sron *btsan* Sgampo, the relations between China and Tibet were invariably called as one between "Uncle" and "Nephew".<sup>9</sup> Thus, formal inter-state relations became more or less royal kinship ties which transformed the Chinese superiority claims into one of seniority order determined not by power but by age. This ingenious formality "saved face" on both sides, but actual problems were far from being solved, as frequent Sino-Tibetan conflicts indicate.

So what sort of inter-state relations did exist between Tang China and *btsan* Tibet which might shed light on our inquiry? Dr Yihong Pan's conclusion is this: "from 706 to 822 Tang and Tibet concluded seven sworn treaties which give us valuable insights into the conflicting attitudes of the two parties towards their relationship and show how China was reluctantly forced to abandon its traditional superiority and treat Tibet on an equal basis."<sup>10</sup> Professor Christopher Beckwith, the author of *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*, reached a similar conclusion:

Henceforth, neighbouring states – even haughty China – were to deal with Tibet on an equal level, and actually refer to the *btsanpo* either by his Tibetan title or, in unofficial writings, with Chinese terms meaning “emperor”. The spread of Tibetan power soon left them little choice.<sup>11</sup>

In the 660s the Tibetan court compelled the Tang envoy Chen Xingyan to perform *kowtow* before the Tibetan king.<sup>12</sup> Old Tibetan historical sources record frequent Chinese as well as Arab, Turk and other “embassies to Tibet to *tshal* (pay tribute)”.<sup>13</sup> In 756 a number of envoys from the Western Regions – including the northern Pamir countries of the Black Ganjak, Wakham and Shug non-paid homage to the Tibetan court, and Tibetan envoys were sent in return.<sup>14</sup> While Tang dynasty gave political titles many times to the rulers of other non-Chinese peoples, nomadic or sedentary, “throughout the history of Tang-Tibet relations the conferment of political titles took place only twice: once in 641 to the Tibetan Chief Minister Luding-zan (Mgar stong rtsan) and once in 649 to the Tibetan *btsanpo*”.<sup>15</sup> The second conferment warrants an explanation. The Chinese Empire Guozeng was a fervent Buddhist; and therefore his offer of the title of *Pao-wang* to Sron-btsan Sgampo was probably accepted.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, we may suggest that Tang China-*btsan* Tibet relations, characterized by frequent conflicts and treaties, were more or less of equal nature; and that Chinese political influence in Tibet during the period was minimal, if any. Even semi-official Communist historians admit, “of course, we do not deny the fact that both the Tang and the Tubo (Tibet) were independent states at that time, and the Tang did not have official rule over the Tubo”.<sup>17</sup>



## Chapter 3

# The Song Dynasty (960–1126) and the Buddhist Revolution in Tibet (842–1247): A Period of Benign Neglect

While the political status of Tibet during the Tang dynasty is unambiguous from the points of view of both the parties, the next phase of Sino–Tibetan relations during the Song dynasty seems not so clear. Communist historians claim that Amdo and the greater part of Kham (Eastern Tibet) were made part of China during the Song dynasty.<sup>1</sup> To the Tibetan historians, both lama and lay, it was “a dark kingless” period (*sil-bur gyur-ba*) when the centralized power and authority of the *btsan* rulers disintegrated into warring feudal principalities, and the question of Sino–Tibetan relations during this period does not arise. One way to approach this period might be to focus our discussion on mainstream developments in China and Tibet respectively during the period(s), as well as on the main thrust of the Song Dynasty’s foreign policy. The political and historical status of Tibet should emerge out of these larger developments.

If Tang China and *btsan* Tibet were essentially military powers contesting with each other, the succeeding regimes in both China and Tibet were ones of relative peace and cultural creativity. It appears that strong centralized military powers are not conducive to human or cultural development, whereas decentralized regimes show a greater inclination towards patronization and promotion of arts and culture, as the histories of Song China and Buddhist Tibet exemplify.

As the centralized *btsan* power declined after 842 leading to the political fragmentation of Tibet, the Tang dynasty also soon declined and was finally overthrown in 907, leading to a complete, albeit brief, disintegration of centralized rule in China. Central and South China as well as parts of the North were divided among rival regional military commanders, each claiming to be the emperor of China. There ensued fourteen such kingdoms (891–979) and, in North China, five short dynasties (907–60). And when the Northern Song dynasty was finally established

in 960, it controlled less area of Han territory than either the Tang or Ming dynasties.

The Song dynasty's major preoccupation and historical achievement was neither territorial expansion nor defensive preparations against foreign invasions such as Liao Tanguts, the Jurchens or the Mongols. On the whole it favoured economic and cultural development to warfare; a rare period in Chinese history characterized by "Commercial Revolution" and "neo-Confucian Renaissance".<sup>2</sup> Thus, from the Song period onward, Chinese civilization had been characterized "by an overwhelming emphasis on civil accomplishments and a contempt for the martial life",<sup>3</sup> the Song army was "the Chief means of taking care of the unemployed".<sup>4</sup> As Professor Fairbank comments:

The Sung never achieved the military prowess of the Han and Tang. It was unable to reincorporate Northern Vietnam (Annam) into the empire or extend its control over any part of Central Asia or the northern steppe. It even failed to win back the sixteen prefectures lost to the Khitan Liao in 926, and in 1004 it agreed to pay the Liao an annual sum of 300,000 units of silk and silver. On other north west, Sung was hard pressed by Tangut Tribes of Tibetans. These had established a strong state in the Kansu panhandle and the Ordos region inside the northern hook of the Yellow River, and in 1038 they assumed the Chinese dynasty name of Hsia (called in history the Hsi Hsia, or "Western Hsia"). After a series of defeat, the Sung started in 1044 to pay an annual sum to the Hse Hsia too.<sup>5</sup>

During the Song dynasty, the major organized frontier state between China and Tibet was Xixia, composed mainly of the Danxiang people of ethnic Tibetan origins, Xixia, situated as it was in present-day Ningxia and northern Shaanxi, posed a serious threat to the security of the Song dynasty. In order to "cope with the invasion by the Xixia", the Song dynasty began to pursue a policy of "using barbarians to fight barbarians". It armed the Khampa and Amdo warriors from nearby Amdo and Kham to fight against the Xixia expansion. This policy of patronage and encouragement of Eastern Tibetan warriors led to the consolidation of their relative power and the formation of the first Amdo state under Gusiluo in the 1060s. The function of this Amdo state, in the Song's scheme, was to check and counterbalance the expansionist power of the Xixia state. That is why the "Song court, attaching great importance to Gusiluo's role in resisting the Xixia, managed to strengthen its ties with the Tibetan regime by granting official posts and rewards to its leaders". This Amdo state "cooperated with the Song Dynasty in wars against the Xixia invaders".<sup>6</sup> From this perspective, it is more accurate to say that Amdowa and Khampa warriors became the military allies of the Song dynasty than to claim that they "came under the sovereignty of the Song dynasty".<sup>7</sup> The term "sovereignty" is too

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strong and too precise to describe the medieval, feudal political relations of the tenth–eleventh centuries; the sovereignty concept did not gain currency until the nineteenth century in either China or the west.

When we turn to Tibet, we find similar cultural creativity and peaceful activity going on during this period. What turned out to be the last *btsanpo* Lang Dharma (838–42) banned Buddhism and persecuted members of the Sangha. Buddhism virtually disappeared for 70–80 years from Central and near Eastern Tibet. It survived only in the extreme eastern and western corners of the country, Amdo and Ngari respectively. This illustrates how geographical factors, not rational choice, were often decisive in the pre-modern world, in shaping man's destiny. These two border locations, far away from Central Tibet, where the persecution of Buddhism was least effective, ensured not only the survival of Buddhism but also favoured the establishment of minor Buddhist kingdoms, namely Guge Kingdom in Ngari and Gusileo Kingdom in Amdo. During the period of Tibetan disintegration, their frontier locations enabled them to enjoy sustained, fruitful and cultural-contacts with their neighbouring Buddhist civilizations – the Xixia in the case of the Amdo kingdom and North Indian princely states in the case of Ngari.

As a leading Buddhist centre, Amdo, was not only able to revive and spread Buddhism in the Eastern corners of Tibet; more importantly it initiated, established and reinforced a Buddhist impact on Xixia, and maintained regular spiritual ties with the latter, not with the Song dynasty. In fact, it appears that Xixia, not China, was the first Buddhist state to start what later came to be known as the patron–priest relations with Tibet. As Chinese sources record:

The Xixia State believed in Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism held sway in the state. During the rise of various Tibetan Buddhist sects during the second-period spread and development of Buddhism in Tubo (Tibet), the royal family of the Xixia State managed to maintain ties with some of these sects. The Xixia State was found to be the earliest to appoint eminent monks as “Imperial Tutors.”<sup>8</sup>

While Lachen Gongpa Rabsal and Yeshe Gyaltzen were principally responsible for the propagation of Buddhism in Amdo and some parts of Kham, the Indian Buddhist master Atisa (982–1054) invited by the Guge royalty and the Tibetan Buddhist translator Rinchen Sangpo (958–1055) were to usher in not only a Buddhist renewal but a renaissance in Ngari that soon engulfed U-Tsang. This renewal was keenly supported and patronized by the Guge kings, especially Lha Lama Yeshe'Od and Changchub 'Od, both of whom became Buddhist monks. Lha Lama Yeshe'Od sent 21 boys to Kashmir to study Sanskrit and Buddhism but only two survived, Rinchen Sangpo and Lekpe Sherab. These two, on completion of their study, invited some Indian pandits to accompany them back to western Tibet. Their

arrival in 978 was considered to be the beginning of the renaissance of Buddhism described in Tibetan Chronicles as “a spark rekindled in the east and spread by a wind flowing from the west”.<sup>9</sup> Thus the conversion of the huge Tibetan Plateau to Buddhism was completed by the eleventh century.

It appears that initial interest in Buddhism during the *btsan* period was confined to royalty and the court, and it is probable that its spread to the peasants and nomads, who remained Bon believers until the Buddhist revolution, was restricted for political reasons.<sup>10</sup> However, during the disintegration following the Lang Dharma’s murder in 842, Buddhism changed from a courtly interest into a larger public passion. It appears that after years of war during the *btsan* rule, people at large hungered for peace, and Buddhism was peace-activity *par excellence*, much promoted and pushed forward by Indian and Tibetan Buddhist missionaries operating from Western Tibet. During this period, there emerged in Central Tibet many rival principalities, “many of which were ruled by lamas, or by laymen closely allied with lamas”.<sup>11</sup> Such priest-chieftains no longer competed against each other in the battlefield for military glory but tried to outdo each other in their competitive efforts to act as greater patrons of Buddhism. Piety and prestige were the dynamics of the Buddhist revolution in Inner Asia. As Shakabpa writes:

It was considered a worthy achievement for any Tibetan prince or local ruler to send scholars to India, or to invite Indian pandits to Tibet. There was considerable rivalry among persons of power, who wanted to acquire reputations as patrons of religious learning.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the most significant transformation during the period was in the sphere of society value or what constitutes good. During the *btsan* period, military prowess and glory were considered “good”, during the disintegration it was peaceful Buddhist activity that was preferred.

Though some translation was done during the *btsan* period, the majority of the translations were done during this “dark kingless period”. For example, Rinchen Sangpo, the Buddhist translator and missionary in Western Tibet built 58 monasteries and translated 250 titles from Sanskrit into the Tibetan language. Sarat Chandra Das records the names of 104 Indian Buddhist pandits engaged in translation and teaching; and many more private Tibetans went to India in search of Buddhist teachings and texts.

It was also during this disintegration period (978–1247) that the formation of the four major sects of Tibetan Buddhism took place. Even though the old sect Nyingma may be traced to the time of Padmasambhava in the eighth century, in terms of codification of doctrine, practice and monastic organization, it took real shape only during this period. The Kagyu, the Sakya and the Kadampa – the predecessor of the Gelugpa sect – all originated during this kingless period. Finally, Bon, the pre-Buddhist

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religion, was incorporated into Buddhism and acquired its contemporary form and shape during this period.

Throughout this 100 year period of Buddhist transformation, numerous Indian Buddhist pandits visited Tibet but they were not accompanied or followed by Indian sepoys. As the Asian Buddhist history as a whole indicates, the spread of Buddhism from India to Tibet was without Indian armed intervention or political ideology. It was primarily a cultural transaction and diffusion with no political content.

The Song dynasty's relations were limited to Amdo and some parts of Kham. That too did not originate in any intention to expand and establish what contemporary Communist historians call Chinese sovereignty in Amdo and Kham. The Song intention, as we have seen, was to mobilize Amdowa and Khampa warriors against the frontier and the then expanding Xixia state which was threatening the security of the Song State. Song China had no contact with either U-Tsang or Ngari. The reason for this may not have been just the distance; Central and Western Tibet, which was undergoing a peaceful Buddhist transformation, posed no security threat to Song China. This reasoning can not only be applied to this kingless era, but also to the later Internal Hegemonic period of struggle (1350–1642) when there was also no security threat to China, and therefore, there was no Chinese influence or intervention. Confucian China's influence and intervention in non-Confucian countries might have stemmed more from Chinese security concerns near its borders than any imperial desire to extend their rule over non-Confucian territories. Active intervention and expansionism were a Mongol imperial(ist) idea, a warrior's contribution to the sedentary Confucian statecraft.

## Chapter 4

# The Mongol Empire (1207–1368) and the Sakya Lamas (1244–1358): The Buddhist Factor in Operation

There are essentially two opposing views on the Sino–Tibetan relations during the Yuan dynasty. Chinese Communist historians emphasize the political dimension of the relationship which leads them to conclude that “a political relationship of superior and subordinate also existed, i.e., a relationship between sovereign and subject”.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Tibetan historians emphasize the religious nature of the relationship and conclude that it was essentially a patron–priest relationship (*chos-yon*) between the Mongol emperors and the Sakya Lamas.<sup>2</sup> Since the relations were complex and long, lasting for 124 years,<sup>3</sup> there is evidence for both the viewpoints and there seems to be some truth in both the Chinese and Tibetan versions. The baffling complexity and uniqueness of the relationship suggest that, at the time, the religious and political aspects were both important, which makes it difficult for us in the late twentieth century to understand its religious motives and medieval forms.

It seems clear that there was an underlying political dimension to the relationship in which the religious motives seem to have had a moderating effect on the political. Nor would it be true to say that the religious dimension was merely a cover-up or pretext for political domination; the Buddhist factor was important to the relationship. There was a political dimension but it was tempered, moderated, softened and eased by what appears to have been the religious belief of the early Mongol emperors such as Godan and Khubilai Khan, both of whom were converted to Buddhism by two Sakya Lamas, Sakya Pandita (1182–1251) and Choegyal Phagpa (1230–80). In short, the Mongol conquerors and early Yuan emperors made some political concessions for Tibet as a special case in the Empire on account of their religious faith in and fascination with the Sakya Pandita and Phagpa Lama. In practical terms, this resulted in the Yuan dynasty’s indirect rule over Tibet, which giving the Tibetan elite full self-administration

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and self-rule, with little or no interference from China. The Mongols chose the Sakya Lamas as their medium of indirect rule over Tibet, and a Tibetan government was established at Sakya which directly ruled U-Tsang and Ngari for 114 years. This was the first centralized government established, with Mongol support, after the fall of the *btsan* state.

The spirit and structure of Sino-Tibetan relations during the Yuan dynasty were largely determined by the personal relations between Prince Godan and the Sakya Pandita from 1240 and between Khubilai Khan and Phagpa Lama from 1252. And when the Mongol warriors finally conquered the whole of China in 1279, the relationship between the Mongol warriors and the Sakya Lamas were formalized and institutionalized.

Although the initial religious spirit might have declined, the special nature and structure of the Sino-Tibetan relations remained basically the same. In due course of time, the relationship gained importance for both sides. The Sakya Lamas needed the Mongol (Yuan) military support for their non-coercive regime in Sakya, while for the Yuan dynasty the Sakya Lamas provided an easier mode of indirect rule over Tibet. In addition, Buddhist Tibet and its charismatic lamas were to become valuable instruments of imperial policy in Buddhist Central Asia and China. I discuss these aspects of chos-yon relations in Chapter 10, based on the Sakya and Dalai Lama cases.

When Communist historians assert that “Tibet was officially incorporated into China during the Yuan Dynasty”,<sup>4</sup> they might be confusing the historical process of Mongol empire-building that predates the Mongol takeover of China and the subsequent exact periodization of the Yuan dynasty. In 1207 the Tibetan chieftains heard that Chingghis Khan and his army were invading Xixia which was Tibet’s close neighbour. At once, the Tibetan leaders met in Central Tibet and decided to send a delegation to the Khan, and submit. He accepted the Tibetan submission on the condition of periodic tribute payments; Tibet was, thus, saved from the imminent Mongol invasion. However, after the death of Chingghis Khan in 1227, the Tibetan leaders ceased to pay the prescribed tribute, and in 1240 Godan, the grandson of Chingghis Khan and the second son of the new Khan, led his troops up to Central Tibet and called for negotiation<sup>5</sup> with an eminent lama. This time it was the Sakya Pandita who saved Tibet from Mongol invasion and occupation.

In other words, Tibet was part of the Mongol global conquests in Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe: one of the nineteen such conquests involving the takeover of twenty such countries or regions in the world (see Table 4.1). Unlike most of the other conquered countries, Tibet was saved in 1207 by the Tibetan submission before Chingghis Khan, and in 1240 by the Sakya Pandita’s appeal before Godan. Under a special papal arrangement which acknowledged the Mongol emperors’ “suzerainty” (or indirect rule), Tibet enjoyed full and genuine domestic autonomy or self-rule. This was not true of other conquered countries, as we shall see.

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**Table 4.1** Tibet as part of Mongol global conquests

<i>Year</i>	<i>Mongol conqueror</i>	<i>Conquered</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1207	Chingghis Khan	Xixia	Xixia is next to Tibet
1207	Chingghis Khan	Tibet	Tibetan leaders submit to Khan on condition of tribute. Tibet was saved from invasion
1209–10	Chingghis Khan	Jin	
1218	Chingghis Khan	Korea	Mongols chased Liao general who ran away to Korea, and Korea was conquered by the Mongols
1218	General Jebe	Liao	
1220	Chingghis Khan	Khwarazma Ghazna, Bamia, Persia, Turkey	
1227	Mongol-Tibet relations strained		After Chingghis' death, Tibetans ceased tribute payment to Mongols
1240	Kotan	Invade Tibet	Sakya Pandit saves Tibet from Mongol invasion
1236	Subeetei	Bronx, Belgorod Kolomna, Moscow	These places are now in Russia
1240–41		Hungary, Northern Poland and Southern Romania	
1241	Batu	Hungary	
1235	Ogedei	Jin Empire	Northwestern region of the Yellow River
1252	Khubilai Khan	Dali	Present day Yunnan
1252	Heluge	Persia, Iraq, Assyria	
1257		Vietnam	
1259	Mongke Khan	Song China (attack)	Mongke died in July of that year in Sichuan
1279	Khubilai Khan	Song China	Final takeover
1271	Khubilai Khan	Burma	Burmese surrender to the Khan
1274	Khubilai Khan's attempt	Japan	Mongols plunder from Japanese cities but fail to occupy Japan
1292	Khubilai Khan	Java and Kolang	

Sources: John K. Fairbank et al., *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1993), pp. 163–7; anon., *The Mongols and Tibet* (Dharamsala, India: Department of Information and International Relations, 1996), pp. 1–20.



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This historical evidence also demonstrates that Tibet became a special domain or indirect part of Chingghis Khan's still expanding empire in 1207, 72 years before his sons or grandsons conquered China in 1279; and the peculiar Mongol patron-Sakya Lama relations began in 1240, 39 years before the Yuan dynasty was established by the Mongol warriors in China. The Chinese Communist position, would appear to be that if the Yuan dynasty conquered Tibet in or after 1279, then Beijing could claim Tibet as being part of Yuan China, and therefore part of the People's Republic of China. However, the historical facts are that Mongol-Tibet relations had begun some time before the Mongol conquest of China, and that China was one of the several conquered countries, though undoubtedly one of the largest and richest possessions. It is also true that it was in China that the Mongol warriors stabilized their empire, due in part to the prior existence of bureaucratic and institutional infrastructures as well as rich cultural and economic resources.

The most favoured relations that the Sakya Lamas enjoyed with the Mongol warriors-turned-emperors have both political and religious aspects. It is difficult to separate the two but for analytical purpose I shall try to focus first on the political dimension. Prince Godan's edict of 1244 to the Sakya Pandita was in the nature of a high command and order. It begins thus, "This is the command from me. Let these words be heard by Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen."<sup>6</sup> But this political order is not devoid of religious motives: although it is a command it is expressed in religious terms which seem to carry conviction and a ring of truth:

In order to repay my debt of gratitude to my parents, the earth and the sky,  
I need a lama to guide me in the correct moral direction.  
After investigation I found you.  
You must come regardless of travelling inconvenience.  
If you say you are old,  
then what about the countless  
Incarnations the Lord Buddha sacrificed in the past  
for other sentient beings.<sup>7</sup>

The transfer of pan-Tibetan authority from the Mongol emperors to the Sakya Lamas and the Mongol appointment of Phagpa Lama as the Tibetan ruler of Tibet were a political act, but one which was transacted in religious terms. The whole process does not seem to have been a meaningless ritual in view of the tenor of the dualistic relationship. According to Tibetan tradition, Phagpa Lama bestowed tantric initiation (Havajra Abisheca) on Khubilai Khan and his imperial family and his court on three occasions. The first earned the Lama the authority to rule the thirteen myriarchies (khri 'khor bcu-gsum). After the second, he was given a relic of the Buddha and invested with authority over the three regions of Tibet – U-Tsang,

Kham and Amdo. And when Khubilai became Khan in 1260, Phagpa Lama was given the title of *tishih* meaning “imperial preceptor”.<sup>8</sup>

Such descriptions might sound incredible in our sceptical age; there is, therefore, a need to situate these medieval transactions in their proper historical context, a context characterized by Khubilai’s growing faith in or fascination with Phagpa Lama whose religious stature made excellent material for indirect Mongol rule over Tibet. There was probably a mutuality of interests involved here: the warrior-turned-emperor needed a friendly philosopher guide and the Lama needed a powerful patron. Thus, their relationship, especially at the early formative stages, was characterized by mutual respect and the mutuality of enlightened self-interest on both sides.

The same spirit prevailed when it came to the definition and delineation of authority relations between the Khan and the Lama. The unique Sakya sect tantric consecration (Hevajra) into which Khubilai Khan was initiated by Phagpa Lama addressed this question. According to this rare ritual, in which the Lama occupies a supreme position, the Khan not only had to prostrate himself before the Lama, but make a serious religious commitment that he would never go against the Lama’s wishes. (This was one of the ways by which lamaist absolutism came to be established in Tibet.) Such a condition was, of course, unacceptable to the Mongol warrior, requiring, as it does, not only subordination to the Lama but also self-negation. However, Khubilai Khan agreed with the following compromise formula which basically defined the Sakya Lama–Yuan authority relations:

During meditations, teachings and at small gatherings, the lama can sit at the head. During large gatherings, consisting of royal families, their bridegrooms, chieftains and the general populace, Khubilai will sit at the head to maintain the decorum necessary to rule his subjects. On matters regarding Tibet, Khubilai will follow the wishes of Phagpa. Khubilai will not issue orders without consulting the lama. But with regard to other matters, Phagpa should not allow himself to be used as a conduit to Khubilai since his compassionate nature would not make for strong rule. The lama should not interfere in the political affairs of Chinese and Mongolian territories.<sup>9</sup>

Other significant political acts initiated by the Yuan dynasty and introduced into Tibet indicate that this was a period of indirect rule, and not of direct political domination. Its western equivalent might be “suzerainty” as understood in feudal international law. If it were a case of “sovereignty” as contemporary Chinese Communist writers claim, then Tibet would have become the thirteenth province of the Yuan Empire<sup>10</sup> or would simply have been incorporated into one of the neighbouring Chinese provinces, as the Communists have done in the case of Amdo and greater parts of Kham since 1951. This was not the case. Tibet, throughout the Mongol empire

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period was ruled indirectly as a special domain of lamas and Buddhism. If the Communist claims are true, then it would not have been necessary for the Mongol emperors to use the good offices of *tishih* (The Sakya Lama) and Ponchen (the chief Tibetan administrator) at Sakya, in order to rule over Tibet. There would simply have been a Mongol invasion and occupation of Tibet, and the establishment of direct imperial rule over Tibet.

Instead the Mongol emperors created complex bureaucratic procedures and Tibeto-Mongolian dyarchic structures through which they maintained their indirect rule or “suzerainty” over Tibet. The Ponchan who actually ruled Tibet from Sakya, was generally nominated or recommended by the *tishih*, and approved and appointed by the Mongol emperor.<sup>11</sup> A similar procedure was followed with regard to the nomination and appointment of regional military officers or commanders.<sup>12</sup>

In short, it was to the credit of enculturated Mongol emperors that they began to re-build relatively centralized administrative and political structures that would reconstitute a Tibetan government in Tibet warrior since the fall of early Tibetan kings in the eighth century. The establishment of fifteen postal stations and the reorganization of Tibetan political community, based on four censuses, were distinct Yuan dynasty’s contributions to the political centralization and cultural unification of Tibet after the “dark, kingless” period of political fragmentation and disintegration (842–1247).

In this process we observe that neither Prince Godan’s nor Khubilai Khan’s interest in Tibetan Buddhism was purely instrumental to their political designs. There is ample contemporaneous textual evidence that suggests that both the warriors showed a genuine and keen interest, if not faith, in Tibetan Buddhism. For example, their choices of Sakya Pandita and Phagpa Lama were not random; they were based on their rigorous search and careful consideration of the two lamas’ merits. Prince Godan selected the Sakya Pandit from three or four other lamas, as being the most learned and most religious.<sup>13</sup> Again it was not just Sakya Pandita’s recommendation of his nephew as his successor that led to Khubilai Khan’s choice of Phagpa. The Khan held an interview in which Phagpa was questioned and scrutinized on various critical aspects of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and history.<sup>14</sup>

Tibetan records<sup>15</sup> suggest that both Godan and Khubilai were converted to Buddhism more out of religious conviction than mere political necessity, after listening to the lamas. Thus, Prince Godan declared in 1247, “From now on Akawun (the leading shaman) and Lhapa-tso (the oracle) may not sit at the head of rows of monks during religious ceremonies. Instead the Supreme Lama (Sakya Pandita) will be seated at the head of rows.”<sup>16</sup> We might recall that Khubilai Khan also went through a similar conversion process following his initiation into Hevajra tantra by Phagpa Lama, and

made a similar declaration that defined authority relations between the patron and the lama.<sup>17</sup> Khubilai Khan's two edicts (of 1254 and 1264) explain why he came to believe in Buddhism. The first edict, known as *Bhendhey Sheykeyma*, states:

Like the sun, the Buddha Shakyamuni's splendour vanquished the darkness of ignorance and its environs. Like a lion, king of jungle, he vanquished all the demons and non-Buddhists. His characteristics, virtuous deeds and teachings have won the perpetual belief of me and Chabu (queen). Because of this, I became the patron of Buddhism and its monks. Even now, I have faith in the Lord Sakyapa and Master Phagpa.<sup>18</sup>

The second edict states,

For complete prosperity in this life, it is fine to enforce the legal code of Lord Chinggis Khan. However, future lives must depend on spirituality. Therefore, after investigating various religions, I have found Buddha Shakyamuni's path to be the most wholesome. Master Phagpa is the one who has achieved spiritual realization and shown the true path to others.<sup>19</sup>

Such contemporaneous textual evidences suggest that the Yuan emperors were not only patrons of Tibetan Buddhism; they also appear in these texts as believing, if not practising, Buddhists themselves. This social fact constitutes the Buddhist factor in Sino-barbarian relations, and in Sino-Tibetan relations since the thirteenth century the Buddhist factor played a determining role. Professor Fairbank and other historians observe the remarkable political stability that China had enjoyed from the thirteenth century till the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> This stability can be explained in two ways. The Mongol and Manchu warriors, who had posed one of the greatest and long standing threats to Chinese security, were converted to Buddhism by the Tibetan lamas in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus, one of the major pre-modern sources of danger to China from Central Asia all but disappeared, and the Chinese enjoyed almost 600 years of peace and stability, until the nineteenth century when they were threatened by the Western imperial powers. By that time, the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe, whose powerful coercive by-products had reached the coasts of China, rendered the Inner Asian "fighting power" obsolete.

However, before that, the Mongols were a power to contend with, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Their conquest of China marked radical departures from Confucian China's tradition of policy towards and relations with non-Confucian states. In so doing, they transformed the traditional Confucian ideocracy into a truly multinational empire. That is to say, the Mongol empire or Yuan China included not only

the Confucian culture countries but also many more non-Confucian states or nations in Central Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and even parts of Eastern Europe. The extent of this empire was never dreamt of by any “Son of Heaven” in Chinese history supposedly reigning “all under heaven”. It was this Confucian myth which the Mongol emperors made into a reality.

After 60 years of continual Mongol expansion into Central Asia, East Asia and the Middle East, Khubilai Khan, in 1267, laid down the specific terms of tribute, which redefined the traditional Confucian tribute relations in much stricter terms. The Khan’s terms of tribute exacted and exhorted the following: (a) the ruler of the conquered country must seek imperial audience in person; (b) son(s) of the ruler must be sent to and kept as a “hostage prince” at the imperial court; (c) a Mongol governor to be placed in charge of the conquered country/territory; (d) a census of the conquered population to be made; (e) the local people must provide military service; and (f) they must also pay taxes.<sup>21</sup> These terms must have been enforced upon all those conquered countries which failed to submit at once, and where direct Mongol rule was extended such as Korea (1218–1368) and Burma (1271–1368). In other parts of the empire, for example Eurasia and the Middle East, fifteen generations of Batu’s dynasty directly ruled the Russian principalities up to 1480; and six generations of Heluge’s dynasty ruled the Middle Eastern countries until, 1526. In the case of Tibet, it was not a Mongol governor who ruled but a Tibetan official called *Ponchen*<sup>22</sup> (*dpon-chen*). As a special Buddhist country, Tibet was exempt from both military service and taxes.<sup>23</sup>

Neither Sakya Pandit nor Phagpa Lama could be strictly considered a “hostage prince”, though a technical semblance could be discerned. As we have seen, both of these charismatic lamas were treated with great respect and honour, if not reverence, unprecedented in Mongol or Chinese annals.<sup>24</sup> The Sakya Pandita, then aged 63, met Prince Godan in 1247, and after remaining with Godan for four years, died. His successor Phagpa Lama did not appear to have been kept as a “hostage prince” at Beijing. Instead, he was elevated to “State Preceptor” and “Imperial Preceptor”.

When Phagpa prepared to return to Tibet in 1274, the Khan decided to accompany him part of the way. Out of fondness for the lama, he remained with him for many months, until they reached the upper bend of the Manchu (Yellow River) in the Amdo region. A grand farewell party was given there for Phagpa by the members of the Mongolian court.<sup>25</sup>

The highly respectful and reverential treatment extended to the Sakya Lamas is not an isolated case, though it is the first such case in Sino–Tibetan relations. Similar reverence and respect were shown by successive Chinese dynasties to successive ruling or reigning High Lamas of Tibet. Two such

examples will illustrate our point: the Ming emperor invited the V Karmapa (Lama Dezhin Shagpa) to China in 1407. A noted Tibetan historian accompanying him recorded the imperial reception to the Lama in the following words:

On the first day of the first month of the Fire Hog year, we arrived at the outskirts of Nanking, the capital of the Ming. Officials and noblemen on horses welcomed us and placed Karmapa on an elephant. At the city gate of Nanking, the Emperor himself received Karmapa Lama. Gifts were exchanged. Karmapa presented a gold model of a wheel and a scarf to the Emperor, and received in return a conch shell and a scarf. After the Emperor had returned to his palace, Karmapa was escorted to the guest house.<sup>26</sup>

It should be noted that the Emperor came out of his palace to receive the Lama, and that there was no question of *kowtow* by the latter to the former. We might say their relations, though not on equal footing, were characterized by mutual respect and implicit compromise politics. An even higher level of state reception was accorded to the V Dalai Lama by the Qing Emperor Shen Xhi in 1652. The Lama's state visit was an unprecedented event in the history of Qing-Tibetan relations. As William Rockhill writes, "He [the V Dalai Lama] had been treated with all the ceremony which could have been accorded to any *independent sovereign*, and nothing can be found in the Chinese works that he was looked upon in any other light."<sup>27</sup>

We note that when Phagpa Lama was leaving China, Khubilai Khan went out of his way to accompany the Lama up to Amdo; when the V Karmapa Lama visited Nanking, the Ming emperor came out of his imperial palace to receive the Lama, and when the V Dalai Lama visited Beijing, the Qing Emperor came out of his imperial palace to receive the Lama. The Lamas did not have to *kowtow* before the emperors. Tributes were exchanged between the patron and the priest, not submitted by the political subordinate to the super-ordinate. The items of tribute were not local products but symbolic Buddhist artifacts,<sup>28</sup> symbolizing the religious nature of the relationship. Communist historians, being declared atheists and materialists, find it difficult to understand the religious motives and symbolism surrounding and permeating the "Chos-yon" relationship. Failing to understand the religious phenomena, they gave a one-sided picture of this strange relationship.

There is no record that the kings of Korea, Vietnam or Burma were ever received in Beijing or Nanking, and accorded the same level of imperial reception as done to the Dalai Lama, the Sakya Lama and to the Karmapa Lama by the emperors of China. This is where what I have called the Buddhist factor in Sino-barbarian relations is relevant. It transformed the *kowtow* culture into mutual respect. From this point of view, Buddhist

## *The Buddhist Factor in Operation*

Tibet's relation with Imperial China was unique, warranting special treatment and status within China.

One of the fundamental psychological obstacles in the way of Sino-Tibetan understanding and dialogue appears to be the Chinese Communists' failure to understand the Tibetan religious phenomena that shaped the Sino-Tibetan relations for more than 800 years. They do not understand why the Dalai Lama continues to have such a potent and deep seated hold over not only the Tibetan masses but also upon Westerners who come from a highly rational and scientific educational background. This remains a mystery to them, beyond Marxist comprehension. Nor do their historians understand why past Chinese emperors respected and even venerated the Grand Lamas of Tibet so much so that the latter had succeeded in creating a special status for Buddhist Tibet within the Chinese empire. Behind this failure resides their ideological commitment to resist any understanding of religious phenomena in human affairs; and without such an understanding the actual history of Sino-Tibetan relations may be easily distorted and misunderstood, as Chinese Communist historians have done.

However, there is hope. During President Clinton's visit to China in June-July, 1998, he urged President Jiang Zemin to resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama in return for the recognition of Tibet as part of China and "the recognition of the unique cultural and religious heritage of that region". President Jiang candidly replied in front of a nation-wide television news conference:

But still I have a question; that is, my visit to the United States last year, and also during my previous visits to other European countries, I found that, although education, science and technology have developed to a very high level, and people are enjoying modern civilization, still quite a number of them believe in Lamaism. This is the question that I am still studying and still looking into.<sup>29</sup>

One hopes that President Jiang will recommend his close associates and intellectuals in China to follow his example. I believe there are enormous cultural barriers that invisibly obstruct the progress of Sino-Tibetan understanding and dialogue. Chinese Communist leaders and opinion-makers tend to dismiss Tibetan Buddhism or what they call "Lamaism" as a bundle of superstitions that has kept the Tibetan people in the darkness of medieval theocratic feudalism which now is obstructing Tibetan progress to modernity under Communist auspices. On the other hand, the Tibetans still retain a Cold War image of Chinese Communists who have systematically and brutally destroyed the Tibetan religion and way of life.

President Jiang's promise to "study and look into" Tibetan religion will go a long way to close the gap that divides Chinese and Tibetan cultures. Such an academic exercise, if carried on a wide scale, might decrease the Chinese habitual bias, reinforced by Maoist Han-centric ideology against

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Tibetan “barbarians”. The aim should not be to convert the Chinese to “Lamaism” but to increase their critical appreciation of Tibetan cultural heritage. On the Tibetan side, the Dalai Lama and his close associates should try to study and understand China’s great past and present heritage, and not always be obsessed with the politics of Sino-Tibetan dialogue. For I believe a sound and enduring basis for dialogue is first to build up mutual respect for each other’s culture and way of life; then to recognize the reality of limiting parameters from both sides.



## Chapter 5

# The Confucian Restoration in Ming China (1368–1662) and the Refeudalization of Post-Sakya Tibet (1337–1565): The Role of Karmapa in Tibetan Politics

In order to understand the post-Sakya developments in Tibet, dominated by the local Tsang hegemonies' power struggles, it is necessary to have some ideas, however tentative and sketchy, of the Tibeto–Mongolian diarchic political system in Sakya that was instrumental in the indirect Mongol rule over Tibet during the Sakya period.<sup>1</sup> For this explains why and how the rapid process of the refeudalization of Tibetan politics and society directly flowed out of the collapse of the Sakya government. The characteristic feature of the post-Sakya period was incessant power struggles among better organized and more ambitious local, feudal units for supremacy which each fighting unit sought to legitimate by patronizing different Buddhist sects.

As we might recall, Khubilai Khan “offered” (*phul*) thirteen myriarchies (*khri-'khor behu-gsum*) to the Sakya Pandita's successor *Phagpa*. This approximately included U-Tsang and Ngari. Each myriarchy was “directly ruled”<sup>2</sup> by a myriarch (*khri-dpon*), exercising both administrative and judicial authority over his local domain (*khri-'khor* = 10,000 households). He also maintained a small private army,<sup>3</sup> especially after the Sakya government began to weaken itself with the decline of the Yuan dynasty.

The executive head of this loose confederation of thirteen autonomous myriarchies was the office of the Ponchen (*dpon-chen*), translated as the “Great Authority”, Chief Administrator or Governor of Tibet located at Sakya. The office of the Ponchen functioned for all practical purposes, as the Tibetan government at the pleasure of the Mongol khans and later Yuan emperors. The Ponchen was invariably a Tibetan nominated by the ruling Sakya Lama and approved by the reigning emperor, as we have seen in our analysis of Yuan–Sakya relations. His function was, apart from being the chief executive head of the Sakya government, to appoint a tripon for each of the thirteen myriarchies, and to act as liason between the Yuan dynasty

and Tibet. It also appears that the Ponchen had a small army at Sakya itself but this was inadequate in terms of internal rebellion and external invasion. His major military support came from the Mongols or Yuan dynasty.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, when the Mongol empire declined, the Ponchen's military back-up system also disappeared, and those myriarchies with ambitious leaders, better organizational abilities and relative military power such as Nedong, Yazang, Thangpoche, Yardok, etc. began their power struggle for the political void left by the collapse of the Sakya government.

The immediate victor to emerge from the downfall of Sakya government was no less than one of its *khri-dpon*, Changchub Gyaltzen, who headed the Nedong myriarchy, and who had been treated unjustly by the declining and degenerated Sakya regime. Changchub Gyaltzen and his descendents ruled U-Tsang (Outer Tibet) for nearly 97 years under the dynastic name of Phamo-drupa. However, they were, except for their founder (1354–1434), frequently challenged and contested by their descendents and dissidents. The year 1434 marked the end of the Phamo-drupa rule in Tibet and the ensuing 100 years were marked “by a constant struggle for power between the provinces of U and Tsang whose leaders adhered respectively to the Ge-lug-pa and the Kar-ma-pa sects”.<sup>5</sup> The main contenders were Dhondub Dorje and Dhonyo Dorje of Rinpung who were subsequently challenged by Tseten Dorje and Konchok Rinchen of Dewa Tsangpa.<sup>6</sup>

I have described the post-Sakya developments in Tibet as one of “refeudalization”, the first case of feudalization being the post-tsan period or “Kingless Age”. In both the cases I refer more to the political consequences of feudalism than its economic aspects. The post-Sakya period was feudal and anarchic in the following senses: (a) it exhibited a weakened centralized state power structure or a relative absence of a centralized state system, which provided an opportunity for power struggles among the local political elite in search of power and security; (b) such political feudal conditions were characterized by constant power struggles among rival local political units in search of power and security in an age of insecurity and uncertainty; (c) sociologically, the political features “associated with feudalism are a direct outcome of a society striving for patterns of organization and cohesion in a period of declining state power and the disruption of traditional kinship security groups”.<sup>7</sup> Such anarchic conditions are favourable for the flourishing of multiple sects and charismatic lamas<sup>8</sup> whose moral support and legitimation the local magnates and feudal lords seek in their power struggle and consolidation of limited local powers. It was these types of social and political conditions which existed during the post-btsan (842–1247) and post-Sakya period (1350–1642).

Amidst the constant power struggles and sectarian strife which lasted over 150 years, the really historically significant development appears to be Changchub Gyaltzen's rule (1302–64). His rule reveals a Tibetan nationalist

vision that was only partially fulfilled. His various reforms were designed to undo the Mongol traces and influences inherent in the Sakya administrative structure, and sought to revive, instead, the national traditions and glories of the early warrior kings (*btsan*). For example, he replaced the *khri-dpon* administrative system by the indigenous dzongpon system; Mongolian dress, which was popular during the Sakya regime, by *btsan* outfits; the Mongol martial law-like summary execution system by the Tibetan legal code called '*khrim-yig zhelche bchu-gsum* originating from the *btsan* period, etc. He also did away with the decimally-based social organization of the Mongols and created a village-based defence system and new taxation laws.<sup>9</sup> Thus, by 1350 Changchub Gyaltzen had "established himself as actual master of all Tibet, deliberately fostering a feeling of national unity and reviving the traditions and glories of the early kings".<sup>10</sup>

However, it is not clear what areas of the Tibetan Plateau were brought under Changchub Gyaltzen's control. Richardson says "all Tibet",<sup>11</sup> Tsepon Shakabpa, "all of Tibet with the exception of Sakya",<sup>12</sup> and Communist historians refuse to recognize Changchub Gyaltzen's conquest, and describe him as "one of the 13 wanhu (10,000 households) officials who were given their official position during the Yuan Dynasty".<sup>13</sup> The record of his rule as a whole indicates that it did not include Kham and Amdo whose lamas and chieftains carried on tribute-trade relations with the Ming dynasty; it included only U-Tsang and probably Ngari.

When Changchub Gyaltzen established his nationalistic regime and was in full control of U-Tsang, the "enfeebled Yuan Emperor could do nothing but accept the *fait accompli* and regularize the position by the grant of title"<sup>14</sup> (Tai Situ) to him. Changchub Gyaltzen visited neither the Yuan nor the Ming court; the title was sent to him through an envoy. Nor did any of his successors visit the Ming imperial court. However, Ming titles continued to flow to them. For example, "the imperial state perceptor"<sup>15</sup> titles were sent to Desid Jamyang Sakya Gyalsten and Desid Dawa Gyaltzen in 1372 and 1406 respectively, neither of whom went to Nanjing or Beijing to receive the titles.

Being nationalistic, the Tsangpa rulers must have understood the political implications of asking for titles from or sending tribute missions to the Chinese imperial court. As such, their relations, tribute or otherwise, with Ming China were perhaps at the lowest ebb. No other non-lamaist regime in Tibet since the fall of the warrior kings had resisted Chinese diplomatic pressure as the Phamo Drupa, Rinpung and the Tsangpa rulers had done.

As we have seen, for almost 130 years U-Tsang was in turmoil. Yet the Ming dynasty "refrained from sending troops to subdue Tibet or from garrisoning troops in Tibet".<sup>16</sup> The Ming response to Tibet during this period reflected a typical Confucian attitude towards the "western region". It was characterized by an active tribute-cum-trade diplomacy with Inner Tibet so as to create an environment of peace and security along China's

immediate border areas. Traditional Chinese concern had almost always been security and border maintenance; it was not, unlike the Mongol emperors, imperialist and interventionist in the military sense, unless, of course, compelled by crisis situations. Had it been the Yuan dynasty, they would have intervened militarily in Outer Tibet either in order to protect their preferred lamaist regime or in order to carry out their imperial desire to rule over a conquered territory.

We have briefly examined the internal developments in Tibet during the Phamo-drupa, Rinpung and Tsangpa regimes. We shall now turn to the internal developments within Ming China. Such internal developments could provide a larger context in which to understand Ming-Tibet relations than speculating about Ming policy towards Tibet. For in pre-modern times internal developments were more decisive than international factors. So what sense can we make of Ming-Tibet relations? According to Chinese Communist historians, "The Ming Dynasty basically followed the system introduced by the Yuan Dynasty in exercising rule over the Tibetan areas."<sup>17</sup> This was true of the Amdo and Kham areas (Inner Tibet) but not of Outer Tibet (U-Tsang and Ngari) where, as we have seen, three successive nationalistic regimes came into existence, which Communist historians prefer to ignore.

On the other hand, Tibetan nationalist historians such as Shakabpa maintain that "Tibet gained its independence from the Mongols in the time of Changchub Gyaltzen (1302-64), and China gained hers in 1368 under the leadership of Chu Yuan-chang."<sup>18</sup> Shakabpa is only partially correct. Changchub Gyaltzen's Tibet included only U-Tsang and Ngari (Outer Tibet) and not Amdo and Kham whose lamas and chieftains continued to have flourishing tribute-cum-trade relations with the Ming dynasty, as we shall see later.

Besides these two extreme views is a considerable body of academic literature bristling with academic debates. The dominant view, as reflected in the works of Luciano Petech<sup>19</sup> and Sato Hisashi,<sup>20</sup> is that the Ming court pursued a divide-and-rule policy towards post-Sakya Tibet in order to keep it weak and fragmented. However, Elliot Sperling does not find any textual evidence in either Ming records or in Tibetan texts to support the Petech-Sato thesis.<sup>21</sup> The latter is probably based on deduction from the number of titles conferred by the Ming emperors upon the eminent Tibetan lamas of the period rather than on comparative analysis of developments in China and Tibet.

The first and rather instinctive reaction of the founding Ming emperor was to express his will to continue China's tribute relations with all tributary states, as established and practised by the previous Yuan dynasty. Wang Jiawei's account implies that the Ming dynasty's founding proclamation and call for submission was made only to Tibet,<sup>22</sup> whereas Fairbank states,

## *The Role of Karmapa*

Upon gaining the throne, Hung-wu immediately tried to re-establish the grand design of the Chinese state in his foreign relations as well as at home. He sent envoys to the peripheral states, Korea, Japan, Annam (Vietnam), Champa, Tibet, and others, announcing his accession.<sup>23</sup>

The Ming Emperor Taizu's "business-as-usual" attitude towards the resumption of Confucian tribute relations with Tibet and other states, as maintained by the Mongol emperors – minus armed intervention – is clearly indicated by the second edict. This edict called on "various tribal leaders to recommend ex-Yuan officials to receive new official posts in Nanjing".<sup>24</sup> Tibetan ex-officials also responded in a similar manner. Namgyal Palzangpo, the last acting imperial tutor of the Yuan Dynasty from Sakya who had withdrawn to live near Sakya Monastery after the fall of the Yuan dynasty, went to the Ming capital in 1373 to report. The new Ming emperor was so glad with Palzangpo's submission that he at once appointed the lama as state tutor and gave him a jade seal. With Palzangpo's recommendation, approximately 100 ex-Yuan title-holders were given new Ming titles.<sup>25</sup>

As we might recall, the Chinese empire reached the zenith of its territorial expansion under the Mongol emperors, and it was therefore to be expected that the Ming successors would lay claim to all the lands and lords brought under varying degrees of Mongol control. But laying claim is one thing, and having the power or force to back up that claim is quite another. Since the Mongols proved to be the major threat to the security of the Ming empire,<sup>26</sup> the Ming dynasty could not spare any military forces to back up their tributary claims. Faced with this situation, the Ming dynasty reverted to the Confucian instruments of tribute relations, more emphatically than before. In this way, Ming tribute relations differed from the Yuan system in the following ways: (a) the threat and actual use of force to regulate tribute relations was minimal, being preoccupied with the Mongol threat; (b) therefore, the Ming court pursued typical Confucian methods of diplomacy such as granting an unlimited number of titles and gifts; (c) since the whole emphasis during the Ming dynasty was on a Confucian restoration,<sup>27</sup> the Buddhist factor, which had received a prominent position during the Yuan and Qing dynasties, was relegated to a respectable secondary position. These are the factors which define the tenor of Ming China–Post Sakya Tibet relations.

While the Ming court pursued Confucian diplomacy and tribute relations with all those Confucian states in East Asia and Southeast Asia as well as with non-Confucian states in Central Asia like its predecessor, its model was not the Yuan dynasty. In fact Ming China, like the Han, Tang and Song dynasties, nursed a deep resentment against Mongols and things Mongolian.<sup>28</sup> The whole period was characterized by anti-Mongolian Han

nationalism whose cultural expression was revitalized Confucianism in almost every sphere of public life. "In the Ming revival of a purely Chinese rule over China, the animating spirit had been to return to the pre-Mongol institutions of the T'ang and Sung."<sup>29</sup> This vigorous Confucianization was evident in the conduct of Ming foreign relations as well. How else can we understand the unprecedented maritime expeditions that the Ming court ventured into? Essentially, those expeditions were made neither for trade nor for conquest but purely for Confucian diplomatic purpose: "to bring all the known world within the Chinese tributary scheme of things".<sup>30</sup>

The Ming court sent seven maritime expeditions, the first in 1405 and continuing until 1433. The first fleet sailed in 1405-7 with 62 vessels carrying 28,000 men and reached India, as did the second and third fleets. The fourth voyage in 1413-15 reached Aden and the head of Asian circumnavigation at Hermuz on the Persian Gulf. The seventh voyage started out with 27,500 men and reached Hermuz, again in 1431-33. Chinese vessels sailed down the east coast of Africa. In addition to traditional tributary states, like Vietnam and Siam, 50 new countries or places were visited, and their rulers enrolled as tributaries. Missions from Hermuz and the African coast came to Ming China four times, from Bengal eleven times.<sup>31</sup>

It appears to me that those large scale and spectacular feats of seamanship, dated before any European penetration, were essentially performed for the sake of Confucian glory and Ming prestige, and not for trade, given the well-known Ming anti-commercial proclivities.<sup>32</sup>

In other words, the larger context and perspective that emerge from the Ming history suggests this: as a Han nationalist reaction to the Mongol domination, the Ming dynasty's nationalist project was to restore pristine Confucian traditions and institutions. They were rather dramatically evident in the conduct of Ming foreign relations. My common sense inclines me to see the Ming court's policy towards and relations with Buddhist Tibet in this larger perspective. If the Ming dynasty could devote such resources – both men and materials – to equip and send ships to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf rim countries in order to establish tribute relations, why could it not do the same in its own neighbourhood where the strategic stakes were much higher and where a tradition of a Buddhist form of tribute relations had already been established? The Ming court did precisely that in a typically Confucian way through virtuous conduct and honour incentives, minus the armed intervention which was the Mongolian way. This seems to me a plausible way to explain why the Tibetan tribute payers reached the maximum number (4,000 in a year) during the Ming dynasty<sup>33</sup> and why the latter honoured more lamas (eight) with major titles during the post-Sakya period than in any other period of Sino-Tibetan history.<sup>34</sup> Usually in Confucian theory and practice, it was a more discerning procedure. The fact that the bestowal of titles and tribute

payers proliferated during the Ming dynasty may partly be due to its emphasis on Confucian restoration and partly due to the relatively confused situation in Tibet.

What did the honorary titles that the Confucian monarch conferred on the Confucian rulers in East Asia and Southeast Asia as well as on the non-Confucian lama rulers and Khans in Central Asia signify? What did the tribute relations as such mean to the actors themselves? Can we find any modern functional equivalents of such tribute relations in order to enhance our contemporary understanding? I raise these larger questions because I believe even the singularity of patron–priest relations cannot be properly understood without discussing it within the larger context of Confucian China and its ancient institutions.

The conferment of honorary titles and the issuance of patents were an important aspects of Confucian diplomatic culture and practice in interstate relations. Their rationale appears to be this: “The Son of Heaven reigns all under heaven”, usually by the demonstration of virtue (*de*), not by the deployment of force. Hence, the Chinese elite enjoyed the popular belief that theirs was the supreme civilization which attracted one and all towards the Middle Kingdom. But the way Confucian China related to the outside world was deliberately hierarchical, not egalitarian. While the kings (*wang*) and khans were inferior to the emperor, there were princes inferior to kings, tribal chieftains inferior to civilized monarchs. And it has been my finding in this study, that in this Confucian China’s scale of values and politico-cultural hierarchy of honours, the Grand Lamas of Tibet ranked – and were often treated as being higher – than any *wang* (king) in East Asia.

Generally, the bestowal of titles by the Confucian emperor to the local/national rulers implied some kind of authority relations. It implies that the Son of Heaven, whose rule was in popular belief characterized by virtue, recognized other lesser rulers’ merit and virtue by granting them this honour. In so doing, he (the emperor) indirectly and subtly encouraged the honoured foreign rulers, lamas or kings, to rule their own domains righteously, as they were seen by the Son of Heaven to be the most fit to rule. This, in other words, was a justification and explanation for the practical wisdom of “indirect rule” in the case of distant and difficult lands. This, in turn, entailed the evolution of certain peculiar rules of the game – tribute relations and the exchange of titles and gifts. A post-Fairbankian Sinologist explains this ancient game for our modern age:

The issuance of patents of office by the emperor of China to his tributaries was roughly equivalent to modern diplomatic recognition in the West, where political entities that have no international diplomatic status are not considered to exist legally. However, the imperial patents did not themselves affect the constitutional structure of the tributary societies.<sup>35</sup>

As a rule only the Confucian monarch (Son of Heaven) had the power and authority to confer honorary titles and patents to the heads of tributary states, and not the other way round. No Korean, Vietnamese or Burmese king (*wang*) ever dared to offer titles to the Chinese emperors. On the other hand the High Lamas of Tibet did receive titles from Chinese emperors but also offered titles. The V Dalai Lama bestowed upon the Qing emperor Shunzi the honorary title of “The Heavenly Lord Manjushri, the Great Emperor”. The III Dalai Lama gave the title of “Dharmaraja, Brahma, the Lord of Devas” to Altan Khan.<sup>36</sup> This is one of the grounds which lead me to think that even though Tibet was considered a tributary state, Confucian China–Buddhist Tibet relations constituted a special case within the tribute relations system. This was due to what I have called the Buddhist factor in Sino–barbarian relations.

While Ming China underwent re-Confucianization both in its domestic and foreign policies, Buddhism was not marginalized altogether. Buddhist influence was considerable especially during the early stages of the Ming dynasty. Its founder, Zhu Yuanzhang, for instance, was a Buddhist monk who cherished his Buddhist bias.<sup>37</sup> Thus, his successor Ming Chengzu dispatched an envoy to Tibet with an invitation for the V Karmapa Dezhin Shegpa. The imperial invitation letter reads,

Formerly, when I was in the North, after hearing of your good name, I thought to meet you [just] once. . . . The previous king built up the kingdom of the Middle country [i.e. China] by peaceful means. A long time has passed since the former one, a believer in the doctrine of the Buddha, my father, the king T'ai [-tsu] kao huang [-ti][Tib. Tha'i rgyal-po hu hang] and the faithful consort, Kao huang-hou [Tib. Hu hwang-bu] passed away, but no way of repaying their kindness has been found. Lama, you, in the true sense of having obtained the excellent *siddhi* [Tib.dngos-grub] by means of skill and deeds, are the essence of Buddha. In order that having speedily come by whatever (means necessary), you perform the rituals for the liberation of the deceased ones, the present junior Director of Ceremonials [Tib. *Li-skyam* (sinc) sha'u skyam], Hou Hsien [Tib. Hu'u Rkyen], and others have been sent, the (gift in) support of the latter has been transmitted, and the invitation has gone out.<sup>38</sup>

Our modern sceptical age might have difficulty in reading and understanding the *spirit* and letter of this invitation letter dated 10 March 1403, because there is a communication gap of over 600 years. My critical and close reading of this text suggests that it is not so much a politically motivated contrivance and concoction designed to entice His Holiness the Karmapa Lama and use him as an imperial instrument of political policy. The document's content sounds convincing and credible, as it reads. It recalls the emperor's hearing of the famous Karmapa's name before,



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reaffirms his father's Buddhist connection and expresses his desire to have the Lama perform rituals for his deceased parents, which was perfectly natural in the context of Confucian emphasis on filial piety. Finally his description of the V Karmapa as the embodiment of *siddhi* and the essence of Buddha is quite convincing in the sense it reveals intimate knowledge of the Karmapa Lama in particular and Mahayana Buddhism in general.

At the least, the letter of invitation does not sound like a politically motivated text, if the reader cares to penetrate and empathize with the spirit of the times. The successive Ming emperors' entitlement of the most eminent lamas from various sects and sub-sects of Tibetan Buddhism should be seen in a similar, if not the same spirit as the emperor Chengzu's recognition of virtue (*de*) in the V Karmapa.

In short, even though the Buddhist factor was not as predominant and decisive as during the Mongol dynasty, its weight was considerable even during the Ming dynasty. This was particularly so in the latter's relations with the High Lamas of Tibet. As a characteristically Confucian dynasty, the Ming emperors' relations with the outstanding lamas of Tibet could be seen as a reflection and continuation of Confucian political ideals: recognition of merit and rule by virtue, not by force alone. Past scholarship on Ming-Tibet relations has tended to stress the ulterior political motives on the part of Ming emperors in their relations with the Lamas of Tibet. I have attempted to show that while political motives obviously cannot be ruled out, there was also a strong spiritual and cultural dimension to the relationship, both in Buddhist and Confucian terms, which should not be neglected or ignored as part of a fuller understanding of Ming policy towards Tibet.

What was the actual historical status of Tibet during the Ming dynasty? And what is the contemporary Communist historians' view of post-Sakya Tibet? The Communist historians do not recognize Tibet as a geographical or political entity during the Ming dynasty. They always refer to it as "Tibetan areas"<sup>39</sup> subject to Ming rule. This description is fairly correct if it describes Ming relations with and the anarchic political conditions in Kham and Amdo (Inner Tibet) during the period. Being close to China, as well as being free from Lhasa control, chieftains (*dpon*) and lamas continued a flourishing tribute-cum-trade relations with the Ming dynasty. For example, in 1536 some 4,000 Tibetans (mostly Khampas and Amdowas) went to pay "tribute" to the Ming emperor and the imperial court complained "at the large influx of Tibetan visitors and stated that gifts should not be given to them on any second visit".<sup>40</sup> Such "tribute missions" were not only uncontrollably numerous and unregulated; rather than being made up of standard Buddhist symbolic tribute artefacts, their tribute items included mundane material objects such as horses, fabrics, lion skin, etc.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the Chinese indigenous tea-for-horse trade operating in neighbouring Chinese provinces such as Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan that bound

Eastern Tibet with China<sup>42</sup> affected mostly the Khampa and Amdowa traders, not Outer Tibet.

Communist historians fail to make this critical distinction, and do not recognize the fact and the reality of the existence of nationalist regimes of Phamo-drupa, Rinpung and Dewa Tsangpa, all of whom ceased their tribute relations with Ming China. As is to be expected, three Tibetan rulers at the time were conferred imperial titles by post but none of them left Tibet to visit Nanjing or Beijing.<sup>43</sup>

Did Tibet, therefore, constitute part and parcel of the ancestor-worship sanctified territory of Confucian China during the Ming dynasty? In 1654 Wang Fen, a Chinese legal officer in the Ming court, drew a map of the then Chinese empire. The names and sizes of Chinese provinces were clearly written in Chinese. But this Ming map “includes no region of Tibet, not even the easternmost regions of Amdo.”<sup>44</sup> Professor Fairbank notes that “the Ming was divided into 15 provinces”, whose names and sizes, as depicted on his map (p. 186) do not appear to include Tibet.<sup>45</sup> In short, contemporaneous fair-minded Ming mandarins might declare that Tibet was not territorially a part of the Ming Middle Kingdom but that it (Tibet) was considered one of the tributary states, even though the actual relations were, as I have tried to show in this section, more complex than this. And tributary status was, according to the Confucian political culture and tradition, more a Confucian recognition of Tibet, like others in East Asia and Southeast Asia, as a legitimate actor in the then international system dominated and led by Imperial China.

## Chapter 6

# The Manchu Empire (1662–1912) and the Gelugpa Hegemony (1642–1950): The Indigenous Instruments of Indirect Rule

The Gelugpa history is, in several respects, a continuation of the post-Sakya period characterized by political instability and consequent power struggles. However, there is one significant difference: a polarization of conflicting forces into a direct confrontation between Gelugpa and Kargyupa forces by the 1530s. In the regions there was a series of conflicts between U (where Gelugpa influence predominated) and Tsang (where Kargyupa influence predominated). This Gelug–Kargyu struggle for power and sectarian hegemony continued for over 100 years (1537–1642).

The internal struggles were not only internecine but also indecisive. It required a level of external intervention to tilt the balance of forces decisively one way or the other. This fact was finally appreciated by both the parties towards the end of their struggles in the mid 1630s. The Lhasa-based Gelugpa leaders decided to seek the military help of the Qirat, Zunghar and Chahar (all Mongol tribes); and the Tsang ruler, Karma Tenkyong, who championed the Karmapa cause, sought help from the Chogthu Mongols. Since both Tibetan parties were then aided by their respective Mongol supporters, the Gelug–Kargyu struggle would have continued for some years, had it not been for Gushri Khan's strategic moves finally tilting the balance in favour of Gelugpa victory.

When the Tsangpa ruler approached the Chogthu Mongols for help, they sent Arsalang, the chief's son, with 10,000 troops in 1635 to Tibet "to wipe out the Ge-lug-pa sect".<sup>1</sup> Gushri Khan, the Qosot chieftain and the staunch supporter of the Gelugpa cause, gathered a small body of troops and intercepted the Chogthu army. A secret meeting took place between the two Mongol chieftains and Arsalang changed his plans. He left his troops in Tengri Nor, some 700 miles from Lhasa and entered the Tibetan capital with his personal bodyguards. Since no one was certain on whose side

Arsalang might fight, the Karmapa Lama and his close disciples fled Lhasa on the former's arrival.

Karma Tenkyong, meanwhile complained to the Chogthu chief about Arsalang's betrayal. The Chogthu chief at once sent his special emissaries to Tibet to assassinate Arsalang. Gushri Khan realized that Arsalang's death made it almost certain that the Chogthu army would attack the pro-Gelugpa forces, and decided to counterattack the Chogthu tribes in their own homeland in the Kokonor region. He allied with another Mongol chieftain, Baatur Khungteji, and jointly they attacked Chogthu tribal camps in Kokonor in 1637. This strategic move eliminated the external challenge to the Gelugpa power and left the Chogthu Army in Tibet in a dilemma: whether to march back to Kokonor or to join forces with the Tsanngpa ruler. Finally they decided to settle down to a nomadic life in Tibet. Thus, the Gelugpa victory over the Karmapa and his lay supporters was ensured and marked the beginning of 308 years of Gelugpa hegemony the supreme institutional expression of which has been Dalai Lama.

In 1638, Gushri Khan, along with other Mongol pilgrims, visited Lhasa and received religious teaching from the V Dalai Lama. At a special ceremony held in Jokhang, the Khan was placed on a throne and given the title and seal of *bstan-zin chos-kyi rgyalpo* (meaning Dharma-raja and the "defender of the faith") by the Gelugpa hierarch.<sup>2</sup> Gushri Khan continued to complete the Gelugpa mission in Tibet. Instigated by the Dalai Lama's chief attendant, Sonam Choephel, the Khan defeated anti-Gelugpa forces in Kham as well as the pro-Karmapa ruler of Tsang. Thus, nearly the whole of Tibet came under the Dalai Lama's rule beginning in 1642. In that year, the V Dalai Lama was led in state and enthroned in Shigatse. On two other thrones, lower than his, sat Gushri Khan and Sonam Choephel. The seating arrangement and the relative height of the thrones signified the new Gelugpa power structure that endured beyond the V Dalai Lama's rule. The Khan, on that occasion, made a Mahayana Buddhist ritual offering of the universe called *man-dral rtan-gsum* to the Dalai Lama.

The Mongol Khan then declared that he conferred on the Dalai Lama supreme authority over all Tibet from Tachienlu in the east up to the Ladakh border in the west. The responsibility for the political administration of Tibet would remain in the hands of Sonam Choephel, who was given the title of Desi (sde-srid).<sup>3</sup>

We have focused on the critical final phase of the Gelugpa-Kargyu-pa struggle for supremacy; actually the beginnings of Gelugpa-Mongol relations go back to 1578, when the III Dalai Lama converted Eastern and Western Mongols to the Gelugpa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. How did the Mongol Khans and the Dalai Lamas perceive each other in this bilateral relationship? This question is important to an understanding of the initial spirit and the basic nature of their relationship especially in the initial stages,

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after which the Manchu imperial state may have largely determined its policies towards and relations with Tibet. Initially both Altan Khan and Gushri Khan, as well as the early Manchu emperors, perceived themselves as reviving or renewing the patron–priest relationship that used to exist between the Yuan dynasty and the Sakya Lamas. As Professor Zehiruddin Ahmad comments:

We have said that Altan Khan invited the third Dalai Lama because he wished to proclaim that he was a second Khubilai Khan. The third Dalai Lama may, on his part, have accepted the invitation also to recreate the days of Khubilai Khan – but for his own purpose. He wished to recreate, in other words, the relationship which had existed between the Sa-skyapa Phagspa Lama and Khubilai Khan. This relationship the Sa-skyapa had used to establish hegemony in Tibet.<sup>4</sup>

The establishment of patron–priest relations was, of course, preceded by the conversion of Altan Khan and his tribes to Buddhism by the III Dalai Lama, like the conversion of Khubilai Khan by the Phagspa Lama. In fact this precedence and analogy was specifically recalled by a Mongol chief who visited Altan Khan in 1576. Khungtaiji informed the Khan that he had heard that in Tibet the incarnation of Avalokitesvara (i.e. the Dalai Lama) had appeared, and asked, “would it not be appropriate, following the example of Khubilai Khan (1216–94) and the Phagspa Lama (1235–80) to invite this new incarnation to Mongolia?”<sup>5</sup> Altan Khan approved of this proposal and sent two consecutive embassies to invite the III Dalai Lama.

The III Dalai Lama’s biography (rnam-thar) records how Altan Khan and his associates repeatedly perceived and expressed this “new” Gelugpa–Mongol alliance as the revival of the Khubilai Khan–Phagspa Lama relationship. Accordingly, the III Dalai Lama also “identified himself as the Phagspa Lama and Altan Khan as Khubilai Khan”.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the Mongols perceived Altan Khan and the III Dalai Lama as the reappearance of Khubilai Khan and the Phagspa Lama respectively. Therefore, they reenacted all the political rituals and ceremonies of the thirteenth-century Mongol–Sakya relationship of what Ahmad calls “Worshipped and Worshipper, Patronised and Patron, and Protected and Protector”.<sup>7</sup>

The Mongol warrior–Tibetan lama relationship is an intriguing subject to interpret in contemporary terms. Perhaps the most difficult aspect of this medieval inter-state behaviour is that it is unclear where religious piety begins and politics ends. The two apparently conflicting motives seem to be so inextricably intertwined that they do little more than confirm the quantum physics principle of uncertainty. As a Tibetan, I am inclined to feel and think that the Mongol warriors’ conversion to Tibetan Buddhism and their unwavering devotion to the Dalai Lama might have a lot to do with Mongol involvement and intervention in Tibetan politics.

Medieval Tibet began to be associated, as we have seen, with Imperial China but not without initial Mongol connections and mediation. Such an historical pattern tends to lend credence to a geo-strategic interpretation of Sino-Tibetan relations; that is, to view the warrior-lama relations initially in terms of Mongol military strategy on China and Tibet, and subsequently as Imperial China's strategic designs on Mongolia and Tibet.<sup>8</sup> This is not an implausible interpretation. However, I would like to suggest another interpretation which is implicit in Luciano Petech's work<sup>9</sup> and which I shall make more explicit. We shall take the Zunghar invasion of 1717 as an illustrative case.

So far we have mentioned the roles of the III, IV and V Dalai Lama as being crucial to the consolidation of Gelugpa power. But the VI Dalai Lama proved to be an unusual and unorthodox lama. He was found to be womanizing instead of meditating, writing love poems instead of commentaries on sutra. Such behaviour, by a Dalai Lama, was unacceptable to the Tibetan ruling class and particularly to the Tibetanized Qosot ruler Chos-rgyal, Lajang Khan. They decided to depose the "illegitimate and spurious"<sup>10</sup> VI Dalai Lama. But the Mongols and the Tibetan lamas all violently opposed any action against the Dalai Lama, whose unorthodox behaviour they took to be another expression of extreme spirituality.<sup>11</sup> This is the backdrop to the event which led to the so-called "Zunghar invasion". The larger international context of this event was the tenacious but uneven rivalry between the Sino-Manchu empire and the last nomadic empire of Central Asia, "the Lamaistic Mongol tribe of Dsungars".<sup>12</sup> As the Zunghar empire rapidly declined, it was largely the religious motive, I believe, which impelled the Zunghars to act on behalf of the Dalai Lama, whose very name inspired faith and fanaticism among the Mongols.

Professor Petech repeatedly emphasizes that the Zunghar invasion was "not so much for strategic reasons [Tibet was and has always been, a military backwater] but because of the religious relations between the Holy See of Lhasa and the Lamaist Monarchy in Ili",<sup>13</sup> the Zunghar capital. He explains that the Zunghar ruler Cewang Arabtan (Tibetan: Tsedwan Rab-btsan) viewed the extension of Manchu Chinese influence over Tibet, through the alliance with Lajang Khan and the possession of such a reserve pawn in the game, as offered by the rightful Dalai Lama.

It was of the highest importance for the Dsungars to secure influence over Tibet, not so much strategic grounds, for that road led nowhere, as because of religious-political reasons. The man who ruled over Tibet in harmony with the lamas was sure to have at his disposal the influence of the Lamaist church, a great factor of power in the Mongol world.<sup>14</sup>

How Cewang Arabtan, as the leader of Zunghars, strategized is one thing; and why common Zunghar soldiers felt and fought for the Dalai Lama, spurious or otherwise, quite another. I wish to take the latter social fact

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more seriously than it is usually taken. The fact was, as the then Chinese emperor admitted, "all the Mongols whole-heartedly obey the Dalai Lama; although he is spurious, he still has the name of a Dalai Lama and all the Mongols follow him".<sup>15</sup> The absolute loyalty of a medieval warrior to a mysterious lama and the unshakable faith of Mongols in Tibetan Buddhism which characterized the Zunghars' devotion to the VI Dalai Lama and to the Gelugpa cause do not make much sense to the modern reader. These two qualities seemed to have reinforced each other, producing a kind of religious fundamentalism. As Professor Petech remarks about the Zunghar army's persecution of the Nyingmapa sect, whose doctrine and practice the Gelugpa puritans used to criticize: "Now these strangers from the northeast, more Lamaist than lamas, imported into Tibet a full-dress religious intolerance and persecution."<sup>16</sup>

In short, the Zunghars' faith in and devotion to the Dalai Lama and the Gelugpa sect, like other Mongols, was not based on critical and discerning appreciation of the finer details of Tsongkhapa's philosophy; it was merely an *uncritical* and emotional attachment to and complete identification with the Yellow sect. This profound faith seems to have been reinforced by the fact that the title Dalai was given by a Mongol Khan and that the IV Dalai Lama was born into a Mongol family. Mongols believe that the Dalai Lama is their creation.

Without understanding the depth and the fundamentalist nature of Mongolian faith in Lamaism, it would be difficult to understand the Mongol warriors' passionate involvement with and armed intervention in Tibetan internal politics. The Zunghar invasion is such a case in point. If it had been a mere military adventure, the Zunghars would have left Tibet after being defeated. But they kept on, as they were determined and adamant, to be in touch with their religious saviour (Dalai Lama) and their Holy Land (Tibet). They even went to the extent of requesting their traditional enemy, the Chinese emperor, to permit them to visit the Gelugpa monasteries in Tibet. They might have felt it was their sacred duty to protect the Dalai Lama and his sect. The Zunghar missions of 1743, 1747/8 and 1750 were essentially religious in nature but were misinterpreted by the sinicized Manchu mandarins in Beijing.

The post-1717 Zunghar religious missions to the Dalai Lama's Tibet acquired the political dimensions of a "Zunghar intrigue" in the XIII Dalai Lama's Tibet. The Mongol characters like the Zunghars in the eighteenth century and Dorjiev's in the early twentieth century pose problems of interpretation in our age. One is not quite sure where religious motives begin and where political motives end. A clue, however, to understanding such phenomena may be the fundamentalist nature of Mongol faith and the unquestioning loyalty that warfare habitually demanded of warriors.

Mongol warriors of various tribal backgrounds may be said to have conquered Tibet during the medieval period but they did not historicize

their claim that Tibet is part of Mongolia. If, on the other hand, China continues to declare that Tibet is part of China, it is not through direct Chinese conquest; it was through the Mongol invasion, intervention or association. Simply and historically put, Tibet comes to China via Mongols whose primarily religious motives we have just explained. This is the pattern observable in both the Sakya-Mongol relations and the Gelugpa-Mongol relations. In both cases, Tibeto-Mongol relations begin before the founding of the Yuan and Qing dynasties. Again, in both the cases, the role of the Tibetan Grand Lamas, has been to render higher objectives to an otherwise objectless imperialism; to render moral support and guidance to the great Mongol Khans so that they could become universal rulers (*cakravartins*). In this sense, the High Lamas became moral, if not political, partners of the “barbarian” empire-building in Yuan and Qing China.

The Gelugpa-Mongol relations began in the 1570s when Altan Khan of the Tumat Mongols invited the III Dalai Lama, Sonam Gyatso, to visit Mongolia. The Khan and his tribe were then converted to the Gelugpa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. In return for his teachings, Sonam Gyatso received numerous presents with the title, “Dalai Lama”, which ever since have been used by the highest religio-political hierarch of the Gelugpa sect. “Dalai” is Mongolian for “ocean” and metaphorically connotes the depth and width of the Lama’s knowledge and wisdom. Sonam Gyaltso was also given a seal with the inscription “Dorje Chang” (*Vajradhara*). The Dalai Lama, in return, gave the Khan the title of “Dharma king”, “Brahma of the gods”, prophesizing “that within eighty years the descendents of the Khan would become the rulers of all Mongolia and China”.<sup>17</sup> This prophesy became significant later when the Manchus conquered China and became Qing emperors, ruling indeed both China and Mongolia and much else. According to Tibetan belief, Manchus and Mongols were closely related.<sup>18</sup>

An interesting aspect of the III Dalai Lama’s Mongolia visit is that it sheds light on the relative freedom and fluidity with which inter-state relations were conducted in the pre-Qing period. Thus, the Dalai Lama on his way back, was invited to visit the Chinese authorities in Langzhou and Ningxia, where he received an invitation from the Ming Emperor to visit China. The Khan and Lama also decided to set-up a diplomatic office at Tongkhor (Lusar) which was about *half-way* between Lhasa and Chahar in Mongolia, thereby indicating a high degree of quality and warmth in their bilateral relationship. It suggests a mutuality and complementarity of interests between the Khan and Lama, as well as the mutual respect for each other that characterized early Mongol-Gelugpa relations. This relative freedom of action in foreign relations remained during the early phases of Manchu rule. Thus, in the early 1670s, the Manchu emperor requested the Dalai Lama “for a loan of Tibetan and Mongol troops” to suppress a rebellion in China.<sup>19</sup>



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All this suggests, first, that countries like China, Mongolia and Tibet were separate entities, and were treated and, indeed, behaved as such. Secondly, the relations were in not one-way; there was considerable intercourse between the separate states. This situation continued until the Zunghar invasion of 1717 and the Gurkha invasions of 1788, 1791 and 1855 which compelled the Qing dynasty to establish tighter control over Tibet, as I shall demonstrate later. But now we turn to the Gelugpa–Manchu relations.

Like the Sakya–Mongol relations, the Gelugpa relations with the Manchu rulers predate the Sino-Manchurian dynastic history. More than 70 years ago, a Japanese scholar outlined and documented the formative stage of the Manchu conversion to Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>20</sup> We might recall how the III Dalai Lama passed through Chahar territory while on his historic visit to Mongolia. Early seventeenth-century Tibeto–Mongol texts refer to how Tibetan Buddhist missionaries were established in the Chahar Khanate, and how some lamas moved eastward from Chahar into its dependencies in Manchuria. This period, which coincided with Nurhaci's expansion into northwestern and southern Manchuria, was marked by the arrival of Tibetan Buddhist missions at the pre-dynastic Manchu court. At any rate, prior to 1621 Nurhaci was converted to Tibetan Buddhism, and he, as the ruler of Manchuria, appointed his royal guru (*dbu bla*) m Olug Darhan Nangso who, at the time also became "Dharma-master of the Manchu realm". Nurhaci's patronage of Tibetan Buddhism and involvement in a lama–patron relationship was continued by his son and successor, Abahai. The latter founded, in 1635, "the Temple of Mahakala at Mukden to enshrine the image of the guardian deity of the Sa-skya pa, the remains of the Sa skya Lama Sarpa Qutugtu, and the Mongol Kanjur".<sup>21</sup> It was also a group of Sakya lamas who consecrated Abahai's accession to power. As a further sign of Manchu honour to the Sakya sect and its tantric cult of Mahakala, which became the dynastic cult of the Qing dynasty, Abahai's religious advisor Beligtu Nangso Lama began to direct work on the extension of the Mahakala complex. "Under the shared patronage of Abahai and Fu-lin (i.e. the Shun-chih Emperor, r. 1644–62), the Saskya pa completed in 1645 an elaborate complex of four temples and adjunct stupas . . . to encircle the Temple of Mahakala, the palace of the cakravartin, and the capital of Mukden within a mandala." This architectonic representation of the Buddhist cosmological order, as Samuel Grupper comments, celebrated Abahai's succession as *cakravartin*, defined Manchu dynastic right, and set the Manchu capital and realm under the protection of Mahakala. "On the other hand it identified the interests of the ruling house with its sanctuary and the presiding lamas while demonstrating an abiding conviction in the efficacy of the Sa-skya pa world view."<sup>22</sup>

With the V Dalai Lama's 1653 visit to Beijing, the Sino-Manchu dynasty's patronage changed from the Sakyapas to Gelugpas more for

political reasons. By then the Geluggas, headed by the Dalai Lama, had become the most popular and therefore most influential sect in Tibet – thanks to the Gushi Khan’s help. The significance and implications of this Gelugpa dominance was not lost on the Chinese mandarins who found in the rising institution of the Dalai Lama a more viable instrument of indirect rule in Tibet, not unlike the Sakya Lamas in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Thus, when the Gelugpa lamas resumed their patron–priest relations with the Manchu dynasty, they used the same format of *chos-yon* that was pioneered by the Sakya lamas. For instance, the Gelugpa lama Lchan-skya Rolpa’ (1717–86), who became a celebrated imperial guru to the Qianlong Emperor, virtually enacted the spiritual drama of Phagpa Lama–Khubilai tantric initiation, with due Gelugpa substitution. When he initiated the Emperor into the Gelugpa tantric ritual called cakrasambhava, the lama felt himself like the Phagpa Lama initiating Khubilai Khan into Hevajra Tantra. It was the same year of the bull, he recollected.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, he recognized Emperor Qianlong as the incarnation of Manjusri. In other words, the spiritual analogy and continuity in the patron–priest relations from Sakya Lamas to the Dalai Lamas was not merely subconscious. As Changkyi Rolpai Dorje’s case reveals, it was quite deliberate.

It is clear that the Khubilai Khan–Phagpa Lama alliance was so successful that it became a legendary model for every subsequent Mongol (or Manchu) Khan to emulate. Gushri Khan perceived his relations with the V Dalai Lama as a revival and continuation of Khubilai Khan’s relations with the Sakya Lama; so did Altan Khan in his relations with the III Dalai Lama; and now we encounter with the same phenomena in the Gelugpa–Manchu relations. The pre-dynastic Manchu rulers were initiated into the Sakyapa sect of Tibetan Buddhism, and soon Sakya ideas and institutions, that had worked well with the Yuan–Tibet relations, were introduced into Manchuria by Sakya Lamas. Even Gelugpa Lamas, after becoming imperial chaplains to the Qing Emperors, employed essentially the same model and religious imagery used earlier by the Sakya Lamas in the thirteenth century, in their relations with Khubilai Khan and the Yuan Emperors.

For the Lama not only gave transcendental objectives and spiritual meaning to an otherwise objectless imperialism; he also sacralized and legitimated the Mongol and Manchu warriors as a universal ruler (*cakravartin*) or Buddhist monarch (*Dharmaraja*) in contradistinction to, or as an alternative to, the Confucian notion of Son of Heaven. In this way Buddhism not only constituted an important international factor in Sino–barbarian relations, it also offered alternative ideas and institutions to Mongols, Tibetans, Manchurians, etc. that impacted on Chinese dynasties since the thirteenth century. Finally there was something especially attractive in Tantric Buddhism which the Sakya Lamas emphasized while converting important Mongol and Manchu warriors. Through tantric deities such as Hevajra, Mahakala promised what the warrior really longed

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for: “supernatural protection of the protector” and “supernatural power”<sup>24</sup> to achieve his goal – either decisive victory in battle or the rapid consolidation of an empire.

The beginning of Chinese imperial interest in the Gelugpa sect may be traced to the life time of its founder, Tsongkhapa, when the latter received invitations on two occasions from the Ming Emperor Yung Lo, in 1408 and 1414. This was followed by the Ming court’s invitation of 1578 to the III Dalai Lama. This implies that the mandarins had keenly and carefully watched the rapid progress of the Gelugpa sect and the increasing influence of its charismatic leaders such as Tsongkhapa and the III and IV Dalai Lamas in Inner Asia. As a rule, the Chinese mandarins upon whose bureaucratic experience and expertise both the Mongol and Manchu dynasties had to depend, showed more interest in such sectarian movements which enjoyed a mass following than in internal power struggles and petty politics. This was true of the post-Tsan and post-Sakya periods when there was no Chinese intervention and little interest. The reason, I believe, had a lot to do with what mandarins considered to be prerequisites for indirect rule through charismatic lamas as happened in the cases of the Sakya Lamas, the Dalai Lamas and was attempted with more than one of the Karmapa Lamas.

The logic of a traditional Confucian monarch’s indirect rule over dependent peoples appears to be as follows. The emperor, usually, does not impose his will upon a dependent people, unless, of course, compelled or necessitated by a crisis situation which endangers the national security of China. He does so indirectly and subtly through the medium of a local or indigenous elite whom the emperor believes enjoys a wide, mass following in the dependent country. More specifically, he singles out the most outstanding leader or charismatic institution of that local elite for patronage, commendation and honour. In so doing, the emperor merely recognizes such Lamas and Princes as an expression or indication of implied popular will and mandate and acknowledges their rule locally with his imperial blessing. This was how the mandarins interpreted and applied the Confucian political principle of the Mandate of Heaven in the specific context of dependent countries such as Tibet. In other words, the Son of Heaven reigned but did not directly rule Tibet. The actual act of ruling was always done by or through the indigenous instruments of indirect rule. The rule of the Dalai Lamas was a classic case of indirect rule by the Middle Kingdom, not unlike that of the Sakya Lamas.

The V Dalai Lama’s Beijing visit of 1653 signified the Qing China’s recognition of the Gelugpa regime in Lhasa, following the Mongol Khan’s acclamation and recognition much earlier. Such occasions were characterized by complex layers of what, today, we call “protocols” that signified the hierarchy of authority relations and the relative distribution of power among the Chinese, the Tibetan and the Mongol dignitaries. In the context

of such a religio-political hierarchy characterizing authority relations, it would be inaccurate to describe the power of the Dalai Lama as “sovereign” in any absolute sense. For even the power of the emperor, in theory, was subject to the Mandate of Heaven. The occasion defined the relative sovereignty of the Dalai Lama in relation to Buddhist Tibet and Mongol converts,<sup>25</sup> but not unfortunately in relation to the Emperor. In relation to the Emperor, the Dalai Lama’s position and power may be described as symbolically, subtly and delicately “near equal” to the former. For example, the V Dalai Lama recalls and records in his autobiography vividly his meeting with the Emperor:

The Emperor sat on top of a wooden stool, which was on top of the Throne, which was as high as a man’s waist. I sat on a seat, which was *a little lower* than the Emperor’s Throne and which was situated not far from one whole fathom’s length from the Emperor’s Throne. When tea arrived, although he asked me to drink before he did, *I submitted that was not proper*, and he granted that we drink at the same time. Such and other showing of (mutual) respect we did very much.<sup>26</sup>

Note that: (a) the Lama sat on a seat “a little lower” than the Emperor’s; (b) that the former requested the latter to start tea, but Lama submitted that it was not proper to do so; and finally (c) that both sides showed “mutual respect” to each other. Such a relationship of symbolic subordination with mutual respect characterized the Emperor’s subsequent “edicts” and the Dalai Lama’s “memorials”.<sup>27</sup>

But the unique aspect of this Manchu Emperor–Dalai Lama relationship was that the Lama did not have to *kowtow* before the Emperor normally a requirement for any ‘foreign’ dignitary desiring to have an audience with the Emperor. Again in the Dalai Lama’s own words:

From this spot, when I had covered the distance covered by 4 arrow-lengths, I dismounted from my horse. The Emperor descended from his Throne and advanced for a distance of 10 fathoms (gzu-dom). He seized my hand with his hand. An interpreter was installed, and he (the Emperor) enquired after health.<sup>28</sup>

What is interesting in this passage is that: (a) the Emperor descended from his throne and advanced about ten steps to meet the Lama; (b) the Emperor shook hands with the Lama and there was no *kowtow*; (c) the whole ceremony symbolizes mutual respect, especially evident in the Lama dismounting from his horse and walking to meet the Emperor, and the latter descending from his throne and walking towards the Dalai Lama to meet and shake hands. Again, we note that, it was not absolute equality. The Dalai Lama dismounted “a little earlier” and covered a “little larger” distance than the Emperor. But in the religious domain, the Lama sat on a

higher throne than the Emperor, as Khubilai Khan defined and drew this distinction in the case of Phagpa Lama.<sup>29</sup> Changkya Rolpai Dorje, the Gelugpa hierarch who was imperial guru to Emperor Qianlong followed this procedure when he initiated the emperor to *Cakrasamvara Tantra*.<sup>30</sup>

The Qing Emperor–Dalai Lama relations were perceived differently by the different actors involved. The Emperor and Manchu officials showed more sincere or deeper reverence to the Dalai Lama than Han mandarins who viewed the Lama as being politically subordinate to the Emperor and quite coldly wished to use the Lama, as usual, as an instrument of indirect rule in Tibet.<sup>31</sup> To the Tibetan lamas, as to the Emperor and his Manchu officials, the relations were, first and foremost, of a religious nature and secondarily, of a politico-military nature, namely *chos-yon byin-bdag*. What the Dalai Lama was looking for was Qing patronage of his sect and protection of his non-coercive regime, as it was with the Mongols. That is why I have presented the Tibetan perception of this relationship as a continuation from Khubilai Khan to Altan Khan, from Altan to Gushri, from Gushri to Manchu Emperor. This relationship has three aspects: “Worshipped and Worshipper, Patronized and Patron, Protected and Protector.”<sup>32</sup>

This might have been the expectation at the outset, but once the “Worshipper”, the “Patron” and the “Protector” stepped into the shoes of the imperial state power structure, the Mongol warriors became Yuan Emperors and the Manchus, Qing Emperors. In this process, both the Mongols and the Manchus become sinicized and imperialized, placing greater stress on the political rather than the religious aspects of the relationship, and the pious beginnings were lost. This, however, does not mean that most of the emperors gave up their faith in or bias for Tibetan Buddhism. The most expansionist Qing Emperor Qianlong, for example, showed an enormous interest in the study and practice of sutra and tantra of the Gelugpa tradition.<sup>33</sup> Thus, on the whole, the Buddhist legacy and impact, from 1260 to 1911, was felt more by Yuan and Qing dynasties but no less by the Song and Ming dynasties. In particular, the influence was there in Chinese relations with Buddhist Tibet till the Communist Revolution in 1949.

The external relations of Buddhist Tibet as a catholic transnational actor were not limited to a bilateral relationship with China. Until the nineteenth century, at least, a triangular relationship existed, including China, Tibet and Mongolia.<sup>34</sup> Thus, Buddhist converts in Central Asia (mostly Mongols) inevitably figured in Tibet’s medieval history along with Chinese emperors, as mediators, subjects and objects of history. First, the Lamas sought to establish relations with Mongol warriors essentially for the purpose of military “protection”. Secondly, it was such Central Asian warriors-turned-*cakravartin* who, guided and inspired by charismatic Tibetan lamas, conquered China and created the Yuan and Qing empires. In this circuitous

way Tibet became part of China through its Mongol connection. And for China, its Buddhist policy was derived not only from Tibet but also from various Mongol tribes in Qinghai, Inner and Outer Mongolia.

It appears that after Chingghis Khan's death, Mongol national unity began to fragment into various tribes, each of whom struggled for supremacy. Out of such frequent intra-Mongol struggles emerged the rise of the Eastern Mongols whom Tibetans call *Hor* and who desperately tried to recreate the Khubilai Khan's Chinese empire. That is why the Zunghars, the major Eastern Mongol tribe, posed the greatest threat to the imperial security of Qing China until the late eighteenth century; it is also why the Zunghars intervened in (invaded) Tibet and why a Tibetanized Hor chieftain, Dga-Iden, rebelled against Qing Emperor, having considerable consequences for the territorial integrity of Eastern Tibet, as we shall show.

Zunghars were not merely Buddhists; they were Tibetanized Mongols and Gelugpa fundamentalists.<sup>35</sup> These intimate relations and close spiritual bondage brought the Dalai Lama and his sect into a closer and more passionate involvement with the Zunghars. The Gelugpa-Zunghar identification and affinity, if not alliance, had unintended consequences on the internal independence and territorial integrity of Tibet. Following the Zunghar invasion, the Qing court intervened militarily in Tibet and, in 1721, removed the indigenous civil government that had existed in Lhasa since the V Dalai Lama's rule. The office of *sde-srid* was replaced by a council of ministers (*bka-bshag*). This council was to govern Tibet under the close supervision of the Chinese garrison commander stationed in Lhasa, who frequently interfered with Kashag decisions, especially when Chinese interests were involved.<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, over a period of six years (1690–96) the Qing waged a campaign against Dga-Iden, a Tibetanized Qosot Mongol living near Amdo who was a Gelugpa convert and closely allied with the then Tibetan ruling class, and annexed the valley of the Ta-tung and Hsi-ning rivers, and established a “legal foothold” – if one might use such a term – in Tibet (1694). In 1696 China “annexed Ta-chien-lu” (Tibetan: Dar-tse-mdo) to the Manchu empire.<sup>37</sup> This was the beginning of a gradual Chinese nibbling of Eastern Tibet territory (Amdo and Kham) which culminated with the Communist incorporation of Amdo and large parts of Kham into the neighbouring Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan and Sichuan.

This raises a series of intriguing questions. Was the initial territorial annexation a result of objective dialectics of escalating campaigns against Galden? Or was it a conscious plan of annexation? These questions are compounded by the fact that there is some evidence to indicate that all Imperial China wanted was peace on the border areas<sup>38</sup> and when these border areas were disturbed, as by the Zunghars in general and Dga-Iden (and by association the Geluga regime) in particular, China responded with the use of force.

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What was the territorial extent of Tibet during the Gelugpa regime? And what was the political/legal status of Tibet *vis-à-vis* China? According to Tibetan sources, Tibet, which was offered/donated to the V Dalai Lama by Gurshri Khan in 1642, included almost the entire Tibetan plateau “from Tachienlu in the east up to the Ladakh border in the west”, a claim implicitly supported by Zehiruddin Ahmad’s account of early Chinese annexation of Eastern Tibet which we have just described. This constituted U-Tsang, Ngari and Kham.<sup>39</sup> However, Tibetan sources are silent on Amdo, which, being located in the Kokonor Region, might have been directly controlled by the Qosot Mongol chieftains.<sup>40</sup>

The idea of offering or donating a territory conquered by a Mongol Khan to a Tibetan Lama implies that the Lama has theoretical ownership over that conquered territory, which also happens to be the Lama’s country. It also implies that the Khan who conquered and then offered the country to a ruling Lama still retained a moral responsibility for protecting and defending that territory. Thus, the Khan retained a continued role within the lamaist political system, as the protector of the Lama and his country, even after the conquest. This was true of both Sakya and Gelugpa cases. In other words, this was the Mongol warrior’s honourable way of indirect rule.

At the same time some of the Dalai Lamas such as Vth and XIIIth and their officials showed a surprising degree of territoriality; they seemed to have had definite ideas of Tibet’s territory and its boundaries. In 1648 the V Dalai Lama sent two Tibetan officials to Tachienlu, Chakla, Gyarong, Bah, Lithang, Jun, Gyalhang, Mili, Dan, Gakhok, Lingsang, Lhathok and Nangchen, all in eastern Kham, to take a census of the Khampa population and to collect taxes – a clear statement of territorial ownership.<sup>41</sup>

During the period 1659–73, there were much coming and going “of embassies between Lhasa and Peking to settle border issues”.<sup>42</sup> Such missions were concerned with “the arrival of Ch’ing at the southeastern and eastern borders of Tibet, just as the conquest of Kansu in 1645 had marked the arrival of the Ch’ing at the north-eastern borders of Tibet”.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, it appears that the Chinese authorities, from the early eighteenth century onwards, nursed secret ambitions of gradually nibbling away at Tibetan territory in Kham and Amdo. This became clear when the Tibetan ruler Gyurme Namgyal (1747–50), son and successor of Polha-nas, petitioned the Emperor for his permission to send some Gelugpa lamas from Lhasa to “those parts of Tibet which had been taken under direct Chinese administration during the K’ang-hsi period”.<sup>44</sup> This aroused enormous Chinese suspicion and they resolutely opposed Gyurme Namgyal. This petition with nationalistic overtones cost him his political life. The incident indicates that the Chinese not only progressively took Tibetan territories in Kham but also strongly opposed any Lhasa attempt to regain those “lost” territories.

However, the Qing dynasty was less interested in Tibet's borders with its South Asian/Himalayan neighbours. All the pre-1950 treaties/conventions/agreements concerning the Tibeto-Indian/Sino-Indian boundary were negotiated and signed between the XIII Dalai Lama's government and the British (or with the Himalayan states concerned), except the Sino-Indian agreement of 1890 on the Sikkim-Tibet border. Tibetan authorities negotiated and signed all these border treaties, with the full knowledge and sanction of the Ambans,<sup>45</sup> the Qing imperial Resident in Lhasa.

Finally, what was the external status of the Dalai Lama's Tibet, particularly in relation to its Chinese, Mongolian and South Asian neighbours? There are several difficulties with any attempt to define the status using more precise modern legal concepts like "sovereign" and "suzerain", which may at best be approximate European equivalents to the strange complexity of *chos-yon byin-bdag*. In the latter case, we encountered above the problems of singling out or prioritizing of religious and political motives. Nor do we find a permanent sense of order; the sense of hierarchy changes from situation to situation. It may, therefore, be more useful to describe the significances, degrees and structures of imperial domination in Tibet than to define the status in terms of water-tight legal concepts. The intention is not to pronounce judgement; it is more to promote understanding so that both parties and their respective supporters might have a clear idea of the problem(s) involved. And hopefully, finally, *justice* will prevail.

Professor Zehiruddin Ahmad, who specializes in seventeenth-century Sino-Tibetan relations, sums up Tibet's status during that period as "the creation of a sovereign State of Tibet, under the sovereignty of the Dalai Lama".<sup>46</sup> Such a description, although somewhat exaggerated, may be partly true in the sense that during the greater part of the seventeenth century, the Dalai Lamas had a closer relationship with the Mongol Khans (over whom the Lamas enjoyed spiritual sovereignty) than with the Chinese emperors. Moreover, this was the period of the Great V Dalai Lama who, according to most accounts, enjoyed a high degree of independence.

Professor Luciano Petech, who wrote a definitive history of Sino-Tibetan relations in eighteenth century, terms Tibet's status during this time as a Chinese "protectorate".<sup>47</sup> This may be a fairly value-neutral description of Tibet's status during the eighteenth century, which witnessed increasing Chinese intervention in Tibet in response to the Zunghar invasion of 1717 and the civil war of 1727-28.

However, there is some scholarly consensus, that we could objectively use as a fairly correct term to describe Tibet's actual status the phrase: "a separate country"<sup>48</sup> in a concrete territorial and administrative sense. Petech uses it frequently;<sup>49</sup> and Ahmad often.<sup>50</sup> This is fairly close to the realities of a pre-nation-state stage in which traditional Tibet found itself until 1950 due to the failure of its ruling class, both lama and lay, to modernize the country.



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**Table 6.1** Tibet and Indo–China border disputes

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Western</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Eastern</i>
Name	Aksaichin	(a) Bara Hott (Garhwal) (b) Sikkim–Tibet border	Tibet–Arunachal Border (Monpa Areas)
Dispute Area	24,000 sq. km.	320 sq. km	51,200 sq. km
Treaty	Ladakh–Tibet treaty of 1684  Maharaja Gulab Singh–Tibet treaty of 1842	(a) Discussion between Indian Collector of Garhwal and Tibetan officials on 5–7 September 1890; also discussions between Tibetan Prime Minister and the Political Officer of Sikkim on 10 July 1914 confirmed U.P.–Tibet border along Tunjun La, Mahri La, Shalshal and Balchandhura passes. (b) Sino–Indian agreement of 1890 and Lhasa Convention of 1904.	Simla Convention of 1914 (India, China Tibet): China initialled, but did not rectify. India and Tibet signed including the McMahon Line.
Position	<i>Indian position:</i> part of Ladakh since tenth century. Some Ladakhi and Kashmiri records. <i>Chinese position:</i> Part of Xinjiang and Ngari (Tibet). No Tibetan records on greater part of Aksai Chin may be some Chinese since nineteenth century	<i>Indian position:</i> Traditional boundary confirmed by 1954 Treaty (Panchsheel) in which six border passes mentioned. <i>Chinese position:</i> Part of Tibet and therefore part of China. Tibetan records.	<i>Indian position:</i> (i) Except in Tawang area, no Chinese or Tibetan evidence of administration. (ii) Simla Convention of 1914. <i>Chinese position:</i> Names of rivers, passes and other places in Tibetan. Some Tibetan records on Buddhist areas of Arunachal Pradesh (Monpas).

*Source:* British, Indian and Tibetan Records.

In such a traditional state of affairs, what mattered to the people at large was their land which was the economic basis of their existence and their habitat. Although who ruled over them also mattered, as I shall explain. The image of “country” captures the two concrete senses of territoriality and administration. Concepts like “sovereignty” and “independent”, so often associated with the nation-state, are too modern to describe pre-1950 traditional Tibet’s relations with Qing China, Buddhist Mongolia and the Himalayan States. The folk notion of *phayul/lungpa* (country) presupposes territorial ownership over one’s country which is ruled by a ruler and a ruling class who share the same values and similar ethnicity, culture, language, etc. with the ruled. During the period under discussion, it has been

a line of Dalai Lamas who enjoyed religious hegemony over the majority of the Tibetan population, and upon whom the people reposed their unwritten mandate. That is why the Gelugpa-lamaist polity lasted for 308 years, the longest period of rule in recorded Tibetan history.

The type of lamaist polity, first created by the V Dalai Lama with Gushri Khan's armed help, remained an ideal Gelugpa model of government, even though its actual operation was by no means constant throughout the 300 years. It was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and even of distancing the autonomous units that supposedly composed the government. Its fundamental problem was a lack of coordination between the three components: the Dalai Lama, the Khan (King) and the Desid (*sde-srid*).

Ideally, this should have created a typical pyramidal power structure with the Dalai Lama at the top of the pyramid, and with the Mongol Khan and the Desid at either end of the base, which should have operated as a triumvirate rule with the Dalai Lama presiding or supervising. But, with a characteristic Tibetan lack of institutionalization, the three components rarely agreed with each other on vital issues, and were poorly coordinated, especially when the "Defence Minister" (the Khan) preferred to roam around the pastures of Dam, away from the Lama or when the Dalai Lama was still a minor (i.e. under eighteen years of age).

The rationale for this triangular political structure (or triumvirate rule), seen from the Gelugpa point of view, was as follows: the Dalai Lama, as the Buddhisattva ruler, unlike a King or Prime Minister, should not directly concern himself with such mundane and secular questions as administrative and military matters, which he should delegate to others. As a Buddhist pope, he reigns through his legitimation of the actual ruling which he delegates to others. This makes the High Lama an ideal instrument of indirect rule in Tibet. If the Dalai Lama engages in politics and begins to directly rule the Tibetan people, it will go against the principles of indirect rule, as seen from the Chinese point of view.

In Gelugpa political theory, the Dalai Lama occupies a supreme spiritual and political place in their political system. His function is essentially to legitimate and morally support the government he presides over. But since his spiritual constituency is not confined or limited to Tibet, his powerful influence extends beyond the Tibetan borders, to the Mongol and Manchu world as well as to the cis-Himalayas. This factor, even if it is not a religious reason, has traditionally compelled the Chinese emperors to respect the person and institution of the Dalai Lama. Thus, the Emperor and his ambans took great care not to disrespect the V and VII Dalai Lama.<sup>51</sup> In short, Tibetans worshipped the Dalai Lama as did the Mongol and Manchu Khans; and Chinese emperors and mandarins generally respected the Lama, as a matter of policy, if not of faith. These powerful factors sustained the Dalai Lama as a fairly permanent institution in the Gelugpa political system, sometimes having real power but always enjoying moral authority

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and legitimative functions, not only in Tibet but also in China, Mongolia and Zungharia.

Next in the hierarchy of the Gelugpa political system as it operated during the V Dalai Lama's rule was the Mongol warrior/Khan whom the Lama called *Bstan-zin chos-rgyal* – the defender of the faith and Dharmaraja. As we might recall in both the Gelugpa and Sakya cases, it was the Mongol warrior who put the Lama in power in Tibet. Partly a reflection of the lamas' gratitude for "defending the faith" and partly because they perceived a continuing need for a "protector", the early Dalai Lamas placed the Khan within the Tibetan political system with specific functions. The function of the Khans such as Gushri Khan and Lajang Khan was essentially military in nature; to "protect" the Dalai Lama and his country as well as "to defend the Gelugpa faith" from the "enemies of the faith" (*bstan-dgra*). In other words, the Khan was the Dalai Lama's military protector.

Now why this defence minister had to be a non-Tibetan (Mongol) has as much to do with Buddhist philosophy as with the early trajectories of lamaist history. As a *Buddhisattva* ruler (not as Dharmaraja or Cakravartin, titles which the Lamas usually preferred to give to Mongol, Manchu or Chinese rulers), the Dalai Lama has no philosophical or theological sanction to use direct force on a public scale to defend either himself or his regime. As a matter of faith, the Lama indirectly and informally entrusted the Mongol warrior with this "evil", but necessary, task of ensuring his safety, the security of his regime and of his country. In this way the Lama is absolved from the "sin" or charge of committing or sanctioning violence. This might sound hypocritical to the modern reader, but it is the Lama's way of suggesting that he is, by nature and philosophy, non-violent as a *Buddhisattva* while, as a ruler, he sees the necessity of occasional force to defend the "holy" regime. This is analogous to the Tibetan Buddhists who eat meat provided someone else has butchered the poor animal. It reveals a definite dislike for violence but also a strong survival instinct.

The role of the Khans was particularly crucial and visible during the early formative stages of the lamaist regime after which they remained in the political background. However, military dependence on an external power (or foreign person) constitutes a fundamental and inherent weakness in the lamaist regime, particularly as it is a dependence without which the non-coercive lamaist regime could not survive. This weakness became more serious with the decrease in the power of the traditional lamaist protector, the Mongols, and the penetration of Asian countries by Western imperial powers.

The role of the *Desid* had been a much more pervasive and somewhat permanent institution in the history of lamaist regimes. This title, to all intents and purposes, means "Chief Administrator" or "Chief Minister", and the office holder could exercise, as a matter of routine, considerable *executive* power. This was particularly true during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During the V Dalai Lama's old age and the VI Dalai

Lama's minority, Desid Sangye Gyatso "gathered all power in his hands and made his office the actual head of the State, practically uncontrolled and acting quite on his own authority even in matters of foreign policy". Similarly, other Tibetan lay rulers functioning in a basically *sde-srid* capacity, virtually ruled Tibet, as Petch remarks:

P'o-lha-nas and after him Gyur-med-rnam-rgyal exercised their power in their own name and authority, without reference to the Dalai Lama. The Chinese supervision was merely nominal, it was non-existent in internal affairs and limited itself to the control of external affairs.<sup>52</sup>

As in the case of *chos-rgyal*, the origins and the necessity of a Desid in the Gelugpa political system follow the same lamaist logic. The Dalai Lama as a Buddhisattva, was expected to devote himself to the study and practice of Dharma, and had neither the time nor the inclination to directly administer his realm. This administrative task was delegated and relegated to a Desid. And in the process of daily administration, the Desid acquired considerable executive power, sometimes usurping the power and prerogatives of a Dalai Lama.

I have depicted the Gelugpa political system in an ideal-type fashion, stressing its constitutive components and their respective or relative functions within the system. In practice, as in history, the triangular system's efficacy depended on the relative strength of character of the triumvirate personalities as well as on the general situation at home and in neighbouring territories. The III, V, VIII, XIII and XIV Dalai Lamas have excelled in holding power in their hands and keeping the country together. The greatest danger to the institution of Dalai Lamas was not necessarily been either non-Gelugpa or external until modern times: it tended to be internal intrigues. In particular, since Regency rule is valid only until the Dalai Lama attains majority (eighteen years), the Regent has attempted to kill the minor Lama in order to perpetuate his own (Regent's) power.<sup>53</sup>

If a strong amban (the title which replaced the Khan in 1711) coupled with a domestic or external crisis situation, coincided with a weak or minor Dalai Lama, Imperial China tended to take stronger measures, and to interfere more than usual in the internal affairs of Tibet. This was what happened to Tibet during the Zunghar invasion and the Gorkha wars. In each of these incidents Qing China intervened and introduced radical reforms in the Gelugpa political system. Following the Zunghar invasion of 1717, Qing Emperor Kangxi set up in 1728 an imperial Resident Office in Lhasa called *ambans*<sup>54</sup> who remained in the Tibetan capital until 1912. At the same time the powerful one-man office of *sde-srid* was replaced in 1721 by a council of ministers called *bka-bshag* which continued to function in Lhasa until 1959; and which today is in exile. The stationing of two ambans with their Chinese garrison in Lhasa since 1728 is significant. It demonstrated that Manchu China had, for all practical purposes,

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replaced the role and function of the Mongol protector (Khan) of the lamaist regime, showing that the non-coercive regime could not function without military dependency on an external power. Thus, the Gelugpa regime moved from one dependency to another.

What has remained a fairly constant factor in the long period of Gelugpa history is the institution of the Dalai Lama, sometimes as a real power but always as a moral and legitimated authority (*ngag-dwan*). While there have been changes within the political system, I feel, based on this analysis, that the Dalai Lama headed a pyramidal political structure which produced, at its most successful, a structural triumvirate rule which remained basically unchanged in its components. What, however, did change over time, and especially in modern times, was the non-Tibetan component of the system, namely the protector, who historically has been an external power – Mongol, Manchu, Chinese, Russian, British, Indian, US, etc.<sup>55</sup> In a theoretical sense, it was the absence of a devoted/committed “protector” – like the Mongol warriors in medieval times – that caused the collapse of the non-coercive holy regime by the mid-twentieth century.

The way in which Qing China gradually increased its control over Tibet was subtle and gradual, a process similar to the Chinese erosion of Eastern Tibetan territories. Beijing took advantage of crisis situations in Tibet with which the non-coercive regime was unable to cope, and opportunely intervened each time. On such pretexts or in such contexts, China increased its control over the Gelugpa regime; it was not a direct Chinese conquest that resulted in the establishment of Chinese “protectorateship” (Petech) or “sovereignty” (Li). In this gradual process, we can observe roughly three stages. First, during the V Dalai Lama’s rule, when the Gelugpa regime first began its relations with China, Sino-Tibetan relations were characterized by near-equality and mutual respect. There was no imperial resident (*amban*) in Lhasa, and the Lama communicated more or less directly with the Qing Emperor. During this period the Lama may be said to have been subordinate to the Emperor in a very subtle and symbolic manner; but there was no Chinese interference in internal or even external affairs.

All this changed with the Zunghar invasion of 1717. Then, after 1721, the Manchu commander of the Chinese garrison stationed in Lhasa often interfered with the Kashag’s decisions when Chinese interests were directly concerned and the emperor confirmed or approved the appointment of Tibetan ministers.<sup>56</sup> But still Tibet enjoyed considerable internal independence. The Tibetan Ministers were subordinate to the Dalai Lama and conducted “the government of Tibet in agreement with the *ambans*”. The latter’s functions were threefold: the drafting and forwarding of Tibetan memorials to the Throne; they were in charge of the Chinese garrison in Lhasa; and supervision of mail stages.<sup>57</sup> However, over a period of 184 years, the *amban*’s status changed from consultative to supervisory and finally to commanding official in Lhasa.

But following the Gurkha invasion of 1788, China established a much *stricter* form of indirect rule in Lhasa. The ambans, one posted in Lhasa and the other at Shigatse, were given the same rank as the Dalai and Panchen Lamas. These two high-ranking Lamas were denied the traditional privilege to communicate with the Emperor directly; they could do so only through the ambans. All important appointments of Tibetan ministers and other high-ranking officials were made by the Dalai and Panchen Lamas “in conjunction” with the ambans. The latter also controlled Tibet’s relations with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim.<sup>58</sup>

Perhaps the most damaging departure from traditional practice was the Emperor’s 1792 order that reincarnations of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas were to be selected by drawing lots should there be more than one claimant.<sup>59</sup> This loss of authority in the most critical sector of its political structure – the institution of the Dalai Lama – shows how much the lamaist regime had lost its power. This fall occurred because of the non-coercive nature of the regime and its military inadequacy which was incapable of coping with external invasions and internal rebellions, the level of which had increased with modern times. Each time Imperial China intervened on behalf of the Dalai Lama, it took more power from the Tibetan authorities. But still China chose to rule Tibet *indirectly* through the medium of indigenous charismatic institutions like that of the Dalai Lama and through the medium of an indigenous ruling class, both lama and lay,<sup>60</sup> because Chinese had discovered indirect rule to be more effective and less costly in military and economic terms. And finally during the period 1912–1950, when the XIII and XIV Dalai Lama were ruling, Tibet was, according to international lawyers, *de facto* independent.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, during this period Tibet did enjoy a high degree of internal and even external independence to a lesser extent, due, largely, to the fact China during this period was weak and divided.

There is a strange paradox in Gelugpa history. It began with the relative sovereignty, grandeur and glory of the V Dalai Lama, and ended with such degradation and defeat by the mid-twentieth century. Unlike the previous lamaist regime, the Sakyapa, whose top hierarch had to reside permanently in Beijing, the Dalai Lamas stayed in Lhasa and sent one of the Gelugpa lamas to Beijing to act as representative and imperial chaplain. Indeed the Gelugpa regime began with a much greater degree of internal independence *vis-à-vis* China than the Sakya regime ever had. However, it managed to establish a kind of Buddhist transnational ideocracy in which other Buddhist states like Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh, Mongolia and Zungharia were subordinate in religious terms and were therefore indirectly subordinate politically to the Asian Buddhist vatican, Lhasa.<sup>62</sup> Yet from the early eighteenth century onwards, the Gelugpa regime found itself progressively losing its internal independence and freedom of action to an extent that no Yuan Emperor had ever subjected the Sakya regime.

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Both the regimes were similar in their non-coercive character and in their dependent relationship with Imperial China. The main reason concerned the radical change in the international environment. When the Sakya Lamas were indirectly ruling Tibet, the Mongols were the superpower and no lesser powers dared to threaten Tibet. But by the time the Dalai Lamas came to power and began their long rule, they found the outside world more complex and unstable. It was no longer the unipolar world of the Mongol empire but almost a multipolar world in which the Zunghar, the Gorkha and finally the British powers threatened the otherwise stable Sino-Tibetan order in Inner Asia. The Gelugpa regime faced more than its share of internal disturbances such as the civil wars of 1603–21 and of 1727–28, Nyarong Rebellion of 1864; and five invasions – the Zunghar invasion of 1717, three Gorkha invasions (1788, 1791 and 1855), the Dogra invasion of 1841, the British Indian armed expedition of 1904 and Chao Erh-feng's military campaign of 1906–8. These crises tested the limits of a non-coercive regime, especially a lamaist type of government based on not using organized force as a matter of principle and policy. This military inadequacy led to increasing military dependency on Imperial China and a progressive decrease in Tibet's internal independence.

Finally, a few remarks on the nature of lamaist polity (*chos-srid gnyis-ldan*) and lamaist politics (*bstanpa chab-srid*). While trying to conceptualize the Gelugpa regime, we cannot fail to essentialize the centrality and constancy of the institution of the Dalai Lama within the political system, as a Buddhisattva ruler. His non-violent philosophy determined the non-coercive character of his regime. But his unparalleled yet institutionalized charisma provided a most enduring legitimation to the regime which explains why it lasted for more than 300 years, despite heavy external and internal odds. In the ultimate analysis, the lamaist non-coercive regime which might appeal to Tibetan lamas and others, may not only be a contradiction in terms; it is also anachronistic in the modern international system. The secret of Gelugpa power, despite their non-coercive regime, for more than 300 years resided in this combination; the Mongol military force transformed the Dalai Lama's charismatic influence into power.

The concept of Lama rulers (Buddhisattva rulers) and non-coercive lamaist regimes are really Tibeto-Mongol inventions for which we do not find any indic precedence. If the Tibetans originally opted for the concept of *Dharmaraja* or *Cakravartin*,<sup>63</sup> their ruler could have combined all the vital functions of the State such as military and administrative affairs. But the concept and practice of a Buddhisattva ruler cannot create a state; for to do so would be not only to self-contradict but also to self-negate. He could only muddle through a non-coercive regime that promotes the welfare of the monastic community and fails miserably in the defence of his country. This conclusion is not only deduced from Buddhist theory; it is empirically borne out by the tragic trajectory of Tibetan history, as I have tried to analyse and show here.

## Chapter 7

# The Rise of the Han Nation and the End of Indirect Rule: The Consequences of Non-Change in Tibet

We have raced through nearly two thousand years of Sino-Tibetan relations, from the earliest beginnings to the present with a focus on historical change. The significance, the structure and the function of Sino-Tibetan relationships have changed over time; and it is through the changing patterns of Sino-Tibetan relations that we can unearth general patterns which will be above a partisan point of view. Such an academic exercise might shed light on contemporary issues in Sino-Tibetan dialogue as well as discern possible future structures for conflict resolution in Tibet.<sup>1</sup>

While pursuing this study, I have kept in mind the following guiding questions: (a) whether or not points of reference have changed; (b) how authority relations have been worked out; (c) how relations have been maintained; and (d) how tensions or conflicts have been resolved. Each of these questions has been analysed against the larger historical background of Imperial China and Inner Asia, stressing, in particular, the turning points in Sino-Tibetan history and the enduring structures of authority relations. In order to do this, I pursue regime changes in China and Tibet, and critically examine whether their policies towards each other persisting or changing. Such an analysis suggests two tentative generalizations.

Confucian China, by culture if not by nature, does not appear to be either expansionist or imperialist. However, there is a deeply internalized sense of territoriality which necessitates boundary-building and boundary-maintenance of what was initially ancestor-worship sanctified territory.<sup>2</sup> In other words, what the typical Confucian monarch and his council of mandarins wanted was peace and security along their well-defined boundaries that marked off Confucian China from Central Asia. And when threats to their ancestor-worship sanctified territory were perceived and border peace was disturbed, they tended to use force and engage in war which resulted in limited expansionism. In particular, the Mongols,



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T Tibetans and Turks were constant sources of threat to the border security and peace of sedentary Confucian China<sup>3</sup> until the nineteenth century when modern Western weapons made Central Asian horse-driven fighting power obsolete. This latter revolution changed the Chinese threat perceptions, but it neither altered nor eliminated boundary consciousness. It is therefore boundary-maintenance and boundary consciousness that appear to be the dynamics of the Chinese search for new frontiers and tendency to expansionism rather than imperialism *per se*, unlike, for example, Mongol imperialism. An ancient Han scholar, Wangfu, emphasized the imperatives of boundary-maintenance for China in 110 AD.

No country can exist without frontiers. A country without frontiers is a country that has perished. Therefore, if Liang-chou were to be lost, then the metropolitan area would become the frontier; if the metropolitan area were to be lost, then Hung-nung would become the frontier; if Hung-nung were to be lost, then Lo-yang would become the frontier. If we were to take this to its conclusion, even were we to withdraw to the eastern seaboard, there should still be a frontier.<sup>4</sup>

As we might recall, in the eighth century when the Tibetan warrior kings (*btsan*) began to take over Tarim Basin countries which – at the time constituted a buffer zone between Confucian China and Bon Tibet – the Tang dynasty engaged in numerous battles against the Tibetan army. By analogy in the modern period, if it is not stretching it too far, I believe it was this same strong and urgent sense of threat to Chinese security from South Asia that led to Chao Erh-feng's military campaign of 1904–11 and the People's Liberation Army takeover of Tibet in 1950. Strategically located Tibet does continue to constitute a security dilemma for both China and India today. How else can we explain the total absence of Chinese intervention during the post-*tsan* (842–1247) and post-Sakya periods (1337–1540) when Tibet did not constitute a threat to Chinese security? Therefore, it appears to me that the outright invasion and occupation of Tibet (“liberation”) in 1950 was largely caused by the security dilemma that the Maoists perceived in Tibet, and it was reinforced by Maoist mission.

The imperial idea and indeed the praxis of imperialism appear to have been the militaristic Mongol gift to the essentially sedentary Confucian culture from the thirteenth century onwards. Before that Han, Tang and Song China did have a transnational Confucian ideocracy in which Confucian culture states such as Korea, Japan, Annam, etc. did participate, but this did not strictly constitute an empire, in the sense that non-Confucian culture areas and non-Han peoples were included in it. The empire was the political achievement of the Yuan dynasty; it was the Mongol emperors who transformed the Confucian ideocracy into a multinational empire. Tibet was a part of this larger historical process, even though it was made a special category through imperial favour to Buddhist Tibet.

However, from 1260 to 1950, there was no attempt at outright conquest or semi-permanent military occupation or even direct rule; it was always a case of indirect rule mediated through the acclaimed indigenous instruments of indirect rule. This was for the following reasons. First, the tried and tested Confucian practical wisdom had been indirect rule, even in the cases of member states of the Confucian ideocracy who shared several cultural and economic commonalities with, but were situated away from, the Middle Kingdom. This prudent and pragmatic precedent was followed by the Yuan dynasty onwards up to the Qing dynasty, with exceptional favour being shown towards Buddhist Tibet. This imperial favour came to constitute what I have called the “Buddhist factor” in Sino-barbarian relations, on which I have frequently commented in the course of this study. Briefly stated, the Grand Lamas of Tibet came to exercise enormous influence not only among the Tibetans but also among the Mongols, the Manchurians, the cis-Himalaya peoples, etc. Charismatic Lamas of wide influence had been found, and had proved themselves to be the ideal instruments of indirect Chinese rule in Tibet since the Yuan dynasty.

What cemented and sustained the Emperor-Lama relationship, as I have tried to show in this study, was not pragmatic political consideration alone on the part of the imperial court. The Yuan, the Qing and, to a lesser extent, the Ming emperors showed incredible faith in and fascination with Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>5</sup> This imperial bias was naturally reflected in the special ways in which Imperial China had treated Buddhist Tibet. The respect and honour with which the Chinese emperors welcomed and received the V Dalai Lama, V Karmapa and the Phagpa Lama to Beijing had no parallels in the history of imperial protocols. These High Lamas were treated as “near-equals” to the Son of Heaven. They were not required to *kowtow* before the Emperor as was the customary practice and the necessary prerequisite with every other foreign dignitary. Even the King or Prince (*Wang*) from Korea, Vietnam or Burma, had to *kowtow* before the Chinese emperor. It is on such evidence that it appears that Buddhist Tibet constituted a special case of indirect rule among not only the Central Asian dependencies but even among Confucian member states in East and Southeast Asia, however preposterous and incongruous it sounds at the end of the twentieth century.

One of the central principles and policies by which Imperial China managed to maintain her influence, and sometimes power, within her trans-border cultural ideocracy and subsequently in her multinational empire was the typical Chinese institution of indirect rule variously translated in the past as either “suzerainty” or “protectorate”.<sup>6</sup> I prefer to use this phrase (indirect rule) because it is a value-neutral term, less devoid of Eurocentric connotations and associations. Indirect rule refers to a rule that is not based on direct political action by a reigning external power but on behind-the-scenes influence, subtly but effectively exerted through the medium of local

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elites so that foreign domination appears to be native rule in the eyes of the native population. This has characteristically been the mandarin manner by which Imperial China exercised *indirect* ruler over neighbouring or relatively distant countries outside China itself where direct domination was unacceptable or illegitimate and, in fact, usually considered politically unsophisticated from the mandarin point of view. Foreign domination, as a rule, attracts local resistance to or revolt against such alien domination; one of the main motives behind indirect rule is to minimize local resistance or nationalistic revolt, yet to establish varying degrees of control over the dependent country, varying to accommodate different domestic and international situations. The concept and practice of indirect rule was certainly one of the crowning achievements of Chinese statecraft and Confucian political culture seen from the historical perspective of two thousand years of Sino–barbarian relationship history. This has chiefly been done through imperial acclamation and recognition of local talents which they perceived to be indigenous manifestations of Confucian universal *de* (virtue).

In our study of Tibet we found two periods of Tibetan history which appear as classic cases of indirect rule: namely the Sakya and Gelugpa regimes. Nedong Gongma regime (1337–1565) may also be considered as an example of indirect rule. During the Sakya period, decision-making power was located in Beijing but the actual ruling was done from Sakya by a Tibetan official called *dpon-chen*, meaning “Great Authority” or “Chief Administrator”). The Yuan emperors took pains to make it appear that their orders or edicts to Tibet were the result of joint Yuan–Tibetan decisions. A Sakya Lama who resided in Beijing usually made a proposal concerning Tibet and the Emperor generally approved the proposal. There was no Chinese interference in the Tibetan administration as there was no *amban* in Sakya and only one case of armed Yuan intervention in a period of nearly 100 years of Sakya rule. This was probably the most successful case of indirect rule over Tibet by Imperial China.

The Gelugpa rule was much longer and more complex than the Sakya regime. No Dalai Lamas, unlike the Sakya Lamas, had to reside in and function at Beijing as *dbu-lha* (imperial chaplain) and therefore there was no question of the Qing Emperor and the Dalai Lama jointly making decisions affecting Tibet. Because of this, a permanent office of the *amban* with suitable military escort or, at later times, a garrison was established to represent the Emperor’s interests and views at Lhasa. It was, therefore, essentially through the *amban* that Qing China exercised varying degrees of control over Gelugpa Tibet. However, this control was always through the indigenous instruments of indirect rule such as the charismatic institution of the Dalai Lamas or lay local aristocratic notables at times of the Lama’s minority. This form of indirect rule was analogous to what the British Raj used to call princely states in India, where an imperial Resident through the

medium and person of a traditional ruler (Maharaja) exercised considerable power to ensure the latter's indirect rule.

The Dalai Lamas' long rule indicates the limits of and objective conditions under which indirect rule was or was not possible. Whenever the Chinese acted through the institution or person of the Dalai Lama, there was no anti-Chinese reaction or revolt against their indirect rule. But whenever the Emperor or Amban took direct political action, bypassing the indigenous instruments of indirect rule, the Tibetan people (or more accurately the Tibetan public at Lhasa) tended to revolt against the Chinese. This is the point at which indirect rule ends and at which direct Chinese rule begins: Tibetan resistance follows almost automatically. Chinese direct political action, not routed through the indigenous ruler or ruling class, was – and still is – perceived by the Lhasa public as a violation of one of the central principles of indirect rule.

This pattern of Tibetan reaction against Chinese direct political action in Lhasa repeats itself throughout the course of Tibetan history. When Lajang Khan, in conjunction with Emperor Kangxi in 1706, tried to depose the controversial VI Dalai Lama, the Lhasa public in general and its powerful monastic community in particular rose up against the Chinese. Similarly when two ambans murdered the Tibetan ruler Gyurme Namgyal in 1750, the Lhasa populace, led by Lobsang Tashi, rioted and revolted against the Chinese. In more modern times, we should remember that one of the immediate causes of the 1959 Lhasa Revolt was the rumour that the People's Liberation Army planned to kidnap the XIV Dalai Lama.

Such incidents have been enough to drive home the message to the Chinese that direct Chinese political action in Tibet is invariably resented by the indigenous population; it is, in fact, counterproductive. The most efficacious means of ruling a religious Tibet, as discovered by the Confucian mandarins over the ages, was, has been and probably still is indirect Chinese rule, routed, however, through the indigenous instruments of indirect rule, preferably and most probably through the institution of the Dalai Lama. Such indirect rule might prove itself to be the least costly in terms of both human suffering and economics for both parties.

Whether or not such a proposition might be acceptable to the Marxist authorities in Beijing or even to the Dalai Lama himself is difficult to say. The times have changed. I have argued in conservative, not revolutionary terms, that historical wisdom might benefit both China and Tibet now as well as in the near future. But I will go on to examine the critical question of what has changed and what has persisted in the Chinese political culture and worldview. This might reveal to what extent my emphasis on the study of the past Chinese history and Confucian tradition is justified in order to find an enduring solution to the persisting problem of Tibet.

In this introductory historical survey, I have paid more attention to the traditional structures of domination or Sino-Tibetan authority relations

and historical patterns of Sino-Tibetan relations. One of my immediate intentions is to present an historical perspective which might have a cooling effect on the emotionally charged and tense political situation of Sino-Tibetan dialogue today. The other reason, no less urgent or important is my earnest desire to participate intellectually in an interesting post-Communist debate on Sino-Tibetan history, initiated by overseas Chinese intellectuals.<sup>7</sup> The latter, I feel, are in a unique situation at this critical juncture of Sino-Tibetan relations, coming, as they do, from their Chinese cultural and Communist background and yet emancipated as they are from Communist totalitarianism or neo-Confucian authoritarianism. Their call seems to be simple and clear: (a) The Communist Revolution as championed and practised by Chairman Mao and his followers, was over by 1986; (b) now there is an urgent need to re-read the embattled pages of Sino-Tibetan history and rectify the distortions wrought by Maoist propagandists and do what they called “justice to history”; (c) such earnest debates hope to shed light on the “true” historical status of Tibet in China as well as the “objective” patterns of Sino-Tibetan relations in and through history. I see much timely wisdom in their goals. That is why I have gone into considerable historical detail and present, unashamed my personal re-reading and understanding of Sino-Tibetan history and politics.

While some of the Chinese dissidents appear to be over-enthusiastic about the possibilities of deconstructing Chinese history,<sup>8</sup> I am a realist. I believe such opportunities will largely be determined by the degrees of revolutionary change that have impacted on Chinese political culture, its worldview, leaders and general social change in China over the last 137 years (1839–1976). This revolutionary period is rather long. For the present purpose, I shall consider the effects of the period on Tibet, with the hope that a more competent Sinologist will be able to deal with the areas I have not covered.

Revolutionary change does not come either easily or willingly to ancient societies which have four to five million years of civilizational history. This is particularly true of Confucian China which has at least two million years of systematic state-sponsored internalization of Taoist-Confucian values and beliefs. Change came to China under pressure from and encounter with Western powers. The Opium War of 1840 and the so-called unequal treaties of the 1860s created a political crisis within Confucian statecraft, leading to an internal interrogation of tradition and a need for reform signified by such events as the Self-Strengthening Movement of 1861–72 and the “100 Days Reform” of 1898.<sup>9</sup>

The Japanese takeover of Formosa (1871–74), the Russian occupation of Zungharia (1871–81), the Sino-French war over Vietnam (1880–85), and Japanese aggression in Korea and the partition of China (1894) compelled China to ideas of empire and settle on the Han nation-state. But the decision did not come easily to the Chinese. For the Sino-Western conflicts

from 1895 to 1939 proved beyond doubt the Western barbarian supremacy over the previously assumed Confucian superiority. This created among the Confucian literate a complex politico-cultural crisis, shaking the very foundations of their Chinese self-image and concept of Confucian world order. The Chinese and Confucian officials before the 1911 revolution used to describe their country as a nation and as an empire. The imperial idea, not traditional Han nationalism, faced an unprecedented crisis in its encounter with challenging Western powers. The Confucian mode of exercising, or more appropriately demonstrating, imperial power was the ostentatious display of presumed superior Chinese culture to the barbarian subordinate groups rather direct political domination, as we have shown. The Confucian politico-cultural assumptions such as culture as a symbol of imperial power, cultural hegemony as a civilized mode of exercising power, and even culture as a value system were seriously questioned and doubted. In the process the Chinese elite came to the stark realization that it was not *de* (virtuous behaviour), as ancient sages advised, but power that made the critical difference in the nation's survival and world politics. As the leading contemporary Chinese intellectual wrote:

In the world there is only power – there is no other force. That the strong always rule the weak is in truth the first universal rule of nature. Hence, if we wish to attain liberty, there is no other road; we can only seek first to be strong.<sup>10</sup>

A couple of decades later Mao could formulate how that power was to be achieved: “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun”;<sup>11</sup> for “foreigners treat a weak nation like a piece of meat to be eaten or like a prey to be swallowed by whales”.<sup>12</sup> The current Communist ambition to make China a great military power, both in nuclear and conventional spheres, has its roots in the nineteenth-century Confucian Chinese dealings with Western imperial powers. Thus, the old Confucian idea of *de* with, a last resort of force, was transformed into almost total reliance on force and power that characterized the Communist rise to power in China, whose first victim was a defenceless Tibet in 1950. Tibetan leaders will have to recognize the factuality of this Han power in the years to come.

Flowing from the logic of power, by the turn of the century, the orderly and symbolic tribute relations were transformed into power politics, especially in relation to Tibet. This is obviously the second major change in inter-state relations and behaviour. The most striking thing about this change is the increasing use of force to fit Tibet into the Han scheme of nation-state, such as signified by Chao Erh-feng's 1904–11 military campaigns in Eastern Tibet and above all the Communists' armed “liberation” of Tibet in 1950.

Previously, during pre-modern periods, Imperial China had rarely sent any uninvited armed expedition into Tibet, and only then upon the request

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of the ruling Lama to protect his non-coercive regime in extreme cases of internal rebellion or external invasion. There was little evidence in Sino-Tibetan history of any attempt by Imperial China to invade and occupy Tibet before the modern period, either in the name of enculturation or national security. For Tibet, in the traditional Chinese mind, was always a separate country, foreign yet intimate territory.

The subject matter of inter-state relations discourse also underwent a sea-change. It was no longer dominated by traditional subject matters like tribute exchanges and patent issuance, announcement and acclamation of lamas and princes. By the beginning of the twentieth century there emerged in the Lifangyuan (Chinese Foreign Office) a new breed of scholar-officials who began to talk in a new language. Their new discourse made tribute relations and patron-priest relations irrelevant and obsolete. They began to press for Chinese sovereignty over Tibet as signified by the 1905 Anglo-Chinese talks in Calcutta, the Shimla Convention of 1913-14, and General Huang Musong's Lhasa negotiations of 1934,<sup>13</sup> and finally by the Communists in the 1951 Sino-Tibetan Agreement. Medieval Tibet was totally unprepared for the "modern" change in Tibet's status that was demanded by the "newly" educated Chinese.<sup>14</sup>

The British colonial discourse about Chinese "suzerainty" but not "sovereignty" over Tibet was a compromise attempt to accommodate the Chinese position in a pre-nation-state, as European feudal, legal terminology that might prevent "New China" from switching her position on Tibet from empire to nation-state. For the irony was, as the British colonial officials realized, Tibet would be safer within the Chinese empire than in a Han-dominated nation-state. The rules of the game differ for these two different conceptions. Empire-tolerated heterogeneity allowing considerable social space for different identities, cultures, languages, etc. to exist, whereas the nation-state, in the name of political centralization and cultural unification, does not tolerate the politics of differences; instead it melts minorities within the crucible of national integration. This is what the Chinese Communists are doing in Tibet today in the name of "national development".

The third change which is also connected with the notion of a nation-state is the enlargement of the sense of territoriality and the transformation of trans-border frontiers into a water-tight fixation of territorial integrity. We argued earlier that a sense of territoriality was inherent in Confucian cultural practice but only at the level of family and clan. What transformed this clannish territoriality into a nation-wide consciousness about Chinese territory was the Maoists' mobilization of Chinese peasants for the anti-Japanese war (1934-45) in China. Strictly speaking, Tibetan territory did not constitute a part of the ancestor-worship sanctified territory of Confucian China or what Pearl S. Buck called Chinese "good earth". But because the late Qing officials and early Han nationalists claimed Tibet to

be a part of the five-race<sup>15</sup> based nation-state or republic, both KMT (Kuomintang) and CCP (Chinese Communist Party) officials declared and demanded Tibet to be “an integral part of Chinese territory”.

Tibetan officials also displayed a strong sense of Tibetan territoriality. Tibetan troops fought hard in the early 1930s to regain lost territories in Eastern Tibet; in 1934 the Tibetan government repeatedly requested the visiting KMT General Huang to return those Khampa territories captured by the late Qing dynasty to Lhasa; even in the course of the 1951 Sino-Tibetan agreement, the Tibetan government repeated this same request to the Communist authorities.

Once again, it was not moral persuasion or legal argument but force that decided Tibet's modern fate. From a separate country with time-honoured Sino-Tibetan borders, Tibet was made into an integral part of the territory of China. Neither Confucian culture nor Chinese history justified this territorial integration as our study reveals but the tyranny of the logic of the nation-state and Communist interventionist ideology presented it with an almost unalterable *fait accompli*. We shall see in the next section how the concepts of a unitary state and a multinational state are, in fact, contradictory.

When the Confucian ideocracy-turned-Chinese empire was transformed into a Han nation-state by the mid-twentieth century, there were, in theory, two basic options for Chinese states: they could be defined as imperial dependencies which would logically and justly graduate to full independence, or they would be forced to integrate into the Han nation-state with a promise of autonomy. The member states of the former Confucian ideocracy which used to pay regular tributes to the Middle Kingdom as had Tibet, but whose head of state ranked lower than the ruling Lamas of Buddhist Tibet, fully fought for and graduated into independence, which is how they exist today. This was a logically necessary and ideologically justifiable stand for the anti-imperialist Maoists. But in the case of defenceless and unmodernized Tibet, the Maoists deviated from this principled stand, forcefully took Tibet over and continues to integrate it into the Han-dominated nation-state by means of totalitarian techniques and a Stalinist-like terror unknown to the Confucian culture.

[Our analytical survey shows that Tibet did not constitute part of the Confucian-Taoist ancestor-worship sanctified Chinese territory; most Chinese dynasties treated it as a separate territory and autonomous domain, almost a special category among the so-called dependencies. Nor were the Tibetans related to the Han nation in any significant way: culture, language, history, political tradition, social organization, etc. Therefore, the Communist direct political action in 1950 not only violated one of the cardinal principles of indirect rule but also constituted an act of internal imperialism about which the Communists continue to feel guilty and embarrassed at heart.]



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At the time of the so-called liberation, and reiterated since on a number of occasions, the Chinese Communists have offered three primary justifications for the armed "liberation" of Tibet: historical, ideological and on grounds of national security. Historically, the Communists claim that Tibet has been an integral part of China since the thirteenth century. The Tibetan case is more complex than this, as I have attempted to show in the case of each regime change in both China and Tibet. If, to take one obvious criterion, the regular payment of tributes and issuance of patents were the hallmark of Imperial China's claim over dependent or subordinate states, not only Tibet but also a number of minor states in East Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and the cis-Himalayas would have become part of China in the loose historical sense in which the Maoists justify their takeover of Tibet.

The Marxist ideological justification that Tibet was feudal, exploitative and backward – therefore in dire need of liberation – is more complicated and I shall address this issue in the final balance sheet. Let me, however, add in haste that this ideological justification may not carry much weight when we recall that the Himalayan kingdoms, which used to pay tribute to China either directly or via Buddhist Tibet, were as backward and feudal as Tibet in the early 1950s, and therefore also in need of "liberation". But my findings suggest that it was a strategic compulsion that compelled Communist China to take over Tibet in 1950 and occupy the country ever since (see Chapter 14). Again we note that it was the modern national security doctrine of state sovereignty that sacrificed Tibet, and not others in the Himalayas or near-East Asia. In the ultimate analysis, Tibet became an unwitting, and of course unwilling, target of Han nationalism whose external expression was Chinese expansionism.

The fourth change that is totally unprecedented in scale and thoroughness in Chinese society must be the rise of the Han nation, and the consequent transformation of elite culturalism into nationalism. This simply means nearly 93 per cent of the Chinese population were mobilized, activated, organized and, above all, politicized in the course of the Chinese Revolution, thereby becoming not only politically conscious, most of them in the process became and continue to be Han nationalists to the core. This transformation of the sleeping dragon into a Han nation, fully conscious of its identity and destiny in the world, is both terrifying and gratifying. If is used for democratic and peaceful development, it could achieve spectacular results; but if used for nationalistic purposes, it threatens the survival of its minorities, security of its neighbours and even world peace. Communist China today stands at this crossroads, both in the case of Tibet and for the world at large.

Elite culturalism, which may be viewed as a small-scale, traditional form of nationalism, affected a small minority in pre-modern China: the Emperor and his courtiers, mandarin and gentry classes, all of whom preferred and

believed in the wisdom of indirect rule for dependent peoples who differed from the Han majority in fundamental ways, and yet who had security and cultural ties with the Middle Kingdom. The traditional elite not only respected but also encouraged minority cultures such as Buddhism. This is not the case with the rise of the Han nation, especially under Communist auspices. The rise of the Han nation and Han nationalism has resulted in Han majoritarianism both in theory and in practice. This has serious implications for the Tibetans. Using a totalitarian democratic logic, the Communist power elite present the will of the Han majority as the will of *all*, thereby marginalizing the non-Han social groups in China as a matter of no consequence. It follows from this twisted logic that rule over the minorities must necessarily be Han domination as they are the majority and dominant group in China. Not only this: the majority group, based on the logic of totalitarian democratic majoritarianism, is also presented as the leading cultural model which legitimates “national” integration and assimilation as the leading model for the minorities to follow. It is, therefore, Han nationalism that threatens the cultural identity and political autonomy of the Tibetan people, as never before in Asian history. Han nationalism once aroused cannot be eliminated; it can be regulated and controlled for the sake of minorities, as could be done by a democratic and humane government.

I have briefly explained the four fundamental changes in the Confucian political culture and traditional statecraft that have completely transformed the sleeping dragon into a power-packed nation-state, within whose realities and parameters, I am afraid, Tibet has to seek justice and structural adjustment unless positive social change in China continues and non-threatening international pressure on China is maintained. While these political changes have occurred in the course of modern Chinese governance (1839–1949), particularly in their self-shattering encounter with the West and Japan, some old Chinese biases and beliefs have, however, persisted under new disguises. I shall briefly comment on two of these “Han ancients” which have direct implications on contemporary Chinese attitudes toward Tibetans and other non-Han peoples.

It has often been observed by Western and Asian writers – and I believe there is a grain of persisting truth in their observation – that Han people continue to enjoy or suffer from a deeply internalized superiority complex which even modern radical egalitarian ideology could not erase. In fact Chinese Communism has probably unintentionally reinforced their belief based on their claim the Han people are (or were) the most revolutionary people in Asia which mandates their right to leadership or domination. This claim, in post-Communist form, manifests itself as follows. Han people are the most modernized and most cultured group in China, whose modernization role and model the non-Han minorities, especially the Tibetans, must follow. The basis of this Han superiority complex is a set of

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ancient Chinese myths such as the Middle Kingdom, super civilization, the longest recorded imperial history, etc. which is normally not articulated into crude jingoism but which nevertheless forms the basis of Han identity and consciousness in relation to non-Han peoples. Hence the current Communist power elite's refined arrogance towards non-Confucian powers in world politics. It envisages the centrality of China in world politics, not merely a multipolar world.

Second, continuity with the past may be in the form of neo-Confucian authoritarianism in domestic politics. It is generally true that Han people had more respect for their emperor and scholar-officials than the theoretical right to rebel attitude which was much emphasized during the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese Communists inherited this deep-rooted authoritarian structure and spirit upon their seizure of state power in 1949 and in fact reinforced it with their Leninist organization "science" and incentiveless forced-labour efficiency. However, before the starry eyes of millions of Han peasants, Chairman Mao offered what Dick Wilson called a "People's Empire",<sup>16</sup> and the Chinese Communist Party was seen as a charismatic institution that would rule the People's Republic of China, not unlike the imperial dynasty. That is why the contemporary Communist leaders and their Party members find it so difficult to understand why the peasants and nomads, monks and nuns of Tibet continue to revolt so often against the Communist regime. Communists feel that this is the height of ingratitude for liberation! But as I have tried to show in this book, Han and Tibetan peoples constitute two fundamentally distinct social groups, nurtured within the wombs of two different civilizations and no amount of forceful social engineering is likely to succeed to merge them into one nation, or people as the former Soviet Union's 80 year experiment clearly shows.

While China went through revolutionary changes for over a century (1839–1949) and while India passed through great changes during the same period, Tibet remained static and non-changing, living in splendid isolation and illusionary independence (1912–50). This isolationism and conservatism had incalculable consequences on the modern fate of Tibet. In particular Sino–Tibetan relations went through changes during the century that neither the lamas nor the commoners of Tibet could comprehend. The Confucian ideocracy was transformed into a Han-dominated nation-state which tolerated no separate entities or identities like Tibet. The fluid frontiers of civilizational realms began to freeze into solidified boundaries of the nation-state fixation whereby the late Qing dynasty began nibbling Tibetan territories and finally the Communist takeover in 1950. The symbolic tribute relations, based on a recognition of virtue and imperial acclamation through Confucian rituals and ceremonies, suddenly changed into a Chinese unilateral declaration of sovereignty over Tibet. During all these processes of change, Chinese elite culturalism was being socially and

systematically transformed into mass nationalism that, under Mao's leadership and organization, swallowed up Tibet. No neo-Communist regime in China would have taken such direct political and military action in Tibet. China's internal imperialism in Inner Asia was not and is not inherent in the structure of Confucian culture; it is the direct result of an alien expansionist, interventionist ideology that justified its acts of internal imperialism as "liberation".

"New China" learnt its new ways, first from former imperial/colonial powers at a time when international politics was indeed power politics; and secondly, from Marxist-Leninism, which became in due course the primary means of organizational and ideological weapons to capture Tibet. But the sad fact is that the first target (or guinea pig) used to try out those new ideas and forceful ways was a Medieval Tibet which was least prepared to cope with imposed "revolutionary changes".

So what have the Tibetan people gained from and lost to the Chinese Revolution? It might drag us into the perennial Left-versus-Right controversy; but I think there is no harm in attempting a summary balance sheet in which I present my findings and humble opinion. In order to achieve this in the space available, I have to concentrate on the essential points, leaving out exceptions and qualifications. From 1951 to 1976 the Chinese Communists were neither engaged in social revolution nor in economic development, two primary purposes for which the Communists had supposedly come to Tibet; they were preoccupied with strategic infrastructure developments for their first 25 years. Most of the Central Government's funds to Tibet as well as Tibet's own limited resources and revenues were spent on building "defence" infrastructure such as military barracks, roads, airfields, bridges, etc.

When Deng Xiaoping's new economic policy was enunciated in 1980, development projects began to appear in Tibet which might have benefited the Tibetan people. But, by 1983, the Chinese population transfer into Tibet had begun in the name of assisting development. China has increased the massive Chinese influx ever since and these people are now taking away better-paid jobs, better housing facilities, better educational opportunities from the urban Tibetans; the Chinese are also competing for scarce limited local resources with Tibetan peasants and nomads. It must, however, be admitted that simple scientific agricultural improvement techniques – for which Chinese are well-known – such as land reform, waste land reclamation, irrigation, etc., have certainly increased Tibetan agricultural and livestock productivity since 1959. But the Tibetan peasants and nomads complain and lament the fact that they are now taxed much more than under the *ancient regime*.<sup>17</sup>

The first three decades of development have tended to enhance the security of the Han-dominated nation-state which has expanded into Tibet since 1951. Tibetans have neither any stake nor say in such security matters.

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The post-1980 economic developments have the potential to benefit the Tibetan masses, but the Chinese migrants have benefited much more than the native population through manipulated market prices and discriminatory policy. Thus, so far, the Tibetan people have lost, both culturally and economically, more to Chinese Communist rule than they have gained from the Chinese Revolution. They lost community power in 1959; are rapidly losing their cultural identity and control over their own local resources; and now their natural habitat is endangered. So what are their prospects for the twenty-first century?

## Chapter 8

# The Anatomy of Tibetan Autonomy: An Agenda for the Twenty-first Century

By the late 1980s when certain global events raised the Tibetan people's hopes and expectations, fertile speculations about Tibet's near future began in Dharamsala (India) and around the world where pro-Tibet groups are active. However, neither the collapse of the Soviet empire, nor the Tiannanmen Square Pro-Democracy Demonstrations nor the Western acclamation of the Dalai Lama as a Nobel laureate was enough to pressurize the neo-nationalist leaders in Beijing to resume<sup>1</sup> the Sino-Tibetan dialogue. The Chinese intransigence frustrated the Dalai Lama's repeated calls for a negotiated settlement on the Tibet issue, finally forcing him, in March 1995, to declare that the whole question is open to public debate. The debate among the exile community continued throughout 1996 culminating in a three-day meeting (21–23 January 1997) in Dharamsala where certain representative refugee intellectuals presented their views. Four distinct approaches to the resolution of the problem emerged out of this discussion: continuing the Dalai Lama's middle path policy of genuine autonomy; launching a Gandhian civil disobedience movement (*satyagrah*) inside Tibet; asking for self-determination or fighting for independence.<sup>2</sup> This exercise was supposed to have ended with a referendum but, in fact, it closed with a popular request to the Dalai Lama to continue his policy of genuine autonomy.

The silent and innocent majority<sup>3</sup> accept the Dalai Lama's middle path policy not because they understand the nuances and subtlety of his compromise politics, but because they believe him to be the living Buddha without a shadow of doubt: they simply put their complete trust in him. In the heart of hearts, they seem to desire complete religious freedom in Tibet with the Dalai Lama restored as their ruler. Most of them do not seem to resent the past economic exploitation associated with the medieval theocracy. What they desire is not so much political independence but

social-cultural independence which has been the hallmark of their historical experience from time immemorial, with a minimum of or no Chinese interference in their social life. In short, the Dalai Lama does enjoy the Tibetan mandate in the same manner as Mao enjoyed the mass following of a whole generation of Chinese. In both cases, it is a question of *charismatic* leadership.

In the course of this study, I also pay equal attention to the various shades of Chinese opinion on the Tibet question. These include the post-1989 Chinese dissidents (who have been vocal on the Tibet question), Taiwanese views, Hong Kong intellectuals and overseas Chinese public opinion in general. There have been various shades of opinion among the dissidents. However, recent surveys indicate that most of them have seemed to reach a general consensus on Tibetan autonomy whose concept and content seem to merge with the pre-1949 Kuomintang (KMT) views. Most of the non-Communist overseas Chinese opinion tends to agree that what the Communist authorities have done in Tibet during the past 40 years is in excess of Confucian moderation; they feel a need to moderate the Communist policy and practice.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, we see a growing Confucian consensus on Buddhist Tibet's autonomous status within China.

My own findings are not far from what I have called the Confucian consensus. I have faced some conceptual problems while participating in this post-Communist debate on Tibet's historical status. My tentative conclusion is that Tibet's historical status *vis-à-vis* Imperial China was neither completely independent nor an integral part of the Chinese empire. Tibet was at critical junctures, militarily dependent on Mongols and Manchus, politically subordinate to Imperial China but in practice, High Lamas of Tibet were treated as near-equals by Chinese emperors. My critical task has been how to translate that dependent or subordinate status into a contemporary political equivalent which is comprehensible to the modern reader and which at the same time does justice to the subject of Sino-Tibetan history. The term increasingly used to denote this peculiar status today is "autonomy" whose operational meanings vary widely. And this is the core of the debate.

The genesis of this problem is rooted in nineteenth-century British colonial history in Asia. It raises the general problems of interpretation and cross-cultural understanding which emerged when the West encountered the East. Before that epochal encounter, essentially, East was East and West was West. Each culture understood and spoke in its own terms, idiom and format. For example, Confucian China was better understood by Confucian Korea than by Buddhist Tibet. Nevertheless Tibet was familiar with Imperial China particularly with its royalty and some of its basic institutions such as tribute relations.

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When the Chinese emperors honoured the charismatic Tibetan lamas with titles, patents and gifts, the lamas symbolically submitted themselves

to the emperors by participating in the tribute relations system. From the Tibetan point of view, their submission was in the nature of reciprocity. How to interpret this Oriental event in European terms was the intellectual problem that the British colonial officials in India and China faced. With their European classical educational background, they naturally understood it in their familiar European terms of pre-modern feudal relations. They interpreted it in the feudal legal terminology of “suzerainty” and later “protectorate”, which was probably closer to reality than the contemporary Communist attempt to interpret it in terms of the nation-state-sovereignty. In reaching this tentative conclusion, British officials were not merely imposing their views on China and Tibet, as may be suspected, being the great world power at the time. They took pains to study and understand the “true” nature of Tibet’s relations with China, as the British Ambassador to China, Sir Ernest Satow’s dialogue with Prince Qing clearly demonstrates.<sup>5</sup> Such inquiries convinced British India to recognize Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, which enabled Tibetans to enjoy complete domestic autonomy. Being the first to use the term “autonomy” to define Tibet’s internal status in relation to China, the British definition of Tibetan autonomy was rather generous, as reflected in the Shimla Agreement (1913–14):

The meaning of suzerainty and autonomy are implicit in the provisions of the draft agreement. “Suzerainty” was limited by engagements to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet; to abstain from interference in the administration of the country, including selection of the Dalai Lama; not to send troops, officials or colonists into Tibet, except for a high official at Lhasa with an escort of 300 men.<sup>6</sup>

While the KMT officials objected to the British usage of “suzerainty” which they countered with claims to “sovereignty”, they nevertheless had little objection to “autonomy” in a sense similar to the British meaning. As we shall see later, a high-ranking KMT envoy to Lhasa proposed a generous package of high degrees of Tibetan autonomy in 1934. But it was the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) who appropriated, popularized and propagated their concept of “autonomy” the most. Hardly anyone concerned with Tibetan affairs, such as Nehru,<sup>7</sup> had any inkling of what the Communists meant by “autonomy” until much later. While retaining the term most associated with Tibet’s internal status since the turn of the twentieth century, the Communists’ practice of autonomy was much more restricted and centralized than the form British India and the KMT had agreed. This miscarriage of Tibetan autonomy was the first-hand experience of the present Dalai Lama and the Tibetans; they have naturally been highly critical of the Communist concept and practice of autonomy. Yet finally (since 1993) the Dalai Lama too has conceded to the fact that the point of reference and framework for negotiation with post-Deng China has to be

“autonomy”<sup>8</sup> whose quantum would be the subject of future negotiations. This is basically in consonant with growing Confucian consensus.

The convergence of Taiwanese and dissidents’ views are nowhere more clearly manifested than on the issue of Tibetan autonomy. In 1999 Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui published his *Taiwan’s Viewpoint* in which he proposed that China be divided into seven regions, though he mentions only five – Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia and Northeast China.<sup>9</sup> This listing follows the 1994 Chinese dissidents’ proposed draft “Constitution of Federal Republic of China”,<sup>10</sup> which grants special “Autonomous Statehood” to Inner Mongolia, Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Ningxia and Guangxi. President Lee suggests that Beijing should dispel the burden of an over-centralized “Great China”, and allow each region to pursue its own development at its own pace. Such non-ideological visions of a decentralized yet stable China (founded not on imposed ideology and force but on shared prosperity and pride) is shared by the post-1989 dissidents now living in the West as well as by those remaining in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The latter group in particular is showing courage in maintaining their views on Tibet in the face of the Communist authorities. For instance, in February 1998, the veteran Chinese dissident Xu Wenli called the Beijing authorities, in an open letter, to open talks with the Dalai Lama as a first step in granting “greater autonomy” but not independence to Tibet.<sup>11</sup>

In short, we observe a growing consensus among the contemporary as well as historical actors involved in the Tibetan tragic drama. Communists insist on “national regional autonomy” but the Dalai Lama demands “genuine autonomy”. The Chinese dissidents call for “greater autonomy”. Historically, as we might recall, British and KMT officials debated the quantum of autonomy for Tibet (see Chapter 10). If in the past the debate was essentially bilateral, it has now become multilateral and more complex. The contemporary “autonomy” debate seriously questions the Maoist concept and assumptions of “national regional autonomy” premised upon a strong, centralized unitary state in a multi-ethnic republic. Therefore, it seems to be only a matter of time before the Chinese public compels the Maoist power elite to grant Tibet greater autonomy.

In such a context can we construct an anatomy of Tibetan autonomy that may be anticipated in the near future? This is a difficult question, probing the future as it does. However, in order to minimize the speculation required, I shall situate our discussion within a historical context in which such futures were debated and discussed as viable and reasonable alternatives for Tibet. I refer to KMT General Huang Musong’s 1934 proposal on Tibetan autonomy and a similar programme as reflected in the Communist-imposed Seventeen Point Agreement (1951). A comparative analysis of these two relevant texts might reveal the degrees of consensus and differences that existed between the Communist rulers and their predecessors regarding Tibetan autonomy. Such an exercise shows how the

Communists deviated from the historical pattern of indirect rule, thereby creating unprecedented problems for both China and Tibet.

This is where historical scholarship, which characterizes this study, can be fruitfully employed to understand, if not solve, the present problems. I do not think history repeats itself. However, I do believe there may be certain historical junctures and persisting political structures in history which might be congruent with contemporary post-Communist imperatives and emerging situations (Chapter 11).

A few introductory words about the two texts may be in order. From 1912 to 1950 Tibet enjoyed *de facto* independence achieved not through nation-building but due to the fact that China was busy with revolution and civil war. During this period China had no representative in Lhasa nor any presence in Tibet. Then, in December 1933, the XIIIth Dalai Lama passed away. This provided a suitable pretext for the KMT Government to show a Chinese presence and renew their connections with Tibet. General Huang Musong, Deputy Chief of the General Staff was selected for this purpose. Under the pretext of paying posthumous tribute to the late Dalai Lama, he came to hold Sino-Tibetan negotiations on Tibet's status within the Chinese Republic. General Huang's offer was a generous autonomy package which the Tibetan authorities declined, insisting on "complete autonomy".<sup>12</sup>

Our second text is the "Seventeen Point Agreement" of 1951 which was more widely publicized and better known than General Huang's proposal. Soon after their revolutionary victory in 1949, the Communists "liberated" Tibet with a combination of force and deceit. This takeover was legitimated by a Sino-Tibetan Agreement whose main clauses were dictated by the Communists. While it declared, like the KMT, Chinese territorial and political sovereignty over Tibet, the Agreement offered a number of concessions to Tibetans which amounted to a special autonomous status for Tibet within the People's Republic of China (PRC). Such status was not negotiated nor granted to any other minority nationality. If earnestly implemented, this treaty would grant high degrees of autonomy to Tibet.<sup>13</sup>

The KMT proposal begins with two fundamental declarations: Chinese territorial and political sovereignty over Tibet (Table 8.1, A1 and A2 respectively). The Communists make the same claims, but they weave them into an ideological and historicized narrative. The Preamble to the Seventeen Point Agreement states that Tibet has been within the boundaries of China for a long time, and that the "unification of the territory and sovereignty" of the PRC was achieved through "liberation".

Both the KMT (B2a and B2b) and the Communists (Point 14) declare that foreign affairs and the defence of Tibet would be entrusted to the Chinese Central Government. The KMT demand that communications also "shall be managed by the Central Government" (B2c). The Communists did not explicitly make a similar demand; they took it for granted since they fought so hard with Tibetan negotiators for the induction of the People's

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**Table 8.1** Comparative positions of Kuomintang and Communists on Tibetan autonomy

<i>KMT 1934</i>		<i>CCP 1950</i>	
A1	Tibet must be an integral part of the territory of China	Preamble	Tibetan nationality is one of the nationalities with a long history <i>within the boundaries of China</i>
A2	Tibet must obey the Central Government	Preamble	In order that the influences of aggressive imperialist forces in Tibet might be successfully eliminated, the unification of the territory and sovereignty of the PRC accomplished, and national defence safeguarded, in order that the Tibetan nationality and people might be freed and return to the big family of the PRC
B2	In the preservation of the traditional political system, Tibet shall be granted autonomy. Any administrative measures within the authority of the autonomy of Tibet, the Central Government will not interfere with		3. In accordance with the policy towards nationalities laid down in the Common Programme of the CPPCC, the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government 4. The Central authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet
B2a	Foreign affairs shall be directed by the Central Government	14	The Central People's Government shall have centralized handling of all external affairs of the area of Tibet
B2b	National defence shall be planned by the Central Government	8.	Tibetan troops shall be reorganized step by step into the People's Liberation Army and become a part of the national defence force of the PRC
B2C	Communications shall be managed by the Central Government	2.	(Probably implied): The local government of Tibet shall actively assist the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defences
B11	Buddhism shall be respected by all and given protection and its propagation encouraged	7.	The policy of freedom of religious belief laid down in the Common Programme of the CPPCC shall be carried out. The religious beliefs, customs and habits of the Tibetan people shall be respected and lama monasteries shall be protected. The Central government will not effect a change in the income of the monasteries

Liberation Army (PLA) into Tibet, who in due course took charge of communications.

In return for these fundamental political demands, both the KMT and the Communists gave assurances on the protection of Tibetan Buddhism (in which all classes of Tibetan society believe) and on the continuation of the traditional Lamaist polity (in which the Tibetan ruling class had vested interests). However, there is a nuanced difference which reveals a relative sincerity on the part of one party and a hidden agenda on the part of the other. The KMT promises that they will not only respect and protect Tibetan Buddhism and its institutions but will also help in the propagation of that religion (B1). The Communists made similar promises, except their help to propagate Buddhism (Point 7) which was not mentioned.

The KMT described the traditional Tibetan polity as autonomous, and promised that they would not interfere in the functioning of this autonomy (B2). The Communists devoted two articles to this issue. Article 3 stipulates that the Tibetan people have the “right to exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People’s Government”. But Article 4 promises that the said Central Government “will not alter the existing political system in Tibet.”

On the question of Chinese official representation at Lhasa, the KMT and Communists hold similar views. The former state the “Central Government shall grant Tibet autonomy but for the purpose of exercising full sovereignty in an integral part of its territory, the Central Government shall appoint a high commissioner to be stationed in Tibet as the representative of the Central Government, on the one hand to carry out national administrative measures, and on the other to guide the regional autonomy.” This representative’s retinue “shall not exceed twenty-five” (C5). This resembles the *Amban* (imperial resident) office of the Qing dynasty stationed in Lhasa from 1727 to 1913. However, the Communists have a much larger scheme in mind when they declare: “In order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the Central People’s Government will set up a military and administrative committee, and a military area headquarters in Tibet” (Article 15). Later in 1954 when the Dalai Lama visited Beijing, Mao was pleased to make a concession on this score. Instead of a military and administrative committee, Mao decided to set up a more liberal body, the Preparatory Committee for Tibet Autonomous Region (PCTAR).<sup>14</sup> The unstated function of this Committee was not merely to represent China in Tibet; it was also to implement “revolutionary programmes” that would systematically undermine what the Agreement promises to protect.

Where the Communists and the KMT really differ are on the degrees of regional autonomy and national integration which they respectively envisaged for Tibet. As the Seventeen Point Agreement and the post-1959 Chinese policy demonstrate, the Communists enforced an almost total

integration and assimilation of Tibet with China proper. The KMT had no such hidden agenda. This is a crucial difference because the question is no longer whether Tibet is or is not part of China, an embattled debate which was important during the Cold War. Now that the Dalai Lama has recognized Tibet as being part of China since 1979, the critical question shifts to the degrees of autonomy and non-integration which can ensure Tibetan cultural identity and genuine autonomy.

The Communists differ from the KMT in two significant respects: the use of force to enforce their conception of “autonomy” and the hidden Communist agenda, which would undermine Tibetan autonomy and destroy Tibetan identity (see Table 8.2). The Seventeen Point Agreement contains four Articles concerning the PLA’s induction into Tibet, its function, its policy and its expenses (Articles 2, 13, 15 and 16). Chapter 12 shows that the Tibetan Government resisted until the eleventh hour the induction of the PLA into Tibet. The KMT had no intention of using force either to implement its conception of autonomy or to permanently station Chinese forces in Tibet. As their Clause C8 unambiguously states: “Military forces to be stationed on the borders of Tibet for defence purpose shall be despatched by the Government of Tibet as at present. If and when there should be foreign invasion, the Chinese Government shall be consulted on military measures to be taken.”

The KMT proposal is characterized by the conspicuous absence of any hidden agenda. This is in sharp contrast with the Communists who carefully concealed their ideological agenda on Tibet and Tibetans. The Seventeen Point Agreement has three Articles (9, 10 and 11) which carries what I call hidden Communist agenda items on Buddhist Tibet, carefully worded with appeasing ambiguity. Article 11 is typical. It promises: “In matters related to various reforms, there will not be any compulsion on the part of the central authorities.” It should be noted that the Communists carefully and cunningly omitted adding to “various reforms” the adjective “democratic” which might offend the conservative ruling class and religious masses. In fact after March 1959, this was what exactly the Maoists did under the slogan of “democratic reforms”.<sup>15</sup>

The tone of the two texts differs markedly. The KMT text is clear, candid and categorical in its basic political demands of Lhasa. Its promise and assurance of autonomy seems genuine and serious. One gets the impression, while reading the text, that if the Tibetan authorities conceded to Chinese territorial and political sovereignty over Tibet, the KMT would have left Tibet virtually intact to preserve Tibetan cultural identity, and to pursue a kind of development at the pace Tibetans could manage and in forms the Tibetan elite would desire.

On the other hand the tone of the Seventeen Point Agreement is essentially deceptive. The Chinese fundamental claims to territorial and political sovereignty are taken for granted as if they were historically

**Table 8.2** Communist departures from KMT

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*Integration*

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9. The spoken and written language and school education of the Tibetan nationality shall be developed step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.
  10. Tibetan agriculture, livestock-raising, industry, and commerce shall be developed step by step and the people's livelihood shall be improved step by step, in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.
  11. In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will not be any compulsion on the part of the central authorities, the local government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and, when the people raise demands for reforms, they shall be settled by means of consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet.
  2. The local government of Tibet shall actively assist the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defence.
  13. The People's Liberation Army entering Tibet shall abide by all the above-mentioned policies and shall also be fair in all buying and selling and shall not arbitrarily take a needle or thread from the people.
  15. In order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the Central People's Government shall set up a Military and Administrative Committee and a Military Area HQ in Tibet. Apart from the personnel sent there by the Central People's Government, it shall absorb as many local Tibetan personnel as possible to take part in the work. Local personnel taking part in the Military and Administrative Committee may include patriotic elements from the local government of Tibet, various districts and various principal monasteries; the name-list shall be set forth after consultation between the representatives designated by the Central People's Government and various quarters concerned and shall be submitted to the Central People's Government for appointment.
  16. Funds needed by the Military and Administrative Committee, the Military Area HQ and the People's Liberation Army entering Tibet shall be provided by the Central People's Government. The local government of Tibet should assist the People's Liberation Army in the purchase and transport of food, fodder and other daily necessities.
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Source: Tieh-tseng Li, *The Historical Status of Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), pp. 168–9; Liming Song, "General Huang Musong's Mission to Lhasa and the Sino-Tibetan Negotiations in 1934" in Helmut Krasser et al. (ed.), *Tibetan Studies* (Wien: Verlag Osterreichischen, 1997), pp. 903–16; for the text of the Seventeen Point Agreement, see Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet* (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 442–92.



definitive; others are twisted into an ideological narrative in which radical projects for total integration and assimilation are carefully hidden, though hinted. If, therefore, the 1934 KMT proposal basically means what it states, the 1951 Sino-Tibetan Agreement conceals more than it explicitly promises.

In retrospect it appears that the purpose and function of the hidden Communist agenda was not merely to communize Tibetans as an ideologically embraced Maoist mission. It was more to undermine the social-political basis of Tibetan autonomy and identity (1951–59). Since this time, Communist policy and practice have been designed to totally integrate, assimilate and merge the Tibetan people with the Han majority not only politically and economically but also culturally, linguistically, socially. Such an assimilationist policy in the name of “revolution” amounts to a systematic destruction of Tibetan autonomy and the sinicization of Tibetan identity. Tibetans oppose sinicization not because they disrespect Confucian culture but because they love their own culture more, like most ethnic groups.

In order to understand this process of sinicization, we must understand the nature, motive and mechanism of the imposed Han Revolution in Tibet. The “Cultural Revolution” (1966–76), for instance, was not and is not an ethnically neutral revolution in Tibet. It glorified a Han leader (Mao Zedong), propagated his thoughts, heavily sinicized Communism. This we can learn from Chinese sources and the Chinese language, which bring along with the “Cultural Revolution” Chinese language, culture, history, politics and Han ethnicity. Its main target were the chief characteristics of Tibetan cultural identity such as Tibetan Buddhism, culture, thoughts, customs and almost anything connected with traditional Tibet. This is how indirectly but effectively the sinicization of the Tibetans has taken place in Tibet under the banner or pretext of “revolution” and “progress”, which are automatically associated with the Han race – thanks to the Han Revolution. The point is that the Chinese Revolution was a Han affair<sup>16</sup> with which the Tibetan people cannot identify. There was no social basis for it and no mass following in Tibet.<sup>17</sup> The Chinese Revolution was imported to and imposed upon an unwilling Tibet by means of structural violence and psychological warfare. In short, the Chinese Revolution, being a Han phenomenon, benefited mostly the dominant and majority social group in China – the Han people. It has meant to the minority nationalities, especially the Tibetans and Turks, the loss of their community power, loss of control over their local resources, loss of their cultural identity, etc.

The “Cultural Revolution” is now seen by post-Mao China as an avoidable aberration in modern Chinese history. Almost immediately after Mao’s death the “Gang of Four”, including his wife, were arrested and imprisoned. And since 1979, under Deng Xiaoping’s moderate leadership, China has enjoyed a period of liberalization especially in the economic and

social spheres. This is not true of Tibet except perhaps for the economic reforms, although these have so far benefited the Han and Hui migrants more than the native Tibetans. In 1977 the previous Panchen Lama complained in public that Maoist leftism was more rampant in Tibet than in Communist China.<sup>18</sup> In 1998, the Tibet Party secretary, as if to confirm the Lama's observation, declared that in Tibet the critical task before the Party is still "class struggle", not liberal reforms.<sup>19</sup>

It is clear then that in Mainland China, the neo-nationalist power elite feels it safe to allow considerable degrees of individual and social freedom, but that this is not so in Tibet. The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), since 1995, continues to be under a relentless reign of terror directed against the religious community and lay believers. It is characterized by anti-Dharma, anti-Sangha and anti-Dalai Lama campaigns,<sup>20</sup> which China would not have dared to do had it been a case of Islam or Christianity. The Communists have increased their control over the lay community as a whole also, denying them the freedom of religion and movement. Why is Tibet being subjected to re-regimentation while China enjoys relative freedom?

There are two related reasons. The general rule for Party cadres, particularly Tibetan ones, has always been this: it is more prudent to be leftist than rightist or even moderate in Tibet.<sup>21</sup> For to take a rightist or even a moderate position, within the Chinese ideological spectrum, on the sensitive Tibetan question, is to be associated with "splitism", a crime more serious than counter-revolution in Communist China.<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, if the Tibetan cadres and functionaries are impelled by a combination of careerism and opportunism to act more "red" than Mao or Maoists, they are basically following their Han role models within the Party, the local government and within the Public Security Bureau. The ideology of this post-revolution generation of Han cadres in Tibet seems to be primarily Han nationalism, devoid of any Marxian ideals or Confucian values. These Han nationalists' reading of Tibetan history and the problem seems to be as follows: what has kept Tibet apart from China for centuries is not so much due to political will or armed resistance. It has more to do with the non-Confucian Buddhist culture and its unique institutions, which have sustained the spirit of Tibetan social independence. Such Communist-turned-Han nationalist second generation cadres realize that Imperial China had coveted Tibet for centuries but it is the Chinese Communists who have made the imperial dream a reality. Therefore, they seem to reason and conclude that it is the sacred historical duty of the Chinese Communists not only to communize – which in itself is a Chinese phenomenon – but also to sinicize the Tibetans so that the Tibetan problem is resolved once and for all.

Can such a Han project succeed in Tibet? It is unlikely for two reasons. Most Tibetologists would agree that the Tibetan people are possessed by a complex yet coherent culture that is heavily documented and deeply

internalized. And if the Han activists try to erase and destroy such a living cultural complexity, they will face – and are facing today – an organic reaction from the Tibetan people: anti-Chinese nationalism based on a reactivated and revitalized cultural identity that is being driven underground. This is the lesson the post-Deng Chinese leaders can learn from the Soviet implosion. The Russians tried, for almost 80 years, to assimilate the non-Russian minorities into Russian culture, only to find the minorities reacted strongly against this process. This was one of the main causes of the collapse of the Soviet empire.

The causes of the Communist failure in Tibet are rooted in their hidden ideological agenda and over-centralized political structure which are Stalinist in origin and character. When the Party cadres act more leftist in Tibet than in China proper, they are doing what the Party secretly expects them to do in Tibet, and not necessarily what it says. What the Party says is to pay lip service to the Common Programme, the Constitution, the National People's Congress (NPC) resolutions, etc. which are really legitimating cosmetics for the actual hidden agenda on Tibet: sinicization. The Party cadres' and government functionaries' inner attitude and operational code of conduct in Tibet which we have observed, are really calculated responses to the secret Party directives<sup>23</sup> and hidden agenda, which are the real yardstick for their performance.

Anyone, whether Han or Tibetan, who has pursued or advocated a moderate policy based on Tibetan realities, has been victimized by leftists. Deng Xiaoping, who was chiefly responsible for the moderate policy in Tibet in the 1950s, was attacked by the Red Guards for practising “a hundred percent revisionism” in Tibet.<sup>24</sup> Hu Yaobang, who enunciated a moderate Tibet-friendly policy in 1980, was soon disgraced, and “leftist officials exploded fire crackers and drank in celebration”.<sup>25</sup> The Xth Panchen Lama, who defended and fought for the Tibetan people's legitimate religious, civil and economic rights as guaranteed by the Chinese Constitution, was victimized and imprisoned for thirteen years.<sup>26</sup>

There is, therefore, considerable evidence to suggest that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Tibet has found, over the years, its leftist policies and programmes as ideologically legitimate tools through which it cannot only communize but more importantly it can sinicize the Tibetan population. In pursuit of his policy, the Han's burden is carried on by an increasing number of hardcore Han nationalists positioned in the Party, the local government and the Public Security Bureau, all united in their design and determination to sinicize the Tibetans. Sinocization is carried on under Marxist slogans such as “liberation”, “democratic reforms”, “Cultural Revolution”, and now in the name of “development” and “progress”. As argued earlier, such revolutionary changes and programmes are not an ethnically neutral medium of social change. They bring with them the Chinese language, culture, history and Han ethnicity which, by their nature,

have a more enduring effect than a mere revolutionary message. Revolution in China was over by 1976 and globally by 1986 as far as communists are concerned. But revolutionary slogans are still used in Tibet today as a defensible means of sinicization.

I have given some indications of the Communist hidden agenda in operation in Tibet during the past 40 years which differentiate Communist policy from that of the KMT. I shall now try to demonstrate how a centrally controlled political structure called “national regional autonomy” all but denies the actual exercise of autonomy. I begin this discussion with a benefit of doubt.

It appears to me that the intention of early Communist leaders was not Han domination of the minority nationalities – not, at least, in visible, direct ways. Mao Zedong,<sup>27</sup> Zhou Enlai<sup>28</sup> and Liu Shaogxi<sup>29</sup> had all condemned what they called “Han-chauvinism” in no uncertain terms. But they did not seem to have realized the fact that the over-centralized political structures, which they were then creating for the minority nationalities, have built-in tendencies for more than a mere verbal expression of Han-chauvinism. Such centrally controlled and Han dominated “autonomous” structures are, in fact, conducive to Han domination, leading gradually and systematically to the political marginalization of the minorities within the system of national regional autonomy. The Tibetan experience for the past 34 years indicates that the regional autonomous organs are neither self-governing nor self-regulating bodies. Each one of such local organs such as administration, education, economy, culture, etc. is directly linked to and controlled by the relevant Central State sector in Beijing, closely supervised and monitored by the nation-wide Party network that has penetrated every office; and all this awesome centralized policy and operation is backed by the PLA and police. The Tibetan regional government is not an autonomous local self-government; it is an effective extension of the Chinese Central State located in Beijing. This conclusion emerges out of successive Chinese Constitutions and other documents.

Li Weihan, an official authority on minority nationalities, writes, “An autonomous organ is a local organ of state power.”<sup>30</sup> The General Programme on regional autonomy states: “Autonomous organs are the organs of State power of the people in autonomous areas.” Article 40 declares, “The right of interpretation and of amendment of the General Program rests with the central people’s government.”<sup>31</sup> For instance, the NPC is supposed to be the supreme legislative body of the Chinese people and minorities. But the 1978 Constitution contains the following article (21): “The National People’s Congress is composed of deputies elected by the people’s congresses of the provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities, *directly under the Central Government, and by the People’s Liberation Army*”<sup>32</sup> (emphasis added). In 1979 a state publication admitted thus, “The organs of self-government of national autonomous areas are

people's congress and revolutionary committees (replaced by local governments by 1980) and they *are all Chinese local state organs.*"<sup>33</sup> The phrases like "Chinese local state organs" should not be construed as in American or Indian constitutional practice. In the latter case, each province or state has a state government which enjoys greater political autonomy. In the Chinese Communist case, there is only one state and that state is the Central State located in Beijing, whose centralized power is extended to the provinces and autonomous regions in the form of a local people's congress and local government. This appears to be the meaning of an "unitary state".

The limited autonomy given to the TAR by the Chinese Constitution is further undercut by the Party's power monopoly, operative behind<sup>34</sup> the scenes in every department or office of the local government. Most of the high-ranking government officials are concurrently Party members and the few who are not Party members such as the Panchen Lama and Phagpata Geleg Namgyal, have less power within their office than Han Party members whose official rank may be lower and whose role in the local government is not recognized by the Chinese Constitution or other legal documents. Thus, within the vast network of the TAR government, a Chinese Communist Party corollary such as the Party's "United Front Work Department" which is particularly active in Tibet, is implanted at each office to oversee the working of the government and to formulate local policies. According to the Chinese Constitution, the two primary instruments in the exercise of regional autonomy are the people's congress and people's government. But the function of the TAR People's Congress is to rubber-stamp policies already made by Party members in Beijing and Lhasa, while the function of the TAR People's Government is to implement and enforce such decisions. The key positions within the CCP structure in Tibet are dominated by Han cadres. The region's Party First Secretary is the most powerful post in Tibet. Since 1965 when this most powerful post was first created, no Tibetan has ever been appointed to this post:

Thus, power in the TAR flows from non-Tibetan Communists in Beijing to non-Tibetans in the TAR, essentially leaving Tibetans out of the political landscape. The result is that regardless of what power is devolved to the TAR as an autonomous region, *de facto* power remains in the hands of the Communist Party and with non-Tibetans.<sup>35</sup>

The Communist practice of Party power monopoly and the modern Chinese cult of absolute state sovereignty, being congruent to each other, have worked together against Tibetan autonomy. The Maoists have created not only an over-centralized "autonomous" political structure to ensure unitary state sovereignty but also staffed such centralized structures with Han cadres<sup>36</sup> to ensure Chinese political and ideological hegemony in Tibet. In such a situation, regional autonomy is reduced to an obedient implementing agency with no decision-making power of even a local or regional nature.

The most important decisions on Tibet are made in Beijing by the Politbureau members, who externally manifest themselves as the Central Government Ministers; and whatever remaining local autonomy is given to Lhasa, is monopolized by the Communist Party Tibet Work Committee members, who formulate plans and make decisions as well as oversee the implementation process, using local government infrastructures and extra-governmental Party outfits and cells. Regional autonomy resides in finding and devising suitable means and tactics to implement strategic decisions and goals decided by the Chinese Central Government and the Communist Party. The TAR government does not have power even to make economic plans, as Article 118 of the 1982 Chinese Constitution stipulates: "The organs of self-government of national autonomous areas independently arrange for and administer local economic development *under the guidance of state plans*" (emphasis added).

It is in such a context of empty autonomy that the Dalai Lama's call for genuine autonomy in Tibet makes sense in the post-Communist and post-Cold War era. The Lama has offered foreign policy and defence matters to China, the rest – economic, cultural, administration, education, etc. – ought to be delinked from the Central Government, and granted to a local Tibetan government to manage its own internal affairs. This is the generally accepted meaning of autonomy as understood world-wide: "Autonomy is here taken in its original meaning as signifying the power and authority as well as the legitimate capacity, to govern oneself in those matters which form the basis of the community."<sup>37</sup>

Continued centralized control over Tibet's limited autonomy is justified in terms of Han leadership, which has, over the years, degenerated into Han hegemony. Li Wei-han wrote in 1951, "Ethnic regional autonomy is practised within the People's Republic of China under the unified leadership of the central people's government."<sup>38</sup> Wanchu echoes this centrism equated with autonomy when he wrote in 1952, "It means regional autonomy practised within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China under the unified leadership of the central people's government."<sup>39</sup> And the latest law on regional autonomy (1984) defines it as follows: "Regional autonomy of nationalities is practised in areas where minority nationalities are concentrated and where self-governing bodies are established and the right to autonomy is exercised under the uniform direction of the Central Government."<sup>40</sup>

All this constant and strictly centralized control over Tibetan autonomy stems from the Chinese cult of state sovereignty.<sup>41</sup> This political cult was born out of certain historical conditions which are no longer in existence. It arose out of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chinese bitter experience of dealing with the great encroaching Western colonial powers, most of whom have declined in relation to the PRC. We may ask, therefore, whether China's continued paranoia about state sovereignty and national

security is justified in the light of its ever-growing power in Asia and the world?

However, from 1954 to 1978 we encounter this repeated declaration in the Chinese Constitutions: "The People's Republic of China is a unitary multinational state."<sup>42</sup> A Han-determined unitary state within a multinational republic seems to be a contradiction in terms, founded not on ethnic realities but on a misplaced idealism which evaporated a long time ago. Its continued assumption creates problems for multinational China. Our historical survey indicates that the Chinese empire was neither a strong unitary state directly ruling over all its domains, nor was China ever culturally homogeneous except for the Han majority in China proper where it was possible for a unitary state to exist and rule. The current Communist power elite is well aware of this historical fact, as Eugene Kamenka and Alice Tay remark, "Chinese officials have long seen themselves as holding China together and the educated are all too aware of the fact that China has not been a single or unitary state for more than half of its history – not unitary in spoken language, in ethnic origin, in local religion and traditions."<sup>43</sup>

From the perspective of our historical analysis (see Chapters 1–6), the PRC has been the most politically centralized empire in the entire course of Chinese history, using the term empire in a technical sense, though not in an ideological intentionality sense. The fact is all the Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, Turks (and others) – each of whom were separate nations or nationalities with their national histories, cultural identities, autonomous regimes, etc. separate from Imperial China – are all now forcefully merged and ruled by a single Han-dominated state. This is a technical definition of an empire which has reached this – rather sorry – stage from its original revolutionary and utopian assumptions of a multinational ideocracy.<sup>44</sup> The failed Soviet model indicates that all the Russian Revolution resulted in was the Russofication of non-Russian minorities and ever-hardening of the Russian-dominated state, which generated typical contradictions within the empire. Communist China escaped a Soviet-like collapse in 1989 because of its adept handling of the Chinese economy and Han demographic predominance. Its nationality problems in Tibet, Xianjiang, Inner Mongolia, etc., stemming largely from over-centralized control and Han domination, are far from resolved. It is in such a context that a number of Chinese dissident intellectuals in 1994<sup>45</sup> and President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan in 1999<sup>46</sup> and the Dalai Lama in 1988<sup>47</sup> have pragmatically proposed a federal system for China in which major minorities would enjoy autonomous statehood. For the Communist concept of multinational ideocracy is no longer tenable in the post-Communist era; and classical ideal of empire was universally condemned as anachronistic a long time ago. Therefore, there now seems to be no alternative before the Chinese Communist empire but a federal system.

Federation is the alternative to empire. It is this because the power wielded in a federation is predominantly consensual while that of an empire is coercive.<sup>48</sup>

If the present Communist leaders want to find a satisfactory solution and yet retain the present extent of the PRC's territory, 60 per cent of which belongs to the minority nationalities, federation may be the answer. Whether the PRC devolves itself into a federation or does so under pressure is difficult to predict at the moment. But there is no question that the question of autonomy – its enlargement and actualization – might be put on the world agenda in the early twenty-first century. For the general consensus seems to be autonomy as a basic point of reference and framework within which the Tibetan Question may be resolved in the near future. It enjoyed historical precedence in Anglo-Chinese negotiations, considerable Confucian concurrence, as reflected in the imperial policy of indirect rule, and growing international consensus. Currently both the Communist rulers and the Dalai Lama, since 1993, use the term but with different meanings which need to be bridged and negotiated through dialogue. In this respect the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan intelligentsia and their supporters<sup>49</sup> have given considerable thought to the question of genuine Tibetan autonomy.

Finally, in this chapter, I present a cross-section of Tibetan opinions on different aspects of Tibetan autonomy, based on informal interviews and discussions with Tibetan exiles and with recent arrivals from Tibet, conducted during the summer months from 1994 to 1999.<sup>50</sup>

*Political dimension* Most of the respondents accept the political dimension of Tibetan autonomy as specified and defined by the Dalai Lama in his Strasbourg Statement (1988). In that document, the Lama concedes Tibet's foreign policy and defence to China; otherwise the region retains complete domestic autonomy (*rang-srid rang-skyongs*) in "association with the PRC". He envisages future new polity to be "a self-governing democratic political entity founded on law by agreement of the people". His vision of a future democratic Tibet, "with a popularly elected chief executive, a bicameral legislative branch and an independent judicial system",<sup>51</sup> seems to be in the right democratic direction and in tune with the current and likely future global trends. At the present time, the Communists might not agree to such a democratic structure, however, I feel it has a good chance of being accepted, with due modifications of course, in the near future.

As we might recall, both the CCP and the KMT had demanded Chinese political and territorial sovereignty over Tibet, whereas the Dalai Lama's 1988 document vaguely leaves it as being "in association with the PRC", which does not satisfy Communist negotiators. There is, therefore, an urgent need for both the Chinese supreme leader and the Dalai Lama to negotiate on the question of Chinese political and territorial sovereignty over Tibet.



Historically, the Chinese insistence on their territorial-political sovereignty over Tibet is not backed by history; it is more a function of the rise of Chinese power in modern times. As our historical analysis of Sino-Tibetan relations shows (Chapters 1–7), the emperors of the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties may be said to have been “ceremonial sovereigns”<sup>52</sup> of Buddhist Tibet, essentially in their capacity as patrons and protectors of Tibetan Buddhism and its institutions. To translate this “ceremonial sovereignty” into hard-boiled modern political and territorial sovereignty is inaccurate and unfair. Some respondents are critical of the Dalai Lama’s concession of security and foreign affairs to the Communists. There is also unanimity among Dharamsala Tibetan exiles about the inclusion of Kham and Amdo (Eastern Tibet) into the TAR so that all Tibetans can enjoy the benefits of genuine Tibetan autonomy.<sup>53</sup>

*Economic dimension* It is surprising that while the economic policies of the provinces and autonomous regions of the PRC have been decentralized since the early 1980s, the TAR’s economic policy is still decided by the Central Government.<sup>54</sup> The respondents unanimously feel that the Tibetan people ought to be given complete control over Tibetan local resources including mining rights. In particular, fresh arrivals from Kham and Amdo stress the importance of mining rights being placed in Tibetan hands. The educated younger generation in India place greater emphasis on economic development and education than on religion and culture, a clear departure from their parents’ priorities.

The type of economic development preferred by most respondents seems to be sustainable development supplemented by Chinese economic assistance, border trade, tourism and related service industries. Their preferred economic models range from a mixed economy to a free market.<sup>55</sup>

The overall impression one gains from the respondents is that local resources must be left within Tibet, to be exploited on a sustainable basis by the Tibetan people and to be gradually developed by the indigenous people (and others) at the pace and in forms Tibetans feel comfortable with. They all deplore the current practice of internal colonialism in Tibet.

*Self-administration* Communist rule in Tibet has been the most carefully crafted Han domination in the entire history of Sino-Tibetan relations, as we have seen. All the important decision-making powers were entrusted to PLA generals who concurrently held top Party positions (1959–68) and ruled Tibet. Even now important posts with crucial decision-making powers, from county-level and above are held by Han cadres. A semblance of “local government” is fashioned by Chinese-educated Tibetan collaborators most of whom are given ceremonially visible posts. The Tibetan majority have no say in the administration of their region. It was in such a context that Hu Yaobang, after his 1980 visit to Central Tibet, proposed that two-thirds of civil servants must be held by Tibetans within two to three years.<sup>56</sup>

The majority of respondents, especially those in the Dalai Lama's exiled administration, express confidence, will and a capacity for self-administration. Their reasons are that historically Tibet has experienced self-rule and self-administration throughout most of its recorded history; that the Dalai Lama's administration at Dharamsala (India) has demonstrated, during the past 40 years, the Tibetan capacity to do so, and even to face complex problems in the modern world. The older generation of respondents seem to put the onus on the educational qualifications and administrative competence of the new generation. The overall impression I get is that the average Tibetan wants a minimum of Chinese interference in the administration of their region. This is, as we might recall, in keeping with the Chinese tradition of indirect rule. As one fresh arrival from Eastern Tibet put it rhetorically, "If the Chinese who know practically nothing about Tibet or Tibetans can rule Tibet, why can't we Tibetans rule our own country?"<sup>57</sup>

*Religious freedom* In China proper religious freedom is much wider and more real than in Tibet. In Tibet the Communists are currently conducting a religious persecution campaign directed against the Dalai Lama, the monks and the nuns.<sup>58</sup> The formal ideological justification for anti-Buddhist attitude is provided by Marx's bias against religion. However, the Chinese Communist reason is more specific. They have discovered that the popular practice of Tibetan Buddhism is somehow bound up with what they call "splitism". It forms the core of Tibetan cultural identity that differentiates Tibetans from Han Chinese; it is the spirit that resists continuing Chinese occupation and domination. If the Communists have discovered the relation between Tibetan Buddhism and nationalism, the answer they have proposed in the form of religious persecution is actually counter productive. If the co-relation between Tibetan Buddhism and nationalism is correct, then the current Communist anti-Dharma, anti-Sangha and anti-Dalai Lama campaign is actually accentuating and activating the Tibetan nationality problem, the very phenomenon the Communists want to prevent. The religious persecution increases the Tibetan religious feelings and identity consciousness, driving them underground, thereby deepening and sharpening the cultural foundations of "separatism", ready to burst out at any opportune moment. Such an eventuality is good neither for the Tibetans nor the Chinese.<sup>59</sup>

The Communists' hope of eliminating the Tibetan spirit and identity is most unlikely to succeed, as the Soviet Union's Stalinist experiment on the merger and assimilation of religious minorities for 80 years demonstrates. Tibetan religion-induced nationalism may be largely a reaction to Han hegemony and Han homogenizing tendencies on the plateau. The answer, I believe, is not direct political action in the form of religious persecution which is not in keeping with the subtlety and indirection of the Confucian political culture. The separation of religion from nationalism (politicization

of religion) can be achieved, paradoxically, by granting full religious freedom and by restoring indirect rule by the Dalai Lama. For only he can moderate and control Tibetan cultural nationalism directed against the Chinese. Religious persecution, on the surface, might seem to have swept aside the nationality problem but, deep inside, it increases and sharpens the contradictions.

Therefore, with regard to religious freedom, there is consensus among the silent majority – peasants and nomads in Tibet and sweater-sellers in India. To them Buddhism is their living tradition and way of life; and the Communists' denial of religious freedom amounts to a denial of the essence of life as they understand it. A respondent nun who had recently left Central Tibet explained it in this way: "I do not want electricity and other colourful things the Chinese have introduced. I want full freedom to practise my religion without which I feel my life is empty and meaningless."<sup>60</sup>

However, both in exile and in Tibet, a younger generation of Tibetans is beginning to emerge. In India they are the Dalai-centric secularists graduating from Tibetan schools and colleges. They tend to single out the Dalai Lama as the anchor of their freedom struggle and the essence of their culture. They emphasize Tibetan language and literature, and not so much Tibet's religious traditions and other lamas. They accept religious freedom with an emphasis on *freedom*.

Secondly, the five decades of Communist rule has unintentionally brought about in Tibet a new breed of Chinese-educated Tibetan nationalists.<sup>61</sup> This group, though small in number, is a significant new development in Tibetan social history. It is evidence of an emerging social fact that those young Tibetans who receive Chinese education via a Chinese medium do not necessarily become sinicized and pro-Chinese. The Chinese education has enabled them to critically and secretly rediscover Tibetan history, society and culture in a neo-colonial context.<sup>62</sup> To this small elite group, religion is the main reason for the loss of Tibet's independence and failure to enter the modern world.<sup>63</sup> Religious freedom is unimportant to the Chinese-educated Tibetan nationalists.

Meanwhile the silent majority in Tibet continues to suffer religious persecution, which concerns me greatly. The current Communist determination to kill the Tibetan spirit and eliminate its identity might have more to do with flawed Marxist assumptions and utopian beliefs. It is high time now, after the collapse of Communist systems almost everywhere else, that the CCP give up its dogmatic truth claim that only the Party members know what is good for the Tibetan people. More specifically some of its early leaders proclaimed on several occasions that their mission in Tibet, as Marxists, was to help the common people, and that the Party dearly loves the people. Those living in the post-Communist era should now tell the Chinese Communists – who still appear to be prisoners of their ideology – that the best way to "love" the silent majority of Tibetans is to, at least,

respect the religious beliefs which they hold, as the previous Panchen Lama observed, as clearly as their own life.<sup>64</sup> Secondly, the Chinese Communist leaders must give up their Marxist project of “changing the world” (i.e. Tibet) in the Communist image. The universal collapse of Communist systems has rendered such a radical project meaningless – neither feasible nor desirable. And if any Communist Party is still clinging to such Communist dogmas in the name of Marx or Mao, it does so with an ulterior motive of destroying minority identity and autonomy under the banner of a Communism that is no longer alive.

*Education* There is one area of agreement among all sections of Tibetan society – education. Even among the traditional learned class (such as Geshe Sonam Rinchen and Khensur Thubten Phuntsog)<sup>65</sup> there is an acute realization that their generation’s failure was modern education which they all now emphasize as the “future seeds for a modern Tibet”. And we have observed how the older lay respondents emphasize the importance of modern education for those who want to govern Tibet in the future.

However, there is some disagreement about the medium of instruction and curriculum content. Those with a Tibetan educational background such as Rabsal and Karma Monlam feel the medium of instruction should be Tibetan,<sup>66</sup> and that education should be entirely in Tibetan hands. Others, who are in the majority, think that although Tibetan can be the medium of instruction, we should also learn Chinese as a link language along with English and Hindi. With regard to the school curriculum, most respondents stress equally a modern liberal education, and science and technology.

I have submitted before you my findings and feelings on a subject that concerns the Tibetan people, their historical neighbours and also the international community. The task is made easier by my direct confrontation with reality, with the hope that out of such reality might emerge a truly autonomous and neutralized Tibet that resolves the strategic contradiction and constant tension between China and India, autonomy that is congruent with the historical pattern of Sino-Tibetan relations, which is consonant with current Confucian consensus and with the Tibetan people’s limited aspiration for greater autonomy, so that all earnest supporters of the Tibetan cause around the globe, including Chinese, Indians and Westerners might feel proud that they have all helped to create a just and equitable autonomous Tibetan society in the heart of Asia.

We began our discourse on Tibetan autonomy by noting the good intentions of early Chinese leaders. Good intentions do not necessarily bring about good or intended results, unless such positive intentions are given institutional expression in the form of enforceable legislation and concrete state policy. Unfortunately, the good intentions and pious sentiments of Chinese leaders were not and are not institutionalized in

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Tibet. The result is rampant Han hegemony and homogenization which were apparently not intended by Mao, Zhou or Deng.

The success of any revolution is measured in terms of the extent to which democratic ideals are institutionalized so that long after the revolutionary fervour has evaporated, democratic and humane ideals, so institutionalized, will continue to shape citizens' public lives. Mao's Revolution was, unfortunately, not of this truly democratic type. The only institution it has produced is the Communist Party which, even though it has forcefully unified Greater China, has, in the process, destroyed Chinese civil society, which is the social structure of freedom. Deng Xiaoping's revolution is a definite improvement, and those post-Communist leaders who wish to continue this revolution will do well to give institutional expression to democratic, humane and liberal values of the Chinese public-in-the-making. This, of course, includes Tibet as well so that democratic institutions might rule a truly autonomous Tibet.



## Part II

# China and Tibet in War and Peace

*“No country can exist without frontiers. A country without frontiers is a country that has perished. Therefore, if Liang-chou were to be lost, then the metropolitan area would become the frontier; if the metropolitan area were to be lost, then Hung-nung would become the frontier; if Hung-nung were to be lost, then Lo-yang would become the frontier. If we were to take this to its conclusion, even were we to withdraw to the eastern seaboard, there should still be a frontier.”*

Wang Fu in 110 AD<sup>1</sup>

*“It would be madness for us to cross the Himalayas and occupy it [Tibet]. But it is important that no one else should seize it; and it should be turned into a sort of buffer between the Indian and Russian Empires. If Russia were to come down to the big mountains she would at once begin intriguing with Nepal; and we should have a second Afghanistan on the north ... What I mean is that Tibet itself and not Nepal must be the buffer state that we must endeavour to create.”*

Lord Curzon in 1901<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Yu Ying-Shih, “Han foreign relations”, in *The Cambridge History of China* Vol. 1 (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 260.





## Chapter 9

# The Warrior Kings of Tibet and the Tang Dynasty

Apart from the Dunhuang documents discovered at the beginning of this century, there has been little objective data on the ancient history of Tibet. This makes our discussion of Tibetan kingship, which precedes the Buddhist era in Tibet, somewhat problematic. The problem is compounded by the Buddhization of ancient Tibetan history that took place during the Buddhist Renaissance in Tibet, 842–1419.<sup>1</sup> Indeed our conventional view of Tibetan kings, including the myth of *chos-rgyal*, has come down to us from what might be called the lamaist historiography that flourished during the period. A full treatment of the development of this myth is beyond the scope of this paper; our main concern is with *btsan*. However, the following points may be briefly noted, which give us some idea of how this development might have occurred.

It seems ironic, although it is true, that Buddhist Renaissance took place during what Tibetan historians call *sil-bu' dus*, a veritable dark age that began with the fall of *chos-rgyal* or the Religious Kings in the 830s and ended with the rise of the Sakya Lamas (*Bla mas*)<sup>2</sup> in the 1230s. This period witnessed not only a renewal but a renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet: the four major sects of Tibetan Buddhism as we know them today took shape during this period; most of the great Lama scholars wrote their monumental work during this period; and of course, most of the translation of Sanskrit works into Tibetan that fuelled the Renaissance was undertaken during this period.<sup>3</sup>

Under the impact of such an intellectual revolution, a new conception of history emerged: *Chos-'byung*.<sup>4</sup> And although the old conception of history (*rgyal-rabs* or royal chronicles) did survive, it is *Chos-'byung* that predominated the quasi-historical work. What is *Chos-'byung*? Usually rendered as a history of religion, it means now (in Tibetan) *Chos* or (in Sanskrit) *Dharma* and it came into being in Tibet. Most of the authors of this genre were Lama-scholars whose pious, partisan preoccupation was

not history *per se*, religious or otherwise, but the progress of Chos. From then on, history could not be a record simply of what men did, but of what they did for or against chos. While recording what they called *bstan-pa sñadar* (233–842 AD), or the spread of Buddhism under the royal patronage, the Chos-‘byung authors established an invidious contrast between pro- and anti-Buddhist forces. The former, such as Sron-btsan Sgampo, were glorified; and the latter, such as Glang Dharma, were vilified. In short, ancient Tibetan history was largely rewritten in the light of Buddhism and in terms of Buddhist rationale during the Buddhist Renaissance. The myth of chos-rgyal is an intellectual legacy of this period.

A new theory of kingship was constructed, and the theogenic origins of early kings were reinterpreted. Thus when Gnya-Khri Btsan-Po, the first known king, pointed his fingers towards the sky indicating where he came from to the Tibetan Bonpos – to whom sky had a religious significance – it was later interpreted by Chos-‘byung authors that he meant India; he might after all have pointed towards the sky above India! Hence, theogenic origin of Tibetan royalty was traced to the Buddhist Mecca – India. Asoka, the Indian emperor reputed for his patronage of Buddhism, was projected as the model king for all Buddhists.<sup>5</sup> Among the Tibetan kings Sron-btsan Sgampo was invariably called chos-rgyal *par excellence* in most works of the Chos-byung genre. Chos-rgyal is the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit term *Dharmaraja*, meaning a ruler who rules not only in accordance with the holy doctrine, *but* also who patronizes Dharma. This view of kingship indeed became an established orthodoxy in both intellectual traditions, chos-‘byung and rgyal-rabs.

That such a myth should have developed is not surprising when we recall the early vicissitudes of Buddhism in Central Tibet: the mixed reception at the court; then its disappearance from the centre and diffusion in the peripheries as a result of pro-Bon, anti-Buddhist forces; and finally its triumphant resurgence after 982 AD – gradually pervading all Tibet. For any adherent to write about the persecution of one’s belief system is hard enough; and to an author of a chos-‘byung work it seems to be his duty to exaggerate royal patronage of, and Bon opposition to, Buddhism. This can be seen in the dialogues of Tibetans who were sent to invite gurus from India during the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>6</sup>

Included in the enormous amount of translation work done during this period was *sulekha*, a kind of epistle, usually addressed to kings and other eminent persons. One of the main purposes of such epistles is to gently and politely indoctrinate a king so that he may be compassionate to his subjects and generous to the Sangha. The overall didactic effect of such *sulekhas* was, then, to idealize the Buddhist conception of kingship – namely, that of *Dharmaraja* or chos-rgyal. It seems to me that the translation of his famous epistles to Raja (King) Gautamiputra, to Raja Satavahana, and so on, played no small role in the popularization of the chos-rgyal idea<sup>7</sup> in Tibet.

A couple of questions remain unanswered, and must remain so until thorough research is done, but there is no harm in raising the questions now. Who was the first Lama scholar or author of any chos-'byung work to call the Tibetan kings, especially Sron-btsan Sgampo, a chos-rgyal, and when did this occur? As it usually happens in Tibetan literary movements, the first known text which christened *btsan* kings as chos-rgyal is an anonymous work called *Bka chem ka-kholma* written in 1049 AD.<sup>8</sup> It is believed to be Sron-bstan Sgamba's death-bed testimony. The date is quite credible in the context of Tibetan history, that is 207 years after the fall of the last *btsan* king. It appears that since the 1040s the concept of chos-rgyal gained wide currency and social circulation so as to make it a powerful myth that captured the Tibetan imagination. This means that the concept of chos-rgyal was invented with Buddhist fuel after 842 AD, prior to which date all the warrior kings were called, behaved and acted like *btsan*.

In the literature on the traditional Sino-Tibetan relationship it is argued that the Sakya Lamas and the Dalai Lamas conceived the Mongol chief (Yuan Emperor) and Manchu Chief (Qing Emperors) as chos-rgyal. We have observed that by 1271 'Phags-Pa was calling Khubilai Khan, a chos-rgyal, but 24 years later, in 1295, 'Phags-Pa becomes the first Lama to receive that title from the Yuan Emperor.<sup>9</sup> His full title was: 'Gro-Mgon chos-rgyal 'Phagspa, which may be translated as the "Lord of sentient beings, the King of Dharma, the Noble One."<sup>10</sup> But it was the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) that popularized the title: it conferred the title of chos-rgyal to eight eminent Lamas.<sup>11</sup> The Chinese message was subtle but unmistakable: the most eminent Lama of each epoch was appointed by the Mandate of Heaven as the chos-rgyal of what Chinese documents vaguely refer to as the "Western realm". Tibet by the Ming period had of course become a fully Buddhist country. Thus, in Sino-Tibetan usage, the term chos-rgyal acquired two meanings. When the Tibetan lamas called Mongol and Manchu emperors chos-rgyal, they meant in the Indic sense of "a king who rules in accordance with Dharma" and who patronizes the Sangha. On the other hand when the latter honoured the former with the title of chos-rgyal, they meant the highest authority (i.e. king) on spiritual matters.

But so far there is no evidence to prove that any of the Tibetan kings ever called himself or was called by his contemporaries chos-rgyal. We search in vain for the term in any of the ancient historical records available today in Dunhuang documents<sup>12</sup> or in the ancient edicts and treaty documents that Hugh Richardson has published over the years.<sup>13</sup> Nor has Haarh found the term in his lengthy study of the "history of ancient Tibet and the origin and nature of its kings" (1969).<sup>14</sup> The myth of chos-rgyal then appears to be a post-Glang-Dharma phenomenon. It was an honorific title conferred posthumously to those Tibetan kings who were *believed* to have patronized Buddhism by the authors of chos-'byung works and by other Lama scholars in gratitude. The surprising fact is that this myth has not only survived in

Tibetan literature to this day: it has found its way into the Western scholarship on Tibet as well.<sup>15</sup> But neither the concept of Tibetan kingship nor the magnitude of the Buddhist revolution in Inner Asia can be fully understood without questioning this myth first.

The fact that terms like *btsan* or *gnam* have lost the cultural and political connotations they once possessed during the royal period is indicative of the magnitude of revolutionary change brought about by the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet. *Btsan* is today an antiquated word (*sgra-rnyingpa*) no longer current in the Tibetan language. *Gnam*, for example, does not mean “heaven”, the connotation it probably had in pre-Buddhist Tibet; it simply means “sky” – purely a technical word. Tantric gods and goddesses do not reside in abodes way above the sky, where some of the Lha (gods) of the pre-Buddhist native religion were believed to be residing. Tibet since 842 AD underwent a cultural revolution<sup>16</sup> of the highest magnitude. In the process meanings of certain metaphysical and political terms were changed or lost altogether. Such is the fate of *btsan*. Today we need to close that conceptual gap in order to appreciate political and cultural development in Tibet.

If one looks at the list of the names of the Tibetan kings published in the *Tibetan Review* (March 1973), one is at once struck by the recurrent word *btsan* (or sometimes *tsan* which is phonetically the same) that almost all of them share in common,<sup>17</sup> either as part of their first name as in Sron-btsan Sgampo or as part of their last name in Gnya-Khri Btsan-Po. And those were the names by which the kings were known in all of the ancient documents available today.

The Chinese who have kept better records than most other Asian peoples are clear on this point. A Song chronicler states that “Tibet’s king is called *btsanpo*”. A modern Chinese historian in a work published in 1903 reiterated the same fact. A contemporary Communist historian in a work published in 1965 has more to say on the subject:

Btsan means “a strong, powerful he-man.” This is a tribute to Gnya-Khri Btsan-ko, Ever since he became the overlord of six tribes, he was known as Btsan-Po. At the time of Gnya-Khri Btsan-Po, society began to be differentiated into higher and lower, and in due course social classes were formed. Hence, the need for a king. Gnya-Khri Btsan-Po’s successors retained the name Btsan. . . . Sometimes fairy tales contain actual truth: (The story that) Gnya-Khri Btsan-Po descended from heaven to earth actually indicates (Tibet’s) historical transition from an epoch of classless society to a class society.<sup>18</sup>

This definition of *btsan* is highly<sup>19</sup> suggestive. Stripped of the class analysis dressing, the author describes the political conditions and circumstances under which the first Tibetan king came to power as the leader of the six tribes. He cites some Tibetan sources which state that “The stronger became the leader; and the weak were forced to be subjects.” In an almost

Hobbesian political jungle which seems to have approximated the pre-Gnya-Khri Btsan-Po Tibet, force or strength might well have been the critical determinant of political domination.

*Btsan*, however, is not co-terminus with the term “king” as the Chinese historians seem to imply. Although the fact that almost all the Tibetan kings called themselves *btsan* in one way or the other might tempt one to equate it with “king”, it was not exclusive to the king even as a royal title. For example, one of Khri-Srong Lde-Btsan’s queens had four sons with the surname Btsan. Nor was the name confirmed to the royalty alone; we come across the names of ministers, of generals and of ambassadors to China with the suffix *btsan* to their names.<sup>20</sup> Etymologically it indicated only physical prowess, which was a necessary attribute of leadership in a Hobbesian political situation. Through habitual usage the term came to be almost co-terminus with “king” as applied to the rulers of pre-842 Tibet, although the Tibetan language does have a word for king, *rgyal-po*, a common male name among Tibetan-speaking peoples; but the same can hardly be said of *btsan*, which again goes to show how far the Tibetan people have travelled from the path of violence to that of non-violence (*ahimsa*).

Although the Tibetan kings represented the embodiment of power in its more primitive form – force – and although force was indeed the practical basis of their rule, it seems they could not do so on a long-term basis without some “justifications which attempt to make use of force legitimate”. As Reinhard Bendix observes “wherever power is vigorously pursued and exercised, ideas of legitimacy tend to develop to give meaning, re-enforcement, and justification to that power”.<sup>21</sup> The theogenic myth about Gnya-Khri Btsan-Po’s descent from the “country of gods” above the sky to rule the six tribes in Tibet marked not only an historical transition from primitive communism to elementary class society; more significantly it points to the political need for an extra-human sanction for legitimate rule. This is particularly true in a near-Hobbesian political situation which seemed to have been the case in pre-Btsan Tibet. Physical prowess was crucial and critical in defeating the less strong; but, after that, physical prowess alone would probably not be adequate to *maintain* one’s dominance over others, because there is always the possibility that someone else might appear on the political scene stronger than a Gnya-Khri Btsan-Po. A ruler in a pre-political era must claim some extraordinary power exclusive to him. In Tibet, that claim took the form of divine descent and the possession of magical power (*Phrul*). This was a way to keep Gnya-Khri Btsan-Po a step ahead of others who might be equally or even stronger than he was. Once he was declared to be a grandson of God, the King presiding somewhere above, the cloudy sky, Gnya-Khri made himself extraordinary; *phrul-gyi lha-btsanpo*, most ferocious deity with power. He claimed charismatic power. Thus he and six of his successors were believed to have “returned to the sky-cord”.<sup>22</sup> According to one version, Gnya-Khri Btsan-Po

was appointed king on the mistaken belief that he came from the sky when he actually meant India from where he had escaped. Similarly when Tho-Tho-ri Hnyan-Btsan (605–649/650) mysteriously received the first Buddhist text, he had to fool his Bonpo Ministers that the holy book had “descended from the sky”.<sup>23</sup>

The place of *gnam* (sky) in the cosmology of the pre-Buddhist native religion must be understood in order to appreciate the symbolic significance of the theogenic origins of Tibetan kings. What we call Bon today was then known to the believers as the “Way of Heaven and Earth” (Gnam-Sa’a Lugs). The space above the sky was considered the abode of gods (or simply “heaven”, to borrow the Christian terminology). In this respect, the ancient Tibetans shared something in common with the Sinic world where *tian* (heaven) played such a significant role in the Confucian cosmology. Early pre-Buddhist Tibetans had a simple three tiered cosmology, in which *lha* (gods) situated in the sky (*gnam*); *btsan* situated in between sky and earth; and *glu* below the earth. It appears the warrior kings claimed to be a fusion of *lha* and *btsan*.

In actual fact, none of the kings had the audacity or folly to claim that he was a son or grandson of god. Instead most of them used Phrul-Gyi Lha Btsan-Po as their formal title. The first syllable is intriguing. Does it mean the same as sprul, from which the Buddhist term for reincarnation Sprul-Sku is coined? After reproducing in his Bod-Kyi Srid-Don Rgyal-Rabs a number of documents dating from the *Btsan* era, Shakabpa translates the ancient word ‘phrul as sprul<sup>24</sup> for the modern reader. If this interpretation is correct, then the Tibetan kings claimed to be reincarnations of some god (to be specified later). But the root syllable ‘phrul, unlike *btsan*, has been pretty much in use over the years. When the pre-industrial Tibetans had to create a new vocabulary to meet the modern scientific needs, ‘phrul became handy. From it the term for machine or machinery is derived ‘phrul-‘khor, literally meaning “magical wheel”. But the same word is used to express an ancient idea deeply rooted in Tibetan psychology: magic (rgyu-‘phrul). The same word is used to express supposedly a new concept when Buddhism was introduced: miracle (‘zu-‘phrul). Again the same word is used to express what I might call for want of better term – the lighter shade of reincarnation – *manifestation*. In other words, the term ‘phrul not only survived the Buddhist Revolution; it is revitalized by Buddhism. *Btsan*, on the other hand, came to be used only in one sense as far as current usage is concerned: a powerful demon in the indigenous religious system, and hence, not much used. It was revived only after the Communist takeover in 1950.

Sarat Chandra Das in his *Tibetan-English Dictionary* gives two meanings to the term *btsan*.<sup>25</sup> First, “a species of demon, inhabiting a given locality”, and Guisepe Tucci<sup>26</sup> adds that it is one of the most powerful deities in the hierarchy of the indigenous religion. Its second meaning, probably metaphorically deriving from the first, is mighty,

powerful, strong, violent, and Das adds the following historical note: “It is said that while Tibet was under early monarchy the laws were enforced with greatest severity and rigor, and because the kings administered them so well they were called Tsan (Btsanpo).”

It is the second meaning that the *Tibetan–Chinese Dictionary*<sup>27</sup> gives to *btsan*. It is, therefore, interesting to note that after the so-called “liberation” of Tibet when the Chinese Communists had to create a new political language for their ideology, they coined the Tibetan equivalent of “imperialism” deriving from Btsan: literally meaning the ideology of a forceful/powerful nation.<sup>28</sup>

The usual formal title by which the Tibetan kings were known in contemporary documents was ‘Phrul-Gyi Lha-Btsan-Po,<sup>29</sup> which may be rendered as the “Manifestation of god or magically-powered god-king, the Most Powerful”. Did they claim to be a manifestation of god? A king with magical powers? A sort of magician-king? There is some *explicit* evidence to indicate that the kings did claim some magical power, the idea being that they were not only physically stronger than others but had some power that others did not possess. Such is the story of Gnya-Khri’s successor, Dri-Gum, who could not be challenged by others unless he divested his magical powers.<sup>30</sup>

There is less explicit evidence, however, to show that the kings claimed to be a reincarnation of a god; we can infer such a claim only from their theogenic origins, from the myth about the first six kings having returned to the sky, etc. If they did implicitly make such claims at all, I would like to hypothesize and associate the first meaning of ‘Phrul (i.e. emanation) with the first meaning of *btsan*. That is, as every Tibetan knows, *Btsan* is one of the most powerful deities of the folk religion. *Btsan* is depicted by a Thangka-painter ‘*Btsan*’ as a fierce-looking warrior with a garment that looks like a suit of armour.<sup>31</sup> Were the ‘Phrul-Gyi Lha Btsan-Po the reincarnation of this fierce-looking, warrior-like deity?

Our discussion of *btsan* should not be construed as an abstraction without material basis. In what follows we shall briefly describe (a) early images of the Tibetan people; (b) the organization of society; (c) general law and military discipline; (d) Tibet’s expansion into the neighbouring countries from the seventh to the ninth centuries. All of these point towards the direction of *btsan*, not towards chos-rgyal.

The portrait of the Tibetan people during the *Btsan* period that emerges out of early Chinese and Tibetan records is one of warriors. The Song annals depict them as always wearing swords and arrows. The latter disappeared but the sword-wearing tradition among Tibetan men continued until April 1959. The Sui annals, while recording a “tribute mission”, registered Tibet as a “women’s nation” (nuer gao), being ruled by a queen and an assistant queen because men were engaged in military activities.<sup>32</sup> How widespread and how long such a supposedly matriarchal society lasted is not known. But what is interesting is the military

motivation and military criteria apparent in such a social structure. A similar organizing principle is apparent in the even earlier Chinese descriptions of Tibet: the young were held in high esteem; the old were not. "Those who are strong are made leaders" we read, and again, "and the weak were forced to be subjects".<sup>33</sup> A Song historian describes something that might be termed "warrior ethic":<sup>34</sup>

Those who died in the battlefield were honoured; those who died in bed natural death were contemptuously treated as if no purpose served; and those who were defeated or ran away from the battlefield were put to shame by tying a fox's tail on their heads, suggesting that they were as cunning and cowardly as the fox.

In other words military prowess was both the criteria for leadership as well as a source of social prestige. This warrior ethic and warrior spirit pervades the whole of Gesar<sup>35</sup> epic which Tibetans believe actually happened in history and which Shakabpa locates in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This warrior spirit survived the Buddhist Revolution to a considerable degree, especially among the Khampas. This is not surprising. Historically too it was mostly the people of what we today broadly call Kham who did most of the fighting against China in the seventh and eighth centuries. As late as 1666 the Chinese found certain tribes in Kham as people who "delight in wars and conflicts, not hesitant to die".<sup>36</sup>

Both the Tibetan and Chinese sources<sup>37</sup> confirm that the entire country was organized on a war footing: (a) the entire country was organized into four major and four minor regiments (ru); (b) each regiment was broken down into groups of one hundred and one thousand soldiers; (c) effective control was exercised through the army unit of one hundred soldiers (rgya-shog), with each regiment commanded by a general, assistant general and a military police chief; (d) *the military chiefs were also heads of civil administration*; (e) the four regiments had a total of 4,624,000 soldiers. All this indicates a very complex military organization and an effective chain of command operative during the *Btsan* period.

The distinguishing features of the *btsan* legal system were the threat or actual use of (a) force and (b) magic in the form of swearing-in ceremonies. Indeed the threat or actual use of force was always present in the exercise of authority. The conclusion of a treaty with China or of a swearing-in allegiance ceremony was always marked by an animal sacrifice. Sometimes swearing in was done by dipping fingers in the blood of the sacrificed animals. The idea was to warn that if the promise was not kept, the violator would meet the same fate as the animal sacrificed. The sky and earth, which the pre-Buddhist Tibetans worshipped were called upon to witness such solemn ceremonies. "Whoever changes his mind and turns a traitor, may the earth and the sky witness that he may be punished like this animal."<sup>38</sup> The Tang new annals in particular stress the severity of the



corporal punishment inflicted by *btsan* rulers such as taking out eye-balls, cutting off hands, feet and noses, etc.<sup>39</sup> as an example of what he calls a “warrior nation” whose “social structure is oriented toward the military function, that does not need to be readjusted to that function by the power of the crown and a new warrior class, added at the same time to the previously existing classes; a nation where the politically important classes – but not necessarily all the classes – view warfare as their main profession, are professional soldiers, do not need to be specially trained as such.”<sup>40</sup> This description seems to fit the Tibet of the *Btsan* period (600–842 AD), as the preceding three points indicated: warrior class, complex military organization of the society, and a kind of “martial law” that prevailed.

From 635 onward the Tibetan warriors extended their “warrior-like activities in all directions with remarkable vigor”. In particular, they were a “constant source of trouble” to the Tang dynasty. The Chinese have kept quite precise records of Tibetan military activities in or around Southwest China: (a) Between 634 and 849 AD, fifteen or sixteen instances of conflict occurred between China and Tibet, of which 80 per cent were Tibetan aggression against China; (b) the average deployment of Tibetan troops in each incidence was 1,270,789;<sup>41</sup> (c) of the total number of conflicts, eight occurred during the reign of one of the most religious kings, Khri-Srong Lde-btsan (740–798).<sup>42</sup> These facts question the conventional assumptions about the so-called chos-rgyal.

A contemporary Chinese publication<sup>43</sup> lists the names of 27 places in the present day Gansu, Sichuan, Qinghai and Yunnan provinces invaded by Tibetans. Most of the battles were fought – for almost 120 years against Tang China – in the region of Koko Nor and Chinese Turkistan described as “the pools of Chinese blood” and “field of Chinese graves”. Perhaps one of the highlights of the Tibetan campaigns was Sron-btsan Sgampo’s strong army marching into China demanding Princess Wencheng in marriage from the Tang Emperor Tai Zong. In 763 another strong army captured the Chinese capital (Sian) and installed, for a short period, a Tibetan prince as Emperor of China.<sup>44</sup>

After the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 783 AD Tibetan military attention was diverted to the Arabs in the West. According to E. Bretschneider, the Tibetans were continually engaged in military operations against the Arabs between 785 and 805. Crossing the River Oxus, they penetrated as far as the Farghana and Samarkant. Today a lake to the north of the river stands as the monument to their expedition, aptly called Al-Tubbat (“little Tibetan lake”). The extent of the Tibetan threat to West Asia may perhaps be gauged by the fact that the Caliph of Baghdad, Harun Ar-Rashed had to ally himself with the Chinese against the Tibetans. Luciano notes, “The very fact that nothing less than the coalition of the two most powerful empires of early Middle Ages was necessary for checking the expansion of

the Tibetan state, is a magnificent witness of the political capacities and military valour of those sturdy mountaineers.”<sup>45</sup>

Since the text of this chapter was written in early 1980 and presented as a paper at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) later that year, it has provoked considerable interest in and research<sup>46</sup> on the subject. Such new findings enable me to draw some tentative conclusions about the pre-Buddhist early period of Tibetan history, especially the warrior kings who waged war against Tang China and elsewhere.

All the currently available contemporaneous sources of information on the period such as the Tang annals (old and new),<sup>47</sup> the Dunhuang documents<sup>48</sup> and the unadulterated Bon ritual texts<sup>49</sup> confirm that the early Tibetan kings up to Glang Dharma (842 AD) called themselves and were called by others *btsan*, and not *chos-rgyal* as commonly mentioned in Tibetan Buddhist historical texts (*chos-'byung*).<sup>50</sup> The Christianization of *btsan* as *chos-rgyal* probably began in the 1040s,<sup>51</sup> nearly 200 years after the fall of last *btsan* king, Glang Dharma. However, the usage of *btsan* titles by native notables continued even during the Buddhist Revolution (842–1247).<sup>52</sup>

The original or ancient meanings of *btsan* have survived only in old Tibetan dictionaries<sup>53</sup> and in continuing pre-Buddhist native folk religions (pure Bon?).<sup>54</sup> The first meaning of *btsan* as given in dictionaries is that it refers to the most fearsome deity in the folk religion; and second, as a metaphor for the early warrior kings. A more intriguing part of these two meanings is *btsan* as a most violent and the most powerful deity in the Tibetan folk religion whose emanation or manifestation the early warrior kings were believed to be. The portrayal or representation of early kings, especially Sron-btsan Sgampo has been so canonized and Buddhisized in *thanka* paintings that it is difficult to say now how they looked or dressed in their own times, because, as I have suggested, the canonization of early kings began only in 1040s. But one thing is clear: *btsan* as a deity is always represented in Tibetan *thanka* paintings as a warrior with full battle uniform (*btsan-gos*) and armoury<sup>55</sup> (*go-lag*). A further clue is discernible: *dmag-dpon rinpoche* (meaning “Precious General”) which continues to figure in Buddhist rituals is painted as a military general looking exactly like a *btsan*.<sup>56</sup> And, of course, in early Bon ritual texts<sup>57</sup> *btsan* and *dmag-pon rinpoche* are synonymous. This might suggest that *btsan* as a wrathful deity and *btsan* as a warrior king are represented in the Tibetan tradition as one and the same thing. Therefore, it is quite clear that the Tibetan warrior kings claimed to be *btsan*-like or even a manifestation of *btsan* in battle and in life. Such a warrior-like conception of life’s ideal and profession is evident in the militarization of Tibetan society, its warrior ideology, expansionist activities in Central Asia and martial law that were maintained both within society and in the battlefield. Thus, the term *btsan* has both specific meaning and corresponding content.

That all the warrior kings called themselves *btsan* is quite clear. But by the eighth century, some of them added a new appellation to their *btsan* title. Thus Khri gtsug lde-btsan was called 'phrul-gyi lha btsanpo.<sup>58</sup> 'Phrul-gyi lha means "god with magical/miraculous power", a divine designation higher than *btsan*.<sup>59</sup> If the *btsan* deity's function is believed to be to inflict violence and death on the enemy or target, that of *lha* is believed to be possessing magical powers. Again the warrior kings' claim to "divine magical power" was understood in relation to military strategy. They were believed to know 'phrul 'khor, the magic of military science or "magical circles" indicative of military strategy and tactics.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the warrior kings were not only *btsan*-like in battle but also they were magician-like strategists. It was such a line of warrior kings who not only kept Tang power at bay, they also fought hard in the battlefield for equal or near-equal status with Imperial China. On this score there is no disagreement on either side, Chinese and Tibetan.

Perhaps the most significant political development in Tibet since the fall of the *btsans* is the fact that central power as such had withered away, and authority had gradually shifted from *lay* to *lama* (Blama) rulers, from kings to priests culminating in the Sakya Pandita's accession to power in 1249. From then on it would be impossible for any non-priest, no matter how powerful he may be, to rule, or even reign in Tibet without some religious sanction and active support provided by one sect or the other. The interregnum period between the first and second wave of Lama rule bears testimony to this. Within a period of 292 years there were three major struggles for power among lay rulers; but neither the Phag-Mo Gru-Pa (1350–1450) nor Rin-Spungs-Pa (1450–1550) nor the Gtsang-Pa kings (1550–1642) could exercise effective authority without allying with the most popular sects of the day – Dge-Lugs-Pa and Bka-bryud-Pa.

This shows, on the one hand, the reluctance and refusal on the part of lay nobility and landed gentry to accept the Lama's monopoly of power and authority; and, on the other hand, the utter futility of such an attempt, particularly one made by Byang-Chub Rgyal-Mtsan to restore the *btsan* glory. Lamas had come to stay at the apex of authority and power in Tibet for good or otherwise.

The commencement of the Sakya Lamas' rule marked not only a sectarian victory; it was the consummation of the Buddhist revolution that really began in earnest after the anti-Buddhist king's death in 842. From 1247 on, all legitimacy and mandate to rule had to come from Buddhism. This in practice meant the political preeminence of Lamas in both state and society. This in turn tended to create a fundamental structural contradiction in lamaist polity: while Buddhism provided adequate legitimacy, a proof of which is the unprecedented social harmony, its reluctance to use power or force as a matter of policy tended to create structural contradictions within the lamaist polity. This led to the creation of a non-coercive regime which, by its very nature, resulted in a necessary military dependence on external

powers in the case of internal rebellion or external invasion (Chapter 10). In this respect the effect of the myth of chos-rgyal was actually felt by the Lama rulers. In other words, the Lamas had the popular mandate to rule once the population was converted to Buddhism, but they possessed little power to enforce their rule.

This change in the concept of authority presupposes a considerable degree of social change in order for the political change to be acceptable to the people at large. This is, indeed, what happened during the 405-year period of general disintegration brought about by the fall of *btsan* and the subsequent Buddhist Renaissance in Tibet. Causes of *btsans'* downfall and reasons for Buddhism's success are complex questions, answers to which must await further research. What seems evident from some limited research is that Buddhism prospered *not* during the rule of the chos-rgyals, as conventionally believed but *after* their fall.

It should be reiterated here that the royal patronage of Buddhism seems to have been highly exaggerated. The number of temples built during the *btsan* period is fairly low – twelve,<sup>61</sup> and all of them sponsored by royalty. We know of hardly any private individuals building temples during the period. This makes one suspect whether the so-called royal patronage was actually designed to control the spread of Buddhism, as happened in China during the same period.<sup>62</sup> Only after the disintegration of central power did the mushrooming of monasteries and temples begin in Tibet, that is during the period of silbui-dus. Buddhism was brought down from the confinement of the court to society at large only after the end of the *btsan* period. Glang Dharma's contribution, undoubtedly unintended, was to release Buddhist energy from the centre, where it was confined, to the peripheries where it could freely flourish, and then eventually engulf the whole of Tibet. His intention might have been anti-Buddhist but the result produced by his action was pro-Buddhist.

How Buddhism spread from the peripheries to the centre is still not quite clear. In general, it seems that after the destruction of the political basis of Bon at Lhasa, the new religion might have become an ideological weapon in the hands of new interest groups struggling for hegemony. In central Tibet, a number of petty rival principalities emerged, many of which were ruled by Lamas or laymen closely allied with the former. A whole new class of what Shakabpa calls "priest chieftains" emerged, whose worldliness surprised the great Indian pandit, Atisa, during his visit to Western and Central Tibet in 1042. There seemed to have been rivalry and competition among the well-to-do about inviting gurus from India and Nepal. The patronage of Buddhism had become a matter of social prestige and a means of political rivalry. It was no longer the royal prerogative and monopoly. That seemed to have been the way in which Buddhism was transformed from a courtly interest into a social force. This social transformation was a prerequisite for the rise of the Lamas to power.

## Chapter 10

# Imperial China and the Lama Rulers: Imperial Power, a Non-coercive Regime and Military Dependency

Since its introduction in the seventh century and especially after 842, Buddhism brought about both ideological and structural transformations in inner Asia that could truly be called revolutionary. It created, among other things, new conceptions of the state unfamiliar to modern political science: *bla-ma-dpon-po* and *chos-srid gnis-ldan*.<sup>1</sup> The first term literally means a ruler who combines the dual functions of a *blama* and political authority. Generally it applies to the Sakya Lamas who ruled during the Yuan dynasty. Specifically it refers to the Lama who resided in Beijing as *dishi* (*dbu-bla*) and the executive authority called *dpon-chen* in Sakya who administered. Their claim to authority resides in their *inherited* lama attributes such as religious learning and high levels of spiritual realization, and is based on the concept of reincarnation. If *bla-ma-dpon-po* is the personalization of rulership, *chos-srid gnis-ldan* is an abstraction or conceptualization of a political system. It literally means a polity in which the spiritual and political principles operate harmoniously – without contradiction. It refers to the enmeshing of the spiritual with the political so as to create a Buddhist polity that serves both the sacred and the mundane aspects of social life. It is a Gelugpa invention and served well during the rule of the Dalai Lamas. This kind of state differed from Western conceptions in that it did not rely on military force as the basis of polity and policy.<sup>2</sup>

This was a clear case of how Buddhist ideology (*viz.* non-violence) influenced political structure. Only in Tibet was a sector of the *samgha* able to capture state power and shape the political system accordingly. This makes Tibet unique among all Buddhist countries, for everywhere else the *sangha* was politically subservient to royal authority, though not spiritually so: A non-coercive regime.<sup>3</sup> The very history of *chos-srid gnis-ldan* demonstrates that even if force is renounced in principle, it is still a necessary part of the state's existence. If it does not possess its own armed

forces, a state must depend on others for military support. In what sense then do we mean that the lamaist regime was essentially non-coercive? It was not conceptually based on organized forces sufficient to maintain the status quo. This does not mean that no force was used in Buddhist Tibet; one can recall three incidents of monastic participation in warfare in the 20th century alone.<sup>4</sup> However, it must be conceded that such incidents were the exception rather than the rule when we recall how Buddhism converted an entire warrior race into a peaceful Buddhist community. What I am saying is that, as a matter of principle, lama rulers neither possessed sufficient forces nor believed in the direct deployment of force. That is, just as lamas in general do not mind eating meat as long as someone else does the butchering, so lama rulers did not mind others using force on their behalf.

This essentially non-coercive character of the lamaist regime created two structural contradictions. Internally, it created a highly decentralized polity as characterized by the existence of several autonomous centres of local power, such as Derge, Nyarong, Sakya and Shigatse. Externally, its lack of armed forces compelled the lamaist regime to depend on external powers for military support. It is the last point which concerns us in this chapter: we will examine how this fundamentally shaped the nature of Sino-Tibetan relationships during the period 1245-1911.<sup>5</sup> This entails a discussion of two relationships during perhaps the most controversial periods of Sino-Tibetan history as these are pertinent to the present analysis. I treat them in their historical sequences, and not in any political order.<sup>6</sup>

By the time Chinggis Khan conquered Inner Asia around 1207, the Buddhist transformation of Tibet was almost complete: political authority had shifted from lay rulers to lamas entrenched in big monasteries. Godan Khan, successor to Chinggis, invited the most famous lama of the day, Sakya Pandita (1182-1251) to his court in 1245 and two years later "offered" ('phul) him the greater part of Tibet, i.e. the "thirteen myriarchies" (khri-skor bcu-gsum) and the chol-kha gsum.<sup>7</sup> The Sakya Gdun-rabs Chen-mo speaks of wondrous miracles that the lama performed which, along with his "all-knowing" wisdom, converted the Mongol warrior chief to the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. This dramatic conversion may be partly explained by what sociologists call "elective affinity": the warrior could at once identify himself with the chief wrathful deity of the Sakya tradition, Hevajra, whose empowerment (dban) he was given as an initiation into Buddhism. A more mundane reason may be that "the illiterate Mongol prince wished primarily to get a learned Tibetan lama for his court, who would invent a writing-system for the Mongols and thereby initiate them into the higher culture of the Tibetans."<sup>8</sup>

With the Mongol conquest of China, the warrior-priest alliance was automatically transferred and elevated to the respectable if somewhat more ambitious Yuan Emperor-Sakya lama relationship (1247-1358), thereby giving rise to a new pattern of Sino-Tibetan relations. While commanding

his conquering troops in Homan, Khubilai invited the Sakya lama chos-rgyal 'Phags-pa to his court/camp and appointed him Imperial Preceptor (Dishi/dbubla); when he was proclaimed Khan at Karakorum in 1260, he promoted his guru to "State Preceptor" (Guoshi) and at the same time made Tibetan Buddhism the official religion of the whole eastern part of the Mongol empire in China. Thus for more than 80 years one of the senior Sakya Lamas had to attend the imperial court in the capacity of *dishi*.

At Peking an autonomous office was set up in 1264 whose political functions might have been analogous to the India Office in London during the British Raj. It was called the Bureau of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs (Xuanzheng Yuan). A second ranking monk-official was put in charge, but its formal head was the dbu-bla. The main function of this office was to select an executive to head the administration in Tibet. Such an executive was called dpon-chen (literally, "great authority"), usually appointed by the lama and approved by the Emperor. Shakabpa names seventeen dpon-chens who ruled Tibet from Sakya.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout the Sakya rule the loci of military power and political authority remained separate from each other. As long as there was no showdown, this caused no disruption in the political process. The Mongol dominance was most indirect: Sakya lamas remained the sources of authority and legitimacy, while the dpon-chens carried on the administration at Sakya. However, there was no doubt as to who had the political clout. When a dispute developed between dpon-chen Kung-dga' bzari-po and one of 'Phags-pa's relatives at Sakya, the Chinese troops were dispatched to execute the dpon-chen.<sup>10</sup>

This was probably the first case of external armed intervention in Tibet since the fall of the *btsans*, the next being the military aid given by Khubilai's son in suppressing the rebellion of the 'Bri-gun-pa against the Sakya regime (1285–1290). This conspicuous lack of external intervention during the Sakya period sharply contrasts with the age of the Dalai Lamas. The Tibetan–Mongolian diarchic structure which regulated the relations between Yuan China and Sakya Tibet may partly explain the relatively stable situation in Inner Asia. The kind of power or control exercised by the Yuan dynasty over Tibet was neither purely political nor military; it was fundamentally structural. I use this term in two senses: institutional and organizational. The institutional aspect has already been referred to (i.e. Xuanzheng Yuan); in what follows we shall briefly discuss the organizational control and the context in which both of these were introduced in Tibet.

When Godan summoned Sakya Pandita in 1245, Tibet was still in the state Tibetan historians call *silbui-dus*, the period of fragmentation: (842–1247), which appears to have actually been a period of transformation.<sup>11</sup> The country was without centralized administration or central power. It consisted of four main principalities centred around Mna-ris, Gtsan, Lhasa

and Lho-kha, in addition to numerous chiefdoms in Khams. It was in this context that the Mongols grafted their semi-military organization and, later, Chinese bureaucratic elements – on to a fragmented Tibet, obviously to make it possible for the lamas to rule, and for the Yuan dynasty to control developments in Central Asia as a whole indirectly.

However, the organization of the country probably did not begin until 1268 when the Mongol census of Tibet was conducted. Perhaps “census” is not the right word here: it was really a count of households (them-tho), assuming six persons per household (hor-dud). The whole country was organized as follows: 50 hor-dud = 1 rta-mgo (horse head); 2 rta-mgo = 1 brgya-skor (100 households); 10 brgya-skor = 1 ston-skor (chiliarchy); 10 ston-skor = 1 khri-skor (myriarchy); 10 khri-skor = 1 klu (circuit); 10 klu = 1 zin (province). It was roughly figured that Tibet had sufficient population for three klu (Ch. lu), or chol-kha.<sup>12</sup>

Above this nation-wide administrative structure, another complex organization of communication networks operated. Twenty-seven postal stages (jam) were set up, each of which functioned as a postal district with an appointed jam-dpon in charge. Thus Tibet was first reorganized along Mongol military lines into neat decimal administrative units ranging from one rta-mgo to a khri-skor (i.e. 50–10,000 households). Central control over these various administrative units was probably exercised through the 27 communication posts which were spread throughout Tibet. The jam organization, it appears, functioned as a command-cum-control system. Thus the Mongols provided the Sakya lamas with an administrative infrastructure which Tibet lacked at the time. But the Tibetans enjoyed considerable freedom and autonomy. A Bengali Tibetologist characterized the Yuan power in Tibet during the Sakya period as “suzerainty”,<sup>13</sup> and a German Sinologist has recently (1982) written that “Tibet was terra incognita, a foreign country for the Chinese and Mongols”,<sup>14</sup> during the same period.

As if to drive home the point that it rested primarily on the Mongol-Tibetan diarchy, the Sakya government in Tibet fell in 1358, anticipating the fall of the Yuan dynasty in 1368. In Peking the ministry for Tibetan affairs “discontinued its activities” and the dpon-chens “ceased to be nominated” by the Yuan emperors.<sup>15</sup>

If the Ming emperors were not “suzerain” over Tibet, as the Mongols had been, they did not, however, misunderstand the logic of politics in Inner Asia. From the Yuan dynasty onwards it was the constant policy of every dynasty to favour and, if necessary, to support the most popular sect and the most famous lama, who was invariably the head of that sect.<sup>16</sup> The Ming dynasty (1368–1644) unmistakably singled out for imperial patronage the Karmapa sect, which had become the most popular and therefore the most powerful sect after the fall of Sakya. But it did not help to set up a national regime.<sup>17</sup> Rival lamas belonging to lesser sects also vied to gain



local power and wealth through imperial patronage, eagerly bringing tribute to the Chinese emperor. However, since Tibet had no single centralized government and since the lay regional rulers did not have official relations with China, Tibet was not “in any real sense tributary to China during the Ming period”.<sup>18</sup>

The next phase of Sino-Tibetan relations followed a pattern strikingly similar to that of Yuan-Sakya relations. Almost every significant historical detail was repeated. Like that of the Sakya Lamas, the rise of the Dalai Lamas, who maintained the longest period of relations with China (1642-1911), has to be traced to the rise of a new sect in Tibetan Buddhism, in this case the Dge-lugs-pa. Again, as and when the first Sakya Lama achieved temporal power, the Mongols put the “first” Dalai Lama in power at Lhasa.<sup>19</sup> But it was not until the age of the Great Fifth, some four centuries after the Yuan-Sakya connection was formed, that the second wave of really controversial Sino-Tibetan relations began.

It is well-known that in 1577 the chief of the Ordos tribe, Altan Khan, invited the III Dalai Lama to his country. Again, as in the case of Sakya Pandita’s conversion of Godan, Tibetan texts (e.g. the Dnos grub rgya mtsho sin rta) record how the Dalai Lama converted Altan to the Dge-lugs-pa order. The sectarian distinction here is important. If Altan’s ambition was conquest, the Dalai Lama’s was to fight his rival, the Karmapa, and settle their sectarian scores. In any case the Mongol troops continued sporadically to fight Gtsan forces for almost 30 years in order to enable the nascent Dge-lugs-pa regime to establish itself firmly. After that Bka’-brgyud forces were compelled to search for greener pastures in the cis-Himalayan regions.

As a symbol of mutual agreement, they exchanged honorary titles with each other: the Lama became Dalai (“ocean” *viz.* Of virtue) and Altan, chos-rgyal (dharma-rajā). Once again the vital link between Mongol chieftains and charismatic Tibetan lamas was revived. However, this time, although they put their lama in power, the Mongols would not conquer China as Khubilai had; and as their cultural cousins, the Manchus, would. The lamaist influence over the Manchus, even before their conquest of China, was considerable even if indirect, via the Mongols. It began as early as the thirteenth century when the Sakya Lama-Khubilai Khan contact was established. Historically, the Manchus were the descendents of the Jurchen tribes conquered by the Mongols in 1234, and so along with Mongol rule came lamaist influence in Manchuria. Etymologically, “Manchuria” is derived from Manjusri, given as a title by the IV Dalai Lama to the Manchu ruler in a 1615 New Year’s greeting.<sup>20</sup> There is also good evidence that Nurhachi was himself a Buddhist.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that as early as 1640, even before the conquest of China, the Manchu Emperor Tai Zong (1627-1643) extended an invitation to the great V Dalai Lama and the chos-rgyal of Tibet, Gushi Khan:

The aim of the Manchus was to win Mongol cooperation in the conquest of China through friendly treatment of lamas and lamaism, since it had become the universal religion of the Mongols. This situation remained unchanged after the Manchu entrance into Peking.<sup>22</sup>

In 1652 the Qing Emperor Shunzhi reissued the invitation to the V Dalai Lama. The Lama's state visit was an unprecedented event in the history of Qing-Tibetan relations. "He had been treated with all the ceremony which could have been accorded to any independent sovereign, and nothing can be found in the Chinese works to indicate that he was looked upon in any other light; at this period of China's relations with Tibet, the temporal power of the lama, backed by the arms of Gushi Khan and the devotion of all Mongolia was not a thing for the Emperor of China to question."<sup>23</sup> The Great V Dalai Lama was received as "an independent sovereign, because the Emperor wished to secure his alliance with a view to establish the rule of Manchus over the peoples of Mongolia".<sup>24</sup>

However, Qing-Tibetan relations were not to remain on this delicate footing of apparent equality for long. As far as China was concerned, the V Dalai Lama's visit to Peking signified the revival of Sino-Tibetan relations that had existed during the Yuan dynasty. This, from the Tibetan point of view, meant the priest-patron relationship (*danapati/chos-yon-sbyin-bdag/shih-chu*),<sup>25</sup> perhaps differentiated from its predecessor by the increasing role of the ruling dynasty in China as military protector of the non-coercive regime in Tibet.

Both the Sakya and Dalai Lamas' rule may be broadly conceived as theocratic systems, but they differed in their degree of dependency on external powers and their crisis-management capabilities. In the case of Sakya, internal contradictions were resolved or prevented by the *jam* organization. Externally Tibet faced no invasion during Sakya rule. The Dalai Lamas, on the other hand, gained a far greater quantum of autonomy from China or Mongolia, but, precisely because their essentially non-coercive regime lacked a permanent military support system, they faced more national crises which necessitated external military support. What therefore caused a fundamental change in Sino-Tibetan relations during the Qing period was Tibet's military dependency on China in the event of any major national crisis, external aggression or internal rebellion. As crises with which the state was unable to cope because of inherent contradictions multiplied in Tibet, lama rulers had to depend more and more on Chinese or Mongol military support.

As Table 10.1 shows, between 1708 and 1904 there were at least eight serious and violent crises which invited external military intervention in Tibet. This fundamentally changed the nature of Sino-Tibetan relations and resulted in the eventual establishment of what Petech calls Chinese

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**Table 10.1** Patterns of Chinese intervention in Tibet

<i>Date</i>	<i>Crisis situation in Tibet</i>	<i>External intervention</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
1708	Political struggle between Lhasang and Tibetans. Regent killed	La-tu-hun's investigation and recommendations to the emperor	First imperial envoy to assist in Lhasa
1717	Zhungars beseige Lhasa and Lhasang	Two successive Chinese military expeditions	New Dalai Lama enthroned. Rule by Chinese "junta"
1728	Clash of pro- and anti-Manchu ministers	Two imperial envoys attempt mediation in vain. 15,000 troops sent to Tibet	Office of Amban established. Chinese military presence
1747	Anti-Manchu uprising in Lhasa	800-man expedition dispatched	New Amban appointment. Anti-Manchu elements punished
1788	First Gurkha invasion Tibetans defeated		Heavy war indemnity to Nepal
1791	Second Gurkha invasion	10,000 Chinese troops drive out Gurkhas	Ambans take power in Lhasa government
1834	Dogras invade Tibet	Opium war. No troops available for duty in Tibet	
1904	Younghusband expedition	Boxer rebellion, etc. No troops available	Anglo-Tibetan convention signed at Lhasa

"protectorate"<sup>26</sup> and Li calls Chinese "sovereignty"<sup>27</sup> in Tibet. Since we have no space for the details of their respective arguments we shall confine ourselves to an analysis of Qing responses to those crises and of the concrete consequences of Chinese interventions. Looking at that history we can make a small number of generalizations about the changing nature of Sino-Tibetan relations surrounding the eight major crises under consideration. Five were invasions, of which China was able to intervene militarily in two, namely against the Zhungars (who were actually invited by Tibetan lamas in their fight against Lhasang Khan), and during the second Gurkha invasion. China was unable to intervene on three occasions largely because of its own domestic troubles, e.g. the Opium War and the Boxer Rebellion. Tibet was able to meet one aggression successfully, namely the Dogra invasion. The rest of the crises were internal power struggles involving pro-Manchu or pro-Mongol factions and Tibetan nationalist elements. China intervened promptly in all of them: diplomatically in two and militarily in one.

We can now make a few tentative conclusions about the pattern of Chinese intervention and its consequences. First, there is a direct relationship between a crisis in Tibet and external intervention. Second, there is also a direct relationship between the frequency of external intervention and the decrease of Tibetan independence: greater intervention corresponds to a greater reduction of Tibetan independence.<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that all the interventions under discussion were requested by one ruling group or another. When and if the ruling dynasty in China could not intervene, as in the case of the Dogra Invasion or the Younghusband Expedition, the Ambans in Lhasa always appeared on the scene after the fighting was over pretending to offer guidance in the negotiations. Following expulsion of the Dsungars, a Manchu military command ruled Tibet for a year during which a new Dalai Lama was enthroned and Lhasang's puppet lama executed. The office of Regent (Sde-srid) was abolished, and in its place a four-man ministerial council called Kashak (Bka-sag) functioned under the supervision of the Manchu military command. Thus, by the time of the Qianlong reign, which witnessed Qing expansion into Central Asia, there were no further exciting military adventures in Tibet for the Manchu generals except to institute stricter control. Their measures were designed to "preclude an occurrence of any unwanted change of internal conditions in the future, and at the same time to protect the country against any foreign intervention".<sup>29</sup>

After placing the VII Dalai Lama in power in 1720, the Qing army remained in Lhasa. From then onwards, until the fall of the dynasty in 1911, Manchu emperors maintained Ambans and some military presence in Lhasa.<sup>30</sup> But after the 1840s, as the central authority in Peking weakened, Qing power in Tibet also declined. The practice of forwarding important decisions to the Amban ceased; the "Golden Seal of the Rainbow and the Earth" was no longer used to stamp Tibetan edicts; the golden urn presented by the Qianlong emperor for selecting Dalai Lama candidates was not used in the cases of the XIII and XIV Dalai Lamas.<sup>31</sup> After the 1911 revolution the XIII Dalai Lama was able to expel the remaining Qing forces from Lhasa and in 1912 declare Tibet's independence.<sup>32</sup>

We note that the establishment of a Manchu-Chinese protectorate or sovereignty in Tibet was a gradual process; it was not the case that a single act completed the process of imperialism.<sup>33</sup> Rather, each crisis led the non-coercive regime to turn to external powers for military support, which in turn led to increasing foreign influence and power within the country. What the whole process might demonstrate is a political truism: a state is by definition based on force, and any state which does not meet this definition, especially in the modern era, jeopardizes its independence. Buddhist Tibet, being an ideological state,<sup>34</sup> tolerated external interference in the political sphere as long as external powers did not threaten its belief system.

Why did such a strange relationship develop? In order to answer this question, we should discuss it within the context of the lamaist polity as it

evolved in Tibet from 1247 onwards. First, we must begin with a naïve proposition: when the high priest of a religion that supposedly renounces any attachment to the material world decides to become ruler, he not only has to find a convincing theological justification for his secular indulgence but he must act, especially in the initial stages, in such a way as to maintain a degree of credibility for this rule to be legitimate and acceptable to the subjects. If the definition of a modern state is one claiming “ultimate monopoly over the legitimate use of force within a given territory” (Max Weber) a lama ruler cannot by definition discharge one of the vital functions of the state, namely the use of force. He has to rely on someone else to do that sinful job and must delegate military authority to a non-lama. Why that was usually a non-Tibetan is explained by indecisive sectarian struggles which could not be resolved without powerful, external military support.<sup>35</sup> If, however, that military supporter were a non-Buddhist, assignment of political and military authority to him would be tantamount to a surrender of sovereignty. This problem was theoretically and practically solved by the priest–patron relationship.

Using Weber’s definition of state, I concluded (1976, 1980) that “Tibet had ceased to be a state in the Weberian sense”.<sup>36</sup> It may have been this which led an anthropologist to entitle a 1982 article on Tibetan political structure “Tibet as a stateless society”.<sup>37</sup> However, the limits of such a concept become clear when we attempt to apply it more broadly. Japan from 1945 to 1979, for example, may be thought of as analogous to Tibet in terms of its lack of armed forces. But who would say that Japan was a stateless society during that period? A degree of decentralization alone is not a proper criterion for judging whether a given political community constitutes a state. Most traditional parties were decentralized due to a lack of nationwide organizational and coercive means, which are primarily modern phenomena. In fact, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>38</sup> the state, particularly the compound nation-state, is an unprecedented modern, political entity, prior to which only ill-organized ancient regimes existed at the centre. Above all, we must remember that Weber’s is one of four major theories of the state. The other three appear more applicable to the Tibetan case, for according to them Tibet did indeed have a state, especially in the Lockean sense.<sup>39</sup>

I end my analysis with a methodological point. Many of our scholarly concepts derive from Western historical experience; some may be universally applicable, others simply are not. One of the major tasks of social scientists dealing with complex non-Western societies is to determine to what degree our concepts or theories are appropriate. If they are not, then we must not superimpose our theories on recalcitrant realities. It is from this perspective that I have approached the controversial subject of Sino–Tibetan relations.

My interpretation departs from the conventional sovereignty–suzerainty dichotomy, because that is essentially a superimposition of Western legal

conceptions on a non-Western phenomenon. I also shifted my emphasis from the simple patron–priest paradigm because it presupposes a degree of religiosity on the part of Chinese emperors which may be incorrect. Instead I concentrate on a concrete analysis of historical forces and ideological influences shaping traditional Sino–Tibetan relations. This approach suggests that the Buddhist revolution in Tibet (842–1245) not only fundamentally altered the balance of power between Imperial China and Inner Asia, but also revolutionized the concept and content of post-842 Sino–Tibetan relationships. Buddhist Tibet’s subordinate relation to Imperial China was a function of the non-coercive nature of the lamaist regime.

I recapitulate the major dynamics of Sino–Tibetan relations as follows. Generally speaking, pre-Buddhist Sino–Tibetan relations were characterized by frequent conflicts between the two countries: *btsan* Tibet (ca. 600–842 AD) was one of the major barbarian” powers menacing China, which attempted to resolve this security problem by forming matrimonial alliances with Tibetan kings. But neither matrimonial alliances nor friendly treaties secured a durable peace; only the Buddhist revolution in Inner Asia solved China’s pre-modern security problem. It not only tamed the Tibetan martial spirit but also created a non-coercive regime necessitating military dependency. Post-1245, and even post-842, Sino–Tibetan relations were therefore characterized by Tibet’s progressive military dependency on external powers.

This relationship of military dependency with its accompanying political influence may be variously interpreted according to Chinese, Tibetan or Western conceptions of international law, as was done in the 1950s and 1960s. In the context of our analysis we may note the following cardinal points which seem unambiguous and irreducible:

- (a) Chinese emperors promoted imperial interest and influence in Central Asia through charismatic lamas by patronizing the latter’s sects.<sup>40</sup> Tibetan lamas, on the other hand, viewed this imperial patronage as exemplifying the guru–disciple relationship.
- (b) This policy, coupled with Tibet’s increasing military dependency, led to increasing external influence and power in Lhasa, but there is no evidence in Chinese history that pre-1911 China ever considered Tibet one of her provinces.<sup>41</sup>
- (c) There is plenty of evidence, on the other hand, to indicate that Tibet was treated as a tributary state, as indeed were all the peripheral states in East, Southeast and Central Asia. Even within that system, however, Buddhist Tibet occupied a special place because of the charismatic lamas’ dominant influence in Buddhist Central Asia, and also because some Chinese emperors were indeed Buddhists who venerated high lamas as living Buddhas (*hu fo*).<sup>42</sup>

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A certain pattern is discernible in the evolution of this strange relationship. The founding of a new sect in Tibet and the subsequent attention given to it by a Central Asian warrior, who would support a charismatic lama of that sect to obtain power at the epicentre of the lamaist world, resulted in ideological direction being given by empowered lamas to Inner Asian conquests which had hitherto been seemingly objectless imperialism. Most important, the lamas provided the necessary sacralization and legitimation of "barbarian" rule in Imperial China.<sup>43</sup> With the Mongol/Manchu conquests of China, the lama-warrior relationship became institutionalized into a permanent structure of dominance and dependency. There was, however, a mutuality of interests. Mongol and Manchu warriors provided the military and political support necessary for lamas to remain in power, and the latter reciprocated with moral support and initial legitimation of barbarian rule. Even after the signification of barbarian rulers, charismatic lamas continued to be useful instruments of imperial influence in the Buddhist world.<sup>44</sup>

## Chapter 11

# British Interpretations of Sino–Tibetan Relationships: The Genesis of Tibetan “Autonomy” and Chinese “Suzerainty”

In Chapter 7, I analysed the traditional Sino–Tibetan relationship in terms of military dependency between an imperial power (pre-1911 China) and a non-coercive regime (Buddhist Tibet).<sup>1</sup> The operation of such a relationship assumed a capacity and willingness on the part of Imperial China to provide military protection to Tibet when and if necessary. It also assumed a fairly stable regional situation, particularly around Tibet because the protector’s military resources prior to the modern era were rather limited. I submit that both of these assumptions were valid until the appearance of great Western colonial powers on the Asian political scene.

But what would happen to such a fragile non-coercive regime when the objective conditions, on which the above assumptions were based, changed? This is one of the central themes of this chapter. The establishment of the British empire in India from 1757 and economic penetration of China by Western imperial powers from 1839, fundamentally altered the traditional balance of power on the Asian continent. For Western imperial politics was “concerned with contesting, controlling, reordering and redefining geographical space”.<sup>2</sup> Though itself a victim of Western power politics and active imperialism, the later imperial China and early Republican regime increasingly sought to transform the traditional Sino–Tibetan relationship, previously based on symbolic language and ceremonial behaviour, into one of political subordination and structural domination.

China’s Tibet policy during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was one of procrastination, because the time (i.e. due to domestic problems and British power) did not appear to be opportune for the realization of China’s ultimate goals in Tibet. While not quite agreeing to the British approaches, Beijing nevertheless pretended to represent Tibet in various international fora. One of the main contentions of this chapter is that the dialectics of Anglo–Chinese negotiations on Tibet provided not only the



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catalyst but in fact the crucible within which the future international status of Tibet was shaped. That is if the British delegates declared "suzerainty" as China's status in Tibet, their Chinese counterparts insisted on "sovereignty". Thus, the whole concept and content of the traditional Sino-Tibetan relationship were transformed into the vocabulary of power politics. Gone were the days of patron-priest relations.

This is not to blame the British colonial/imperial officials for unwittingly facilitating the Chinese transition from symbolic dominance to structural domination in the name of modernity. Since both parties acted as empires, it never seemed to have crossed their minds that Tibet should graduate from Chinese imperial dominion to Tibetan freedom and independence in accordance with a modern ideology. The main point, however, in the present context is to demonstrate a certain objective process by which this monstrous metamorphosis in the Sino-Indian relationship took place. It has a lot to do with power relations and dynamics which, although not absent in the pre-modern era were accentuated by modern conditions. That is to say that power dominance goes side by side with cultural dominance. As the dominant imperial power, the British officials defined the critical terms and conditions of their discourse and dialogue. And since political dominance implied cultural dominance too, the British demanded that the Chinese articulate their ancient ties with Tibet in terms of exacting Western legal and political concepts which the British best understood. To be fair, the British officials took pains to understand the peculiar Sino-Tibetan relationship and translate it into their familiar concepts. This is evident in Satow-Ching (Beijing) and Fraser-Tiang (Calcutta) talks as well as in their earlier attempts since the 1770s to understand the political conditions in Lhasa.

British policy toward Tibet was characterized by two conflicting imperatives which, throughout their rule in India, they sought to reconcile. From early on the British rulers realized the importance of Tibet as a buffer between India and any external power on the north, be it France, Russia or China. But to support or even encourage a completely independent Tibet was to damage a much larger commercial interest in China. Hence, they sought to limit Chinese power in Tibet and encourage Tibetan autonomy. In short, the British Government recognized what they called Chinese "suzerainty" but not sovereignty in Lhasa.

As they gradually consolidated their power in South Asia, the British *raj* was increasingly confronted with the problem of safeguarding the long land frontier of their empire to the north. Tibet, by virtue of its strategic situation, occupied a prominent place in British India's strategy in Asia. Coupled with this strategic consideration was the social fact that Lhasa, as the epicentre of the lamaist world, wielded considerable influence throughout the cis-Himalayan region, China, Mongolia and Russia. Hence, as early as 1775, the British rulers tried to establish contact with Lhasa, but

the latter studiously adopted a closed-door policy right up to 1904. A major purpose of this section is to trace the origin of this isolationist policy and explain why Tibet chose to adopt it.

The images of Lhasa as the 'Forbidden City' and Tibet as the 'Hermit Kingdom' are of recent origin – probably dating from the nineteenth century. Prior to that, Lhasa was, by traditional Asian standards, a fairly cosmopolitan city where Mongols from Mongolia and Russia, Nepalese, Bhutanese, Sikkimese, Ladakhi pilgrims and scholars, Kashmiri Muslim traders and Christian missionaries from Europe rubbed shoulders. This cosmopolitan characterization of Tibet is confirmed by the findings of eminent Western Tibetologists. Various types of influence including Indian, Chinese and the Middle Eastern had gone into the making of Tibetan civilization.<sup>3</sup> Such influences could not have penetrated Tibet had it been a closed, isolated hermit kingdom. In fact, with the emergence of Tibet as the Vatican of Mahayana Buddhism since the thirteenth century, Tibet's cosmopolitan character continued to flourish.

In particular, Tibet enjoyed close cultural ties with India. But with the Muslim arrival, the intensity of cultural contact (842–1247) that had characterized the Indo-Tibetan relations for three or four centuries suddenly ceased. The alleged Muslim destruction of Buddhist monasteries in India is vividly described in such texts *Kalacakra Tantra* (Dus 'khor rgyud). The number of Tibetan scholars and pilgrims dramatically decreased. But this did not mean that Tibet's door was closed to Muslims, and much less so to Hindus. Hindu pilgrims and mystics continued to visit their sacred sites in Western Tibet. A class of Bengali holy men called Gosains "wandered freely in the mountains between India and Tibet, visiting the holy places that were revered by both Hindus and Buddhists".<sup>4</sup> As for Muslims, they had come to trade and settle down in Lhasa, Shigatse and Tsethang since the time of the V Dalai Lama (1679–1705) and continued to do so, numbering about 3,000 in 1959.<sup>5</sup>

Nor was Tibet's door closed to Westerners. In 1625 Roman Catholic missionaries were well received by the King and Queen of Guge (Western Tibet). They opened a mission in Tsaparang, and in ten years 100 baptisms were performed. One of the Jesuits, Cabral, went to Shigatse with the Guge King's introduction. In 1661 a German Jesuit, John Grueber, and his Belgian companion, Albert d'Orville, went to Lhasa. In 1716 Desideri and Freyre reached Lhasa and stayed there for five years. Their mission "was accepted with good grace and welcomed with genuine hospitality" by Lhasang Khan who was ruling Tibet at the time.<sup>6</sup> They were followed by a Capuchin mission headed by Francisco della Pennadi Billi. In 1724 the Dalai Lama decreed for the establishment of a church in Lhasa by the Capuchin Friars. The Friars were well received by Pholanas in 1741.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, up to the 1740s Tibet remained a fairly open society. What caused Lhasa to tighten its door to Westerners was the rise of British

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**Table 11.1** British expansion into the Lamaist culture areas

<i>Year of takeover</i>	<i>Name of Lamaist culture area</i>
1835	Darjeeling
1844	Tawang
1845	Lahul and Spiti
1846	Ladakh
1861–90	Sikkim

imperialism in South Asia which, since the 1840s, had expanded into the Himalayan region, traditionally the Tibetan sphere of influence. We can establish a rough correlation between British expansionism into the cis-Himalayan region and the Tibetan authorities' decision to close Tibet's door to Westerners (Table 11.1).

Tibetan suspicion of British power in India was "progressively confirmed by the extension of British ascendancy all along the Himalayan foothills in areas where the influence of Lhasa, even if not sovereign, had long been respected".<sup>8</sup> It might be useful here to explain the complex cultural relations between Tibet and the lamaist culture areas in the cis-Himalayan region. The Tibetan-speaking peoples inhabiting the cis-Himalayan region saw Lhasa as the centre of their faith, and in terms of the strange trans-Himalayan religio-political relations, Lhasa wielded considerable influence over the lamaist culture areas in the cis-Himalayan region. In fact Ladakh, Sikkim and Bhutan used to pay tri-annual tributes to the Dalai Lama until the Communist takeover of Tibet in 1950.<sup>9</sup>

Although the Tibetan fear of a possible British takeover of their country was ill-founded, they never ceased to suspect the worst from South Asia until the XIII Dalai Lama's escape to India in 1909–12. Just as British expansionism into the lamaist culture areas in the cis-Himalayan region had brought home the reality and unprecedented power of British imperialism, Tibet's close neighbours informed the Tibetan ruling class about the new dangers. Such informants included Indian Muslim merchants who held a grudge against the British rulers who overthrew their empire in India, the Chinese who had experienced gunboat diplomacy, and the Nepalese who had witnessed British expansionism into India from close quarters. These groups all shared the early Tibetan perception of British imperialism which gradually blew up into mythical proportions. Therefore, the real reason for Tibet's isolationism and anti-Western phobia was the perceived threat that British imperialism in South Asia appeared to represent to the territorial integrity of Tibet if not to the whole lamaist world. The whole affair was couched in a popular idiom that the religious people could understand. The

Westerners were projected and portrayed as a diabolical threat to the survival of Tibetan religion and the political system that sustained that religion.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after George Bogle's arrival in 1775, the Panchen Lama had heard that "the Fringes were fond of war; and after insinuating themselves into a country, raised disturbances, and made themselves masters of it; that no Fringes had ever been admitted into Tibet, he [Regent] advised the Lama to find some method of sending me back, either on account of the smallpox, or on any other pretence".<sup>11</sup> Thomas Manning who managed to visit Lhasa (1811–12) found that the Chinese Imperial Resident (Amban) "detested Europeans". The Amban told Manning, "These Europeans are very formidable; now one man has come to spy the country, he will inform others. Numbers will come, and at last they will be for taking the country from us."<sup>12</sup> The Kashmiri merchants who were doing business in Tibet described the British as "the most cunning people in the world; little by little (they) are acquiring possession of all countries of India, but it is always rather by stratagem than open force ... Instead of overthrowing the authorities they cleverly manage to get them on their side, to enlist them in their interest."<sup>13</sup> The King of Nepal warned not only the Panchen Lama but also the Dalai Lama that "he desired them further to have no connection with Fringes or Moghuls, and not to admit them into the country".<sup>14</sup> The Sikkimese, whose country the British took over in 1890, also played their role in informing the Tibetan ruling class about the invincible British power in South Asia. An ex-minister of the Raja of Sikkim who was expelled from the country for his treatment of Dr Hooker and Campbell, obtained from the Dalai Lama the post of frontier officer, to watch the British encroachments. He viewed the attempts of Dr Hooker, Mr Edgar and Sir Richard Temple to enter Tibetan territory as encroachment on the part of British India. He told the Tibetan authorities that British India was "devoting all its energies to the invasion of Tibet".<sup>15</sup>

In other words, the Tibetan authorities came to know the nature of British imperialism in South Asia early on from their neighbours. As the Panchen Lama confided in George Bogle in 1775: "I had heard also much of the power of the Fringes; that the Company was like a great king, and fond of war and conquest; and as my business and that of my people is to pray to god, I was afraid to admit any Fringes into the country."<sup>16</sup> Samuel Turner who followed Bogle's footsteps was asked by the then Regent in Lhasa why so many Englishmen were "willing to leave their country for the inclement climates and rude, inhospitable men" of other lands. Turner's apology for British colonialism was no less ingenious. He replied that education and recognition of talent "prompted by curiosity, not less than by a desire of wealth, spread themselves [British] over every region of the universe".<sup>17</sup>

It is true that modern terms like "imperialism" or "colonialism" were never used by either Tibetan authorities or by the contemporaneous

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informants. They did not fail to understand the colonial nature and the unprecedented power of British imperialism, as manifested in the Indian subcontinent in general and the cis-Himalayan region in particular. Soon British imperialism came to be conceived in the more familiar idiom of Tibetan mythology. "English are dreaded by the Government officers, especially the monk officials, as an invincible power, and as being the incarnation of the Lhamayin (giants) who fought against gods. ... The whole world will succumb to the power of Phylings (Russians and English). Neither the Emperor of China nor combined legions of Gods and demigods who reside round the golden mount of Rirab (Semeru), will be able to arrest the progress of their arms or the miracles of their superior intellect".<sup>18</sup>

Lhasa did not ban the entry of all foreigners; only Europeans. In 1775 the Panchen Lama told George Bogle not to send any English but a Hindu, if necessary.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently the British sent Indians to explore Tibet. In 1865 Mann Singh and Mani Singh were to conduct a route survey and reconnaissance work up to Lhasa and to survey the goldfield of Thok Jalung in Western Tibet. Sarat Chandra Das, disguised as a Sikkimese lama, was sent to observe the political conditions of Lhasa and Shigatse in 1879 and 1881. Spies from other Asian nations could also penetrate Lhasa but not Europeans. A Japanese monk, Ekai Kawaguchi lived in Lhasa for three years (1901–3). A well-known Russian agent, Agvan Dorjiev, a Mongol by birth, lived in Lhasa for a number of years and also acted as a tutor to the XIII Dalai Lama. Thus Lord Curzon ransacked the entire British empire to select suitable messengers or go-betweens. A Bhutanese named Ugyen Kazi, a Burmese named Taw Sein Ko and a Ladakhi named Chiranj Palgez were selected as possible British messengers to the XIII Dalai Lama. But the Dalai Lama refused to receive any communication from British India. The two letters sent by Lord Curzon through Kennion and Ugyen Kazi were returned to India unopened at the turn of the century.

Even those foreigners with Chinese passports were denied entry into Tibet. Col. Nikolai Prejevalsky with a Chinese permit to travel to Tibet was stopped by Tibetan troops at 150 miles short of Lhasa. "When Prejevalsky flourished his Chinese passport and protested that he had the Emperor's authority to travel to Lhasa, the Tibetans replied that they did not take their orders from the Chinese but only from their own Government".<sup>20</sup> In 1876 China again granted passport for a British overland mission to Tibet but the Tibetan border guards refused entry. The mission once again readied itself in 1886 to march through Sikkim; but hearing this, the Tibetan troops moved near Sikkim. In the same year, a French traveller, Gabriel Bonvalet, was stopped twelve days march from Lhasa. Captain Hamilton Bower and Surgeon Captain W.D. Thorod were stopped by Tibetan soldiers. In 1892 Annie Taylor was stopped at a place three days march from Lhasa. In 1894 Dutreuil de Rhins and Fernand Grenard fought their way but failed to reach Lhasa. Mr and Mrs St. George Littledale met the same fate. In 1897 Henry

Savage Landor was stopped by Tibetan soldiers. The following year Charles and Susie Rijnhart were also stopped by Tibetan troops.<sup>21</sup>

Tsarist Russia, however, was more successful than British India in establishing diplomatic relations with Lhasa. Russia's relative success indicates what the lamaist regime at Lhasa considered as the proper mode of diplomatic conduct. It raises the question of the lamaist conception of international relations: with whom and how such international relations may be properly conducted and sustained. The Russian success in gaining access to the XIII Dalai Lama was the achievement of a single Russian citizen of Mongol origin called Dorjiev.<sup>22</sup> He did so well in his studies that he became, at the turn of the century, professor of metaphysics (*tsenyid-mkhanpo*) and a tutor to the XIII Dalai Lama. As such Dorjiev thoroughly understood not only Buddhist metaphysics but more relevantly the political culture of Tibet. As an advisor to the Dalai Lama, he argued that, as Tibet's traditional protector, China was getting weaker, Lhasa should seek a Tsarist alliance in order to defend itself from British India. In order to convince the Tibetan authorities not only of the political necessity of Russian support but of its appropriateness in terms of Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Dorjiev translated the Tsar's possible role in Tibet in terms of Tibetan mythology. He propagated, in a short treatise written in Tibetan, that Jang Shambala (*Shangrila*) referred to Russia, and that the Tsar was the incarnation of Je Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelukpa sect to which the Dalai Lama belongs.<sup>23</sup> The Dalai Lama was so convinced of Dorjiev's argument that he decided to visit Russia, and sent his throne in advance.

Buddhist Tibet as the Vatican of Mahayana Buddhism had, up to 1950, long and consistent relations with other Buddhist countries surrounding it including China, Mongolia, Nepal, Ladakh, Sikkim and Bhutan. Such international lamaist relations may be characterized in two ways: (a) patron-priest relations and (b) priest-disciple relation. Tibet's relations with China and Mongolia fall under the former category and its relations with Bhutan, Ladakh and Sikkim under the latter category. That is to say that Tibet used to conceive China and Mongolia as the powerful patrons of Tibetan Buddhism, and had proper relations accordingly. Somewhat on a different level Lhasa used to conceive Bhutan, Sikkim and Ladakh as disciples of High Lamas, and had proper relations with each of them accordingly. Implicit in such a conception of intercourse between nations is not only a sense of hierarchy or dependency but also heavy moral overtones. This is not to say that all such relations were purely religious; religion is the idiom and format of such diplomacy but its concept can vary and can include political, military, economic matters. Thus, the Panchen Lama interceded on behalf of the Bhutanese with Warren Hastings in 1774.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, whenever Tibet was invaded, China used to rush to send military assistance if the Tibetans could not defend themselves.

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It was, therefore, the fear of British colonialism which was alien to the lamaist conception of international relations and that compelled the lamaist regime at Lhasa to cut off all contacts with and refuse any communication from the British Government in India. Similarly when the Republican regime in China started to reveal expansionist tendencies in East Tibet in 1908-9, Lhasa decided to terminate the centuries long relations with China. The Tibetan refusal is indicative of both moral indignation at the ways of colonialism and military inability to cope with such a situation. This method of dealing with the modern world may seem strange and counterproductive to outsiders but Tibet was medieval and strange. It was a moral refusal to interact with new forces that violated its customary norms of a lamaist conception of inter-state relations. For lamas were used to spiritual conquests but not to political or territorial takeovers of other countries. A certain degree of dependency is probably implicit in the lamaist conception of inter-state relations but outright colonization or brutal takeover is definitely alien to it.

Despite Tibet's closed-door policy, British India made a number of attempts to survey the economic resources, to spy on the political conditions in Lhasa and Shigatse, and above all to establish some sort of contact with the Tibetan government. The British rulers were unsuccessful in establishing contact with Lhasa until 1904. Yet they were undaunted in their effort, for Tibet figured increasingly in the Empire's defence policy.

What complicated British political interest in Tibet was the latter's peculiar relationship with China about which the early British explorers had vaguely learned. The critical question was: should India approach Tibet directly or through China? When the British approached Tibet directly, Tibetan authorities tend to hide behind the facade of Chinese imperial authority. On the other hand when they approached China regarding Tibetan affairs, the Tibetan authorities objected and refused to honour any Chinese orders. Initially it was a trade interest which gradually became a political interest by 1885. Tibet was a means of access not only to the local trade in Tibet and the adjoining Himalayan states but also to the fabulous markets of the Chinese Empire. The East India Company's Court wrote to their counterparts in Bengal in February 1768: "We desire you will obtain the best intelligence you can whether trade be opened with Nepal, and whether cloth and other European commodities may not find their way thence to Tibet, Lhasa, Western parts of China".<sup>25</sup> By the end of 1769 the Company decided to try to establish trade contact with Tibet and Western provinces of China. When Warren Hastings sent George Bogle to Shigatse, he hoped that the Panchen Lama "would speak favourably to the Chinese Emperor about English supercargoes bottled up in Canton. ... He was probing Tibet's possible use as a back door to China".<sup>26</sup>

Although British India's trade interest gradually declined as the century advanced, the view that Tibet can be used as a back door to trade with

China continued to persist. A British trade agent in Ladakh, Captain G. Chenevix French gave the fullest expression to this point of view: "In view of the future uncertainty of our trade with Chinese Turkistan, and the chance that 'open door' in that quarter may not always be open as now, it is our duty to look fresh fields. In my opinion this is to be found in the direction of Tibet. A commercial invasion of that mystic country, with the rich provinces of Szuchuan and Kansu and Shensi in China as the objectives, would, I believe, be profitable."<sup>27</sup>

As the British surreptitious explorations of Tibet progressed, they came to realize that it could not be used as a back door to Southwestern China because the Tibetan authorities objected. Nor did Tibet possess much trade potential. Trade eventually centred around two commodities: tea and gold. Tea was cultivated in Darjeeling and Assam (India) in the nineteenth century, and if such tea could be exported to Tibet, large profits could be made, it was argued. But the problem with the expected tea trade boon was Tibetan tea drinking habits. Tibetans, for centuries, drank Chinese brick tea, and not loose leaves from India. Indian tea could not be exported to Tibet unless it was made to suit the Tibetan taste. Ja-ril was such an attempt to cater to the Tibetan taste and it used to sell in Tibet quite well before 1959.

Gold was observed by early Jesuit and Capuchin missionary travellers such as Bogle, Turner, Kirkpatrick, Moorcroft, etc. Subsequently, Hamilton's East India Gazzetter of 1815 notes that gold is found in Tibet in very large quantities, and that it is the principal article of export from Tibet. Therefore, in 1867 an Indian Pandit explorer was sent to explore the gold mines of Jalung. In fact in April 1899 an agent of the Rothschilds approached the India Office for support for a venture to exploit Tibetan gold. Lord Salisbury dismissed it as a "mad scheme"; Lord Curzon laughed at it, remarking "how far they care to burn, or perhaps I should say freeze their fingers, all for the auri farca fames in those inhospitable regions". Even during the Younghusband Expedition, an attempt was made to obtain gold concessions from the Tibetan Government but the Indian Government refused to help these schemes.<sup>28</sup>

A British officer with a good deal of experience in Tibet explained the main drawback to large-scale Indo-Tibetan trade as follows: "The main drawback to a big trade with India is that Tibet is a poor sparsely populated region whose inhabitants are separated by enormous barren distances, and with but little transport between her trade centers which lie in the few comparatively fertile valleys and the Indian frontier. Then also the Tibetan is a peddler, not a trader. He has not the instincts of trade in him, and the foreign trade and considerable portion of local trade is monopolized by outsiders e.g. Nepalese, Kashmiris and Chinese."<sup>29</sup> The British trade interest receded after Macauley Mission (1885), and subsequently their interest centred on political and strategic issues.



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There is a tragic irony in Tibet's decision to remain isolated. It did so because of its incurable fear of colonization of the country by the British. But the British, after preliminary exploration, found out that it was not worth colonization. British colonial officials rightly calculated from early on that Tibet is a case which brings diminishing returns to imperialism. Even "the most optimistic imperialist would have shrunk from assuming responsibility for another 2000 miles or so of frontier enclosing over 50,000 square miles of country, mostly high, severe and unpopulated and totally lacking in communication. It seemed, therefore, the best solution to patch things up between Tibet and China in a way which would restore formal connection between them, saving Chinese face but restricting Chinese control."<sup>30</sup>

It appears that the British colonial officials came to such a decision from the time of the East India Company. The Panchen Lama, in a letter, pleaded for British assistance against the Gurkhas. Cornwallis replied negatively: "First, it would be too costly; secondly, the Company had no cause to attack Nepal; and thirdly, British sea trade with China was too important to risk alienating the Emperor by such an act of aggression."<sup>31</sup> Bogle also warned the Company that Britain could not sustain suzerain responsibilities in Tibet because communication lines were simply too long. Samuel Truner who travelled to Bhutan and Tibet in 1783 observed, "The objections I have made against an expedition into Bhutan hold good with respect to Nepal and Lhasa, for this sole reason that a communication cannot be kept on."<sup>32</sup> When the Younghusband Expedition (1903) was under preparation, the British government made it clear to the Chinese and Tibetan government that "the mission was of an exclusively commercial character, that we repudiate all designs of political nature upon Tibet, that we have no desire either to declare a protectorate or permanently to occupy any portion of the country."<sup>33</sup>

When the Chinese forces overran Tibet in 1909, the Dalai Lama, then in exile in India, began to press upon the British Government to extend its protectorate on Tibet. In June, 1910 three Tibetan Ministers appealed to Charles Bell, who was the British political officer in Sikkim, in these terms: "We want an alliance with the British Government on the same terms that Nepal has her alliance with the British Government, namely that the British Government and Tibet should help each other with armed assistance as each requires of the other."<sup>34</sup> The Dalai Lama became desperate and went further. He mentioned Bhutan's relations with British India as an appropriate model on which to base Tibet's future relations with India.<sup>35</sup> Britain dismissed Tibet as an economically unviable proposition for colonization, protectorship or even for trade. Such evidences contradict the Chinese charge that India intended to take over Tibet. However, there is overwhelming evidence in the documentary works by Mehra, Ghosh, Addy, etc. that Britain intended, tried and succeeded for 48 years in making Tibet an autonomous buffer state between India and China.

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The Tibetan authorities continued to float the idea of a British protectorate over Tibet from the beginning of the twentieth century and the idea continued to dominate Tibetan thinking even in the 1920s. Charles Bell wrote "Even now there are several influential Tibetans who desire a British protectorate over their country. But it was recognized on our side from the first day that this would have devolved far too heavy a burden upon us, the responsibility of protecting the distant and difficult expanse of Tibet."<sup>36</sup> Even Lord Curzon, the architect and advocate of British forward policy towards Central Asia, wrote in 1901:

It would be madness for us to cross the Himalaya and occupy it [Tibet]. But it is important that no one else should seize it, and it should be turned into a sort of buffer between the Indian and Russian Empires. If Russia were to come down to the big mountains she would at once begin intriguing with Nepal; and we should have a second Afghanistan on the north. I have not put this very clearly. What I mean is that Tibet itself and not Nepal must be the buffer state that we must endeavour to create.<sup>37</sup>

This succinctly sums up the British policy towards Tibet. Tibet was economically worthless for the British to colonize or even extend protectorate over; but this did not mean that Tibet should be dismissed altogether from the framework of British Imperial foreign or defence policy. Tibet figured to the British just as it does now for independent India: in purely strategic terms.

There were various options before the British Empire in India with regard to Tibet. They could have colonized Tibet with much difficulty and at high cost; they ruled out this option as early as 1775, because it was then not a viable economic proposition. They could easily have extended their protectorate, as the Tibetan authorities including the XIII Dalai Lama and his ministers repeatedly requested, but the British ruled out this option too because it would be a costly affair. They could have granted independent status to Tibet, as they tentatively tried to do after 1912 until 1947, but this option was not officially sanctioned because it was an action which would damage their much larger commercial interest in China. Under the circumstances, the only viable option they considered seriously was that China had suzerainty over Tibet but on the understanding that Tibet was autonomous. Such a conditional policy safeguarded British economic interests in China as well as the national security of the Indian empire.

The primary consideration in British policy towards Tibet was how to ensure the security of the 2,000 mile long Himalayan frontier that India shares with Tibet. This could be ensured if Tibet remained autonomous in the British sense and as long as China remained weak as a nominal suzerain authority in Tibet. This formula (suzerainty with autonomy) worked up to 1949 because China remained weak and divided until 1949. The other,

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equally important factor was British power acting as a deterrent against any Chinese armed intervention in Tibet. The British strategy was to allow Tibet to continue with the fiction of Chinese suzerainty over her. This concession to Beijing was not out of any British love for the Manchu rule but for their understanding that Tibet under the suzerainty of the weak Chinese would not be a source of danger to the safety and security of British India.<sup>38</sup> This could be ensured if Tibet remained free from direct Chinese control or hegemony.

Article III of the Simla Convention put it thus: “Recognizing the special interest of Great Britain, in virtue of the geographical position of Tibet, in the existence of peace and order in the neighbourhood of the frontiers of India and adjoining states.” The Simla Convention gave the fullest expression to British strategic designs and Tibet’s place in them. Tibet would be divided into two zones; Inner Tibet consisting of Kham and the Amdo was declared part of the Chinese sphere of influence, and Outer Tibet becomes autonomous under the direction of the Government of Lhasa, and Chinese are precluded from introducing military forces, administrative officials or colonists in this portion of the country (Simla Convention Article III). As the India Office wrote “The extent of our interest in Tibet, as is made clear in the Simla Convention of 1914, is the maintenance of the integrity and autonomy of Outer Tibet (that is Tibet proper), and of an effective Tibetan Government, able to maintain peace and order in the neighbourhood of the frontiers of India and the adjoining States and free from the influence of any foreign power (excluding China from that term).”<sup>39</sup> Such a design, the British declared, brought together their own interests and the Tibetan desire. “The frontier between India and Tibet is 1,800 miles long. It should never be forgotten that a peaceful and contented Tibet is the cheapest and most efficient safeguard to India’s North East Frontier.”<sup>40</sup>

The British were interested in a relatively stable government because the “theory of the buffer state has never worked properly except where the buffer state was strong enough to keep up an efficient Government and administration and to make encroachment by either neighbour a risk”.<sup>41</sup> Since Tibetan society was stable and peaceful – thanks to its value system – the basic British objective was “to remove the Chinese to as great a distance as possible from Lhasa, Outer Tibet generally and at the same time to interpose a buffer state under Chinese administration between Outer Tibet and Mongolia, so that Russian influence may not easily penetrate to the Tibetan capital”.<sup>42</sup> The British further clarified that they “wished to avoid interference in Tibet, at the same time we held that though we recognized Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, Tibet ought to remain an autonomous state between India and China; and this view we should press diplomatically in Peking as strongly as needed be”. They further stated that their “only real object is to establish Tibetan autonomy and that is the great desire of the Tibetans themselves. All we ask is that the Chinese should recognize Tibet

as an autonomous dominion bearing the same relation to China as a British dominion to the United Kingdom.”<sup>43</sup>

We have seen that British official despatches had consistently described the historical status of China in Tibet as suzerainty. We shall now examine the observations of British officials and foreign travellers who spent sometime in Tibet. George Bogle, who visited the Panchen Lama in Shigatse, wrote, “In 1720 the Emperor of China acquired sovereignty of Tibet in the way sovereigns are generally acquired by interfering in the quarrels between two contending parties.”<sup>44</sup> At the same time he observed the considerable influence the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama wielded at the Chinese imperial court. Thomas Manning who managed to penetrate Lhasa during the years 1811–12 described China’s status as a “master-nation”.<sup>45</sup> Sarat Chandra Das, who was in Tibet during the years 1881–82, described the Dalai Lama as the Pope and the latter’s relation with China as one of dependency.<sup>46</sup> The Japanese monk Ekai Kawaguchi, who was in Tibet during the years 1897–1903, described the Sino–Tibetan relations as master/vassal and Tibet as a protectorate of China.<sup>47</sup> Col. Younghusband, who led the British Expedition to Lhasa in 1903–4, described China’s status as suzerainty.<sup>48</sup> And, of course, the Anglo–Russian treaty of 1907 described China’s status as suzerain – the first international agreement where China’s status is specified as such. Sir Charles Bell who visited Lhasa on several occasions described China’s status as follows: “It may be argued that whatever might be the opinion as to Chinese action in Tibet the country was undoubtedly under suzerainty of China. But Asia does not think along European lines. The Tibetan Government maintain that the Dalai Lama is the spiritual guide and the Chinese Emperor his lay supporter.”<sup>49</sup>

Our sample of observations by foreign visitors obviously indicates certain discrepancies. The discrepancies are due to a number of factors including whether the visitor in question had been to Lhasa or to Shigatse where Chinese influence was most apparent; whether the Amban<sup>50</sup> was a strongman or Regency ruler in which case the Amban found it easier to bully the Tibetan officials while the Dalai Lama was a minor. Obviously if a strong Amban’s tenure happened to coincide with Regency rule, the Chinese influence at Lhasa tended to be stronger. Conversely if a weak Amban was in residence while a Dalai Lama was in power, then Chinese influence at the capital tended to be weak.

While the British insisted that China’s historical status in Tibet was suzerain, the Chinese learnt to speak in the same political language but, of course, did not agree with the British proposition; they claimed their status was sovereign in Tibet. After the 1911 Revolution “the Manchu had bitter experience at the hands of western powers, who taught them a novel method and language which they proceeded to apply to the innocent Tibetans.”<sup>51</sup> From the vantage point of traditional patron–priest relations, the Chinese stand marked a clear departure from the traditional conception

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of mutual relations. The transformation of a traditional conception of relations into the political language of nationalism came about in two ways. A new generation of Chinese officials had come into existence as a result of Western education in treaty ports and they increasingly spoke in Western political language in relation to Tibet. Secondly, Great Britain and China held a series of negotiations regarding Tibet the frame of which was dictated by the British, being the greater power. Such negotiations, particularly the Calcutta talks, unwittingly taught the Chinese to conceptualize their views on past Sino-Tibetan ties in modern Western political and legal terms.

One such Western educated Chinese official was Tang Shao Yi who held very definite ideas along modern lines regarding China's status in Tibet. He told his British counterpart that China's status approximated that described by the term "sovereignty" rather than "suzerainty". He added that Tibet's position in relation to China was analogous to Mongolia's. Recognizing China's declining strength in Tibet, Tang proposed to reverse this by a drastic reform which marked a radical departure from traditional Sino-Tibetan relations. He argued, for instance, that the large number of monks who led a parasitical life on the wealth of the land should be made to work.<sup>52</sup>

Tang's views were later (1904) echoed by Prince Qing whose conversation with the British ambassador in Beijing was dispatched in the form of a memorandum to the British Foreign Office.

Sir Ernest [Satow] then asked what was the proper technical term in Chinese to express the relation of Tibet to China. In English China was described as the "suzerain" of Tibet. How was this expressed in Chinese? The Prince said there was no proper word to express this. The Tibetans called the Emperor of China their "Huangshang", not "Ta Husangti (Da Huangdi)", as a foreign nation would say. The word "suzerain" he supposed implied the "shang-kuo (Shang guo)". The upper nation. The superiority of the Emperor over the Dalai Lama was demonstrated in his appointment by patent (chih-shu (Zhishu)). Sir Ernest asked in the Ming dynasty a "chih-shu" was not also given to the Shogun of Japan. His Highness: "Yes, he believed so, though in that case it did not imply any claim on the part of China to sovereignty over Japan but was merely the act of a big Power to a small one."

Sir Ernest asked whether China considered that in Mongolia both land and people were subject to China. His Highness: Yes. Ernest: And Tibet? His Highness: "Tibet is very much in the same footing. We have conducted military operations in Tibet, in Chien Lung's (Qianlong) reign and may be said to have subjugated it."<sup>53</sup>

Thus, since 1905, China has used the term "sovereignty" to describe her status in Tibet, and Great Britain has insisted that it should be "suzerainty".

Of particular historical interest was the Anglo–Chinese talks at Calcutta on the Lhasa Convention. Chinese representative Tang Shaw-yi, who was a graduate of Yale and held a Ph.D., objected to the term ‘suzerainty’ which he dismissed as “a word quite inadequate to define China’s position towards Tibet. He declared the appropriate term was one of sovereignty. The Calcutta negotiations centred on the terms ‘suzerainty’ and ‘sovereignty’. By July 1905 the British representatives maintained that China was suzerain power in Tibet, and Tang insisted that China was sovereign.”<sup>54</sup>

British officials contributed towards the Chinese redefinition of China’s historical status in Tibet in two specific ways. First, Anglo–Chinese negotiations regarding Tibet which dictated that the Chinese representatives express themselves in modern terms of nationalism, even though there was no appropriate English equivalent for *Shih-chu* in Chinese and *chos-yon-sbyin bdag* (patron–priest relations) in Tibetan. Once such talks were conducted in a modern Western political framework, the dialectics of the bargaining negotiations was to demand something more than the party was willing to concede. Thus if the British conceded that China’s historical status approximated suzerainty, the Chinese counterpart would claim more than that: sovereignty. Our argument might appear to suggest that the British opened a Pandora’s box in demanding that China express her historical status in Tibet in the modern Western language of nationalism. What we are really trying to suggest is that British negotiators unwittingly helped late Imperial China and the early Republican government to redefine and reformulate their conception of China’s status in Tibet in exacting a modern political vocabulary. This was unfair for Tibet which remained purely pre-modern in its outlook until 1950. But in view of the global ascendancy of European political and legal ideas, this Europeanization of Sino–Tibetan relations seemed inevitable, except that Tibet was far from ready for this crucial transition from feudalism to nationalism.

The Europeanization of Sino–Tibetan relations took place roughly between 1905 and 1913. This marks a major discontinuity in the history of Sino–Tibetan relations: “the terms of reference have changed by which issues are defined, relationships maintained or contentions resolved”.<sup>55</sup> The terms of reference are no longer the Qing Emperor and the Dalai Lama, nor relations between two distinct though hierarchical civilizational realms. They are now the territorializing and nationalizing Chinese nation-state. Issues are no longer defined in terms of tributes and title exchanges but of the “Chinese nation-state’s” monopolization of Tibet’s traditional ties with British India, Nepal, Bhutan, etc. This territorializing and nationalizing process amounted to the cessation of the traditional Sino–Tibetan relations and ultimately led to the integration of Tibet to the Chinese body politic in the name of political modernization.

From a comparative perspective, traditional international relations or feudal inter-state relations, in both theory and practice, were much more

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tolerant and subtle than the modern political and legal doctrine of state-centric sovereignty, as far as small states are concerned. Modern international law and relations orthodoxy operates on two extreme levels of independence and non-independence. There is no middle ground arrangement such as the one that fitted pre-1912 Tibet. This does gross injustice to cases like Tibet. If you are non-independent, then you are supposed to be part of an independent "nation-state" since empires are no longer ideologically fashionable or acceptable in the post/colonial era. This is the tyranny of the logic of the nation-state which does not compromise on its supposed "territorial integrity", which in fact includes more than its true nation-state area.

The treaty-port intellectuals, some of whom found their way into the late Qing bureaucracy,<sup>56</sup> responded well to the British insistence on the Europeanization of the traditional symbolic modes of Sino-Tibetan relations, as being more tangibly advantageous to China. Out of this legal "Europeanization" arose the contemporary Chinese Marxist claim that Tibet is an integral part of China, empire or no empire. The logic used here is that of nationalism which hardly permits any half-way house political arrangement in which the pre-1911 Tibet tended to fit, yet the action consequence is technically imperialistic in the sense defined earlier. It marked the Chinese transition from culturalism to nationalism.

In concrete terms, the period 1775-1907 briefly analysed in this chapter marks one of the great transitions from old-fashioned symbolic dominance to modern structural domination in centre-periphery relations. It witnessed the rise and growth of modern capitalist imperialism in South Asia which produced demonstration-effects on China's relations with Tibet.

However, there is a great qualitative difference between classical Confucian imperialism and modern disguised imperialism. The former based on the concept of *tian-hsia* (all under heaven or "universal rule") was largely contented with symbolic submission from subordinate powers residing at the peripheries of the Confucian universe and loosely institutionalized by periodic ceremonial relations. It demanded neither political nor socio-economic integration of the peripheral yet autonomous units with China proper. Such is hardly the case with Chinese Marxist action in Tibet since 1950. Using the logic of Chinese nationalism, they failed to appreciate the complex nature of Sino-Tibetan relations in a truly historical perspective; they refused to even recognize a half-way form of political status for Tibet as warranted by history, at least from 1720 to 1911. Nor have they granted the Tibetans the right to graduate from dependency to independence as happened in the colonial world. Having said all that, we must remember that the Chinese Marxist transition from symbolic dominance to structural domination of Tibet in the name of Marxist liberation and Chinese nationalism was, as we have argued, paved unwittingly by British India and necessitated by Chinese national security.

Tibet should have graduated, according to the logic and practice of decolonization, from a Chinese imperial dominion to Tibetan independence and freedom. But that graduation was subverted by the Maoist armed intervention in the name of Marx.

Thus China's new claims on Tibet did not remain at the verbal plane. Both the late Qing dynasty and the early Republican regime sought to translate their new claims into military action. In this regard, too, the British played a considerable role in causing much suspicion in the Chinese mind, and therefore increasing Chinese military operations in Eastern Tibet. More specifically the Younghusband Expedition of 1903–4 dramatically sensitized the Chinese to the strategic importance of Tibet to China. After all, if Tibet was strategically important to the British empire in India, it was no less so to the Chinese empire. In fact Chao Erh-feng's military campaign in Eastern Tibet (1907–8)<sup>57</sup> can be viewed as a Chinese reaction to the British armed expedition to Lhasa in 1904. In 1906 Chang Yin-Tang sought to weed out all those Chinese and Tibetans alike who had been associated in the least degree with the British Commissioner or the Convention. He "suspended Tibetan functionaries until the term Tibetan Administration became synonymous with Chinese administration in Tibet".<sup>58</sup> Contemporary Chinese Communist historiography depicts the Younghusband Expedition as "iron clad proof" that the British in India coveted Tibet which would later be used as a base to attack China proper.<sup>59</sup> But this Chinese suspicion is really unfounded. As demonstrated earlier, British internal documents reveal that British India did not harbour any territorial ambitions in Tibet. More specifically, the Younghusband Expedition had no sanction for occupation or even annexation of any part of Tibet. After forcing a treaty (1904 Lhasa Convention), the expedition returned to India.

Thus the British activity and immense interest in Tibet caused great suspicion in the Chinese mind, and made them suspect the worst in Tibet. It became a classic case of a security dilemma for China: "If we did not take over Tibet, India would so, let us take it over". The utter strategic importance of Tibet after the Younghusband Mission, dawned upon the Chinese as never before. The Governors of Szechuan warned "Tibet again is like the backdoor to a house. If the door is opened wide, robbers will flock into the apartments."<sup>60</sup> Another Chinese official expressed a similar view:

Lhasa is the capital of all Tibet, the home of the cult of lamaism, the abode of the Imperial Resident, the seat of the numberless Buddhist shrines, the rendezvous of all the tribes; it has long been coveted by the British. Tibet again is the door that shuts off Yunnan and Sichuan, and should we prove remiss, the teeth will feel cold when the lips have gone. Any disturbance of her present status would bequeath to us a legacy of deep-seated injury.<sup>61</sup>



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We would note here that the idea of Tibet as a backdoor to China was first conceived by the East India Company.<sup>62</sup>

If the British rulers were most determined that no other power – either Russian or Britain<sup>63</sup> should replace China in Tibet, and if at the same time they were most emphatic that China would not be allowed to take over Tibet, two basic questions remain. What was the extent of Tibet’s autonomy *vis-à-vis* China? What was the measure of Chinese suzerain rights in Tibet? First of all the Tibetan autonomy on which the British rulers insisted was a necessary concomitant of India’s frontiers being peaceful. In other words, Tibetan autonomy was a necessary prerequisite to the security of India’s northern frontier. Whenever China gained direct and extensive control over Tibet, it posed a definite danger to the imperial security system. But why did they not support Tibet’s complete independence which would automatically ensure the British security requirement?

The British position on this critical question was almost equally divided between its imperial security requirement in India and its commercial interests in China. The practical result was the recognition of Chinese suzerainty with the Chinese assurance of Tibetan autonomy. The recognition of Chinese suzerainty was to safeguard British commercial interests in China and the support of Tibetan autonomy was to ensure the security of India’s northern frontier. These two conflicting imperatives in British policy towards Tibet caused many oscillations, much confusion and even contradiction in the course of the actual implementation of this policy. Thus, they declared China had suzerainty over Tibet yet insisted on Tibetan autonomy. While Tibet was declared to be a part of the Qing Empire, it had a separate political entity with treaty-making powers.<sup>64</sup>

When late Imperial China began to amass troops in Eastern Tibet, British India sought to define Tibetan autonomy in clearer terms. Sir John Jordan protested to China as follows: “His Majesty’s Government, while they have formally recognized the ‘suzerain rights’ of China in Tibet, have never recognized, and not prepared to recognize right of China to intervene actively in the administration of Tibet, which should remain, as contemplated by the Treaties in the hands of Tibetan Administration . . . While the right of China to station a representative with a suitable escort at Lhasa, with authority to advise the Tibetans as to their foreign relations, is not disputed.” The British Government was not prepared “to acquiesce in the maintenance of an unlimited number of Chinese troops either at Lhasa or in Tibet generally”. More precisely Tibetan autonomy meant that China could not introduce “military forces, administrative officials or colonists” in outer Tibet.<sup>65</sup> Chinese suzerain rights included two items: (a) to station the Amban with a suitable escort (300–500); (b) to advise the Tibetan Government in their foreign relations.

This suited and satisfied the Tibetans as well. As Hugh Richardson writes, “the Tibetans, not affected by the uncompromising Western attitude

to nationalism, were content to continue what had become a habit – the formal recognition of a link with, but not ultimate dependence on, the Emperor together with the practical freedom to do as they pleased in their country”.<sup>66</sup>

As far as the British Government was concerned, China’s suzerain right meant essentially the Chinese right to advise Tibet in its foreign relations, and this right they scrupulously recognized. This is evident in the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa in particular and other treaties in general. Younghusband made every effort to associate the Amban with every stage of the proceedings, and although he did not sign it, he was present at the signing of the treaty.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the formula which the British were groping for in the early twentieth century was an autonomous Tibet, subject to a weak Chinese suzerainty and guaranteed by the Anglo–Russian treaty of 1907. The British Government made their recognition of Chinese suzerainty conditional on Chinese recognition of Tibetan autonomy.<sup>68</sup> Chinese suzerainty assumed Tibetan autonomy, and Tibetan autonomy implied Chinese suzerainty; the two concepts were inseparable.

The British resolution of their conflicting imperatives was a typical British compromise on the issues concerning China and Tibet; they declared China’s status in Tibet was suzerain but on the condition that Tibet was autonomous, terms which call for explanation. Though used by missionary accounts and by British intelligence reports much earlier, these terms, especially suzerain, began to be officially used by Great Britain from 1905 onwards until the 1930s, when the usual Chinese presence was almost absent in Tibet. It became standard British (and therefore Western) shorthand to describe Sino–Tibetan historical relations. By suzerain the British meant the Chinese power to (a) station an Amban with (b) suitable escorts (ranging between 200–300 soldiers) at Lhasa and (c) China’s power to guide the external relations of Tibet.<sup>69</sup> Only this extent of Chinese suzerain power in Tibet is evident in the works of Alastair Lamb, Parshotam Mehra, Suchitra Ghosh, Premen Addy, etc. who have researched the official British documents.

Such an official usage of suzerain to describe a complex relationship is unfortunate but the British thought that it was the most appropriate term for the traditional Sino–Tibetan relationship. Etymologically, it was used in the middle ages to describe the relation between a feudal lord and his vassal. The suzerain relationship implied that “(1) the vassal had to perform every year an act of homage and submission to the suzerain; (2) he had to pay a tribute to suzerain; (3) he had to serve the Emperor with his soldiers in times of war and emergency; (4) the suzerainty granted a subsidy or pension to the vassal”.<sup>70</sup>

Let us see how far these points are met by the substance of Sino–Tibetan relations. Most of the Chinese emperors, especially Buddhist ones such as the Mongol and Manchu dynasties regarded the Dalai Lama and other

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High Lamas of Tibet as their gurus. As such, who paid homage and submission to who may be debatable. There was, however, a custom of paying tributes to the Chinese emperor in terms of Buddhist holy objects such as scriptures, icons, etc. On point (3), the situation was exactly the reverse: China served Tibet with soldiers in terms of war and emergency. There was no Chinese subsidy or pension to the Tibetan authorities including the Dalai Lama, though Buddhist emperors used to make donations or offerings to famous monasteries and to the High Lamas of Tibet.

Therefore the term suzerainty in its proper usage is not appropriate to designate China's historical status in Tibet. It may be suitable if used by "analogy to describe a relationship of dependency between states of unequal power, the superior state being the 'suzerain' and the dependent state the 'vassal'".<sup>71</sup>

The other term much used and advocated most emphatically by the British was autonomy. It is interesting to note that the Chinese Marxists have appropriated the same word to designate Tibet's status, but in a vastly different connotation than that of the British. As far as the British were concerned, the term autonomous or the autonomy of Tibet implied the following conditions: (a) the absence of Chinese troops other than the specified suitable escort to the Amban; (b) no interference in the Tibetan Administration which meant the absence of Chinese officials in the said Administration; (c) no transfer of Chinese colonists into Tibet; (d) that neither China nor Tibet was allowed to permit any foreign power into Tibet. In short, the Tibetan Government was independent in all of its domestic affairs except the foreign affairs which China as suzerain power was expected to guide.<sup>72</sup>

The classical Chinese lexicon has no exact term for "autonomy". The Chinese Marxists have used the same term that the British do to designate Tibet's contemporary status since 1965. But the Chinese usage appears to be a mockery of the term autonomy in the sense its historical popularizers had in mind. For today, the Tibet Autonomous Region, for all practical purposes, is a glorified provincial status for a Tibet that managed at least its internal affairs for centuries. Chinese domination seems to be most comprehensive: (a) the People's Liberation Army estimates range from 200,000 to 300,000 in Outer Tibet alone;<sup>73</sup> (b) since 1959 the Chinese have reorganized the Tibetan Administration into the Chinese model and all upper echelon positions are staffed by Chinese;<sup>74</sup> (c) since 1983 Peking has been transferring Chinese colonists into Tibet.<sup>75</sup> As a Marxist regime, the People's Republic of China, of course, justify all these radical measures on the grounds of "liberation" and progress.

It appears that the British Government, on the whole, tried to follow Oppenheim's legal definition of "suzerainty". Professor Oppenheim stated "Modern suzerainty involves only a few rights of the suzerain state over the

vassal state. ... The rights of the suzerain state over the vassal are principally international rights" that is foreign policy. He further stated that "the vassal remains nevertheless a half-sovereign state on account of its internal independence".<sup>76</sup>

Does the suzerain State (China), therefore, have ownership rights over the territory of the vassal state (Tibet)? Here historical facts do not fit the legal definition. In the context of war, Professor Oppenheim wrote, "As states under the suzerainty of another state are internationally in several respects considered to be a portion of its territory, they fall within the region of war between it and another power."<sup>77</sup> During World War II the USA asked the Tibetan Government to allow it and its allies (which included China as well) to use Southern Tibet as an alternative route to wartorn China from British India, but Lhasa refused on grounds of neutrality.<sup>78</sup> Secondly, all the pre-1950 treaties/conventions/agreements concerning the Tibeto-Indian boundary – five or six in number – were negotiated and signed between Tibet and British India (or with Himalayan States concerned) except the Sino-Indian agreement of 1890 on the Sikkim-Tibet border, which the XIII Dalai Lama's Government refused to recognize.<sup>79</sup>

But neither Chinese "suzerainty" nor Tibet's "autonomy" were acceptable to Lhasa. These terms were British impositions on an unwilling and unarmed Tibet, as the appropriate status – based not so much on actual history but on British imperial security and commercial imperatives. The British, too, learned how the Chinese suzerain power ran in Tibet, especially since 1890. Tibet refused to accept the terms of all Anglo-Chinese treaties on Tibet to which the Tibetan Government was not a party. Similarly, all those foreign travellers or missions to Tibet with Chinese purposes were not entertained by the Tibetan authorities. Thus, despite her isolationist policy, Tibet's refusal to comply with Anglo-Chinese attempts to redefine her international status is clearly on record. By 1908 the British rulers had learned that any Anglo-Chinese attempt to define Tibet's status without Tibetan participation was unacceptable to the Tibetans. The Simla Convention was a logical culmination of an attempt to discuss Tibet's status among all the parties involved – India, China and Tibet.

Finally we shall examine the international treaties signed on or by Tibet. Such treaties may be considered as indices to (a) the extent of Chinese suzerain power and Tibetan willingness or refusal to comply with such orders as might emanate from the suzerain power; (b) the quantum of Tibetan autonomy on which the British always insisted; (c) the status of Tibet as contemplated by the said treaties.

The first Anglo-Chinese diplomatic discussion on Tibet took place in 1846 regarding Ladakh-Tibet border. The British thought it necessary to confer with the representative from Jammu-Kashmir and Tibet to prevent future border disputes. Tibet showed no signs of complying. The British

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then sought to get Beijing to press the Tibetan authorities to agree to the talks but the Chinese declined and refused.<sup>80</sup>

The Chefoo Convention of 1876 signed between Great Britain and China, permitted a British exploratory mission into Tibet, but the Tibetan authorities refused to recognize the Chinese passport and the Mission could not proceed.<sup>81</sup>

The Anglo-Chinese treaty of 1890 recognized the British protectorate over Sikkim and sought to demarcate the Sikkim-Tibet border. The Tibetans showed profound disregard for the treaty stipulations by demolishing the new border markers (pillars).<sup>82</sup> That is, the Tibetans refused to recognize the British takeover of Sikkim and consequently the newly defined boundary between Sikkim and Tibet.

Tibetan authorities showed no less an objection to the Anglo-Chinese Trade Regulations of 1893 which agreed to the establishment of a British trade mart at Yatung (Dromo). "It was evident from the outset that the Tibetans had no intention of observing the Convention. At Phari, a march or two beyond Yatung a 10 percent duty was charged on all goods from India, no Tibetan traders were allowed to go beyond Phari in the direction of Yatung with their goods. In 1895 the Commissioner of the Rajashahi Division was told flatly at Yatung that, as the Convention was made by the Chinese only, the Tibetan Government refused to recognize it."<sup>83</sup>

Whatever may have been the motives behind the Younghusband Expedition (Russian intrigue or Tibetan refusal to communicate with Lord Curzon), the Lhasa Convention begins with this Preamble: "Whereas doubts and difficulties have arisen as to the meaning and validity of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, and the Trade Regulations of 1893, and as to the liabilities of the Tibetan Government under these agreements". Article I stipulates that "the Government of Tibet engages to respect the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, and to recognize the frontier between Sikkim and Tibet, as defined in Article I of the said Convention and to re-erect boundary pillars accordingly." Article II deals with the trade mart at Yatung under the Anglo-Chinese Trade Regulations which "shall, subject to such amendments as may be hereafter be agreed upon by common consent between the British and Tibetan Governments, apply to the marts above mentioned".<sup>84</sup> Such stipulations make it clear that the British Government compelled the Tibetan Government to accept the Anglo-Chinese treaties in which Tibetans had no say and which they therefore refused to recognize as binding on Tibet. But the true significance of the Lhasa Convention lies in the fact that Britain recognized Tibet's treaty-making power or at least the realization that a treaty concerning Tibet without Tibetan participation would be quite meaningless.

The Lhasa Convention was signed between Great Britain and Tibet, and failed to obtain the Chinese signature which Younghusband thought was necessary. Thus, the potential was left for later Chinese complaints. In order

to appease the Chinese Government, Britain entered into the Anglo–Chinese Convention of 1906. This treaty makes it clear that the Lhasa Convention was necessitated by Tibet’s refusal to recognize the Anglo–Chinese treaties of 1890 and 1893: “And whereas the refusal of Tibet to recognize the validity of or to carry into full effect the provisions of the Anglo–Chinese Convention of 17th March, 1890, and Regulations of 5th December, 1893 placed the British Government under the necessity of making steps to secure their rights and interest under the said Convention and Regulations.” Chinese face was saved. However, Tibet refused to recognize the validity of the Anglo–Chinese Convention of 1906 and repudiated it at the Simla Convention.<sup>85</sup>

Another Anglo–Chinese Trade Regulation (1908) made sure that China accepted the Lhasa Convention. It was provided that “both the High Contracting Parties should engage to take at all times such steps as might be necessary to secure the due fulfillment of the terms specified in the Lhasa Convention of 7th September, 1904 between Great Britain and Tibet, the text of which was attached as an Annex to the above-mentioned Convention (Preamble)”. Though signed between China and Britain, this treaty accepted the authorization of a Tibetan delegate, and as such there appeared to be no opposition or objection from the Tibetan side. It is the first international agreement in which Great Britain managed to get both China and Tibet to accept the agreement, and marks a prelude to the Simla Convention of 1913–14.

The Simla Convention is the culmination of several British attempts to settle the question of Tibet and its relations to both China and British India. It is a culmination in the following sense. First, believing in Chinese suzerainty, the British signed treaties with China on issues concerning Tibet. But such treaties were repudiated by Tibet as not binding on her. Hence, they tried to bring both claimants (China and Tibet), to the negotiating table. The Simla treaty also sought to divide Tibet into Outer and Inner zones, whereby the latter was declared as the Chinese sphere of influence and the former as autonomous Tibet. It was a tripartite treaty between Britain, China and Tibet. Though initialled, the Chinese Government refused to ratify it. However, its true significance lies in the realization that dawned upon the British Government that no treaty concerning Tibet can be meaningful without Tibetan participation.

A number of proposals were repeatedly put forward that the Chinese Government should be approached through the British Legation at Beijing to grant an order of admittance to Tibet: the “Chinese Government would never willingly grant permission for a British visit to Tibet partly because it did not want to see its own position endangered and partly because it was impossible that even if permission were granted, the Tibetans would honour it.” Coleman Macaulay’s proposed mission to Lhasa was “flatly refused by Tibetans and Chinese unable to compel them to accept.”<sup>86</sup> When Tibet

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invaded Sikkim in 1886, Peking was approached but the Tibetan troops did not withdraw.<sup>87</sup> Lord Curzon approached the Ambans with regard to a revision of Trade Regulation of 1893 and to demarcate the Sikkim–Tibetan frontier but concluded that Chinese suzerainty was a constitutional fiction.<sup>88</sup> Hence, the British decided to try direct dealing with Lhasa. Lord Curzon's two letters addressed to the Dalai Lama and the Simla Convention to which Tibet was one of the parties – represented this belated, but new, realization.

We have analysed the foreign policies of British India and imperial China towards Tibet during one of the most tumultuous periods in Asian history, the era of capitalist imperialism, whose politics and dialectics largely determined the status of Tibet. Tibet remained isolated from and closed to the outside world for nearly 130 years (1775–1904) during which time Great Britain rose to power in South Asia, redrawing Asian maps to suit her grand strategy. We emphasize that Tibet's isolationism was not so much due to her alleged fear of the destruction of her religion by European powers nor due to her anger that the British were behind the Gurkha invasion of Tibet (1788), as several earlier writers have alleged. It was fundamentally out of a well-informed fear of British colonialism as manifested in India and the cis-Himalayan region in particular.

Tibetan fear and suspicion that their country too might be colonized by European powers in general and Great Britain in particular (Phyi-gling) proved, unfortunately, to be wrong. As Owen Lattimore remarked, Tibet brings diminishing returns to imperialism; one might add only its strategic importance both to China and India makes the cost bearable. Since China remained weak and divided from the early 1840s up to 1949, the British could manage their national security through diplomatic manoeuvres without colonizing or even extending protectorate over Tibet. Finding Tibet's economy poor, resources bad and communications difficult, the British ruled out any colonization of Tibet from the time of the East India Company. If it had been colonized like South Asia, Tibet's modern fate might have been very different. British imperialism was a modern capitalist imperialism based mostly on profit motivation rather than on glory of conquest or habit of warfare rooted in its social structure. Neither Great Britain nor Tsarist Russia was willing to extend protectorate over Tibet. Both of these powers, which had high security stakes in Central Asia, sought, instead, to neutralize Tibet, as clearly reflected in the Anglo–Russian Convention of 1907, so that their respective security goals were ensured.

Once colonization of or protectorate over Tibet was ruled out, it became a matter of adjustment with the Chinese Empire. In fact Imperial China and British India mutually perceived themselves as "respective Empires" as written in the Conventions of 1890 and 1906; such phrases were not used in the case of the Anglo–Russian agreement. There is therefore some truth in the view that at certain periods, especially during Curzon's Viceroyship,

there developed a working alliance between British India and Imperial China.<sup>89</sup> For the common enemy intriguing in and disturbing Inner Asian peace was perceived to be Tsarist Russia.

Besides this alliance, there is another important factor which we must consider, namely the British overall policy towards Imperial China as such. Unlike South Asia where the British were able to defeat other European contestants for power, in China no single Western power could triumph over other rivals who were equally well-entrenched in their respective spheres of influence. Since protracted struggles for the domination of China were likely to be costly for the rival imperialist powers, there emerged among such powers an operational consensus on their commitment to the territorial integrity of China. Thus, Chinese 'melon' was divided among Western imperialist powers and China became a hypo-colony but the territorial integrity of the Chinese Empire was ensured.<sup>90</sup>

Throughout their rule in India, the chief British interest in Tibet was how to maintain the security of the 2,000 mile long northern frontier of their Empire in India. Tibet was essentially conceived as a buffer between India and other powers that neighbour Tibet – China and Russia. At the heyday of British colonial power in India they designed a double-rampart security system. The outer rampart included the Tibetan Plateau where external influence was not ruled out (e.g. by China); and the inner rampart consisted of the Himalayan states where no external influence was permitted.<sup>91</sup> That is why the British took over Sikkim, which used to be tied to Tibet in several ways, and signed a treaty with China in 1890 which recognized that the British Government "has direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that state".<sup>92</sup> In the case of Tibet, they intervened militarily only if there was perceived definite external danger such as the so-called Russian intrigue.

The British attempt to make Tibet a buffer state was not without difficulties, because Tibet had traditional relations with China that defied any simple explanation. But it was not because of Chinese opposition that they could not take over Tibet in the same way as Sikkim; they could easily have overrun Tibet if they had deemed it vital to their interests. The real reasons were conflicting imperatives in British policy towards Tibet. Throughout their period of imperial power in Asia, the British tended to be anxious lest their diplomacy towards both China and states considered as falling within the Chinese sphere might produce an adverse effect on the British commercial interest in China. In 1814–16, for example, when Britain was at war with Nepal (a country thought to be in some way tributary to the Chinese emperor) the Indian Government endeavoured to minimize the risk of Chinese reprisals against the East India Company's trade at Canton, the main source of its profits at the time.<sup>93</sup> In fact the British Government showed even more sensitivity towards Chinese sentiments regarding Tibet as shown in their fastidious interest in the



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nature of the historical Sino-Tibetan relationship, so as to determine China's historical status in Tibet.

The initial Chinese reaction to the early British encroachment in Tibet was one of traditional imperialism – a glory of domination rather than economic or strategic interest. However, as time passed, especially after the Younghusband Expedition, Britain realized a new dimension to Tibet which did not exist in the Chinese consciousness. It was the strategic value of Tibet to China. Since then China began to perceive Tibet as "the back-door" to China, as "the lips of the mouth". If the backdoor was open and occupied by a foreign power, China proper could not feel safe and secure. If the lips of the mouth were open, alien and dangerous elements might penetrate the Chinese body politic. In an important sense the Chinese Communist takeover of Tibet in 1950 might be explained in such strategic terms.

In driving the Chinese perception into a strategic direction, the British played no small role. Their activities in Tibet – such as spying, exploration, expedition, "trade" posts, diplomatic attempts to define China's historical status in Tibet, etc. – aroused tremendous suspicion in the Chinese mind. As far as the British were concerned such activities were nothing more than a "show of their presence" in a region vital to the security of their empire in India, and to ward off any possible danger to their national security.

In conclusion I will now reiterate one of the basic assumptions of this chapter and the larger international system that prevailed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: a sort of strategic rivalry ("the Great Game") between British India, Imperial China and Tsarist Russia that shaped the status of pre-1950 Tibet as an autonomous, buffer state in Inner Asia. The assumption is this: Buddhist Tibet represented a rare case of a non-coercive regime in the sense that the said regime did not possess sufficient armed forces to defend itself, especially from any external intervention or takeover.

During the traditional era, that is before the Western colonial powers' penetration of Asia which completely upset the pre-modern balance of power in the whole Asian continent, Tibet used to depend on Mongol, Manchu and Chinese power for its necessary military protection.<sup>94</sup> This arrangement worked fairly well for the lamaist regime as long as there was no radical change in the external security environment surrounding Inner Asia, and also provided that its traditional military protectors were either Buddhist themselves, such as the Yuan and Qing dynasties, or at least sympathetic towards lamaist culture, such as Republican China and British India.

But all this changed radically with the arrival and consolidation of European colonial powers in various parts of Asia, particularly in South and East Asia since the 1830s; they brought about a great transformation in the traditional modes and the very concept of inter-state relations in Asia, directly affecting Tibet. This chapter has been primarily concerned with the

objective impact of this great transformation on the traditional pattern of Sino-Tibetan relations, resulting in the Europeanization of the relationship. It represents a major discontinuity in the historical process.

The British colonial/imperial officials concerned with Indian affairs perceived and forcefully interpreted the traditional modes of Sino-Tibetan relations in terms of European international law and the praxis of imperialism. They believed that the sole actor in international politics is either the sovereign state or empires which may be defined as a single imperial metropolis or centre controlling various nations and nationalities under a single political roof. Tibet was put under the latter category as belonging to the Qing Empire. These were the ways and means by which the British power elite sought to legitimate their stand on Tibet *vis-à-vis* China. But the extent of Tibet's actual autonomy and China's suzerain status in practice was largely determined by the imperial security concerns of the British empire in India, backed undoubtedly by the unparalleled power of Pax Britannica.

The security problem of a non-coercive regime, situated in a strategic location, became all the more acute in the early modern age of active imperialism and rising nationalism because of increased rivalry, competition and conflict over security concerns and economic resources. Therefore, one of the first consequences of British imperialism in South Asia was to create a major security crisis, as the Tibetans at first perceived it, in their traditional external security arrangement as it worked with the Mongol and Manchu protectors. The then military protector, the Qing Dynasty, proved inadequate to meet this unprecedented threat, as demonstrated by the Chinese failure to intervene when the Younghusband Expedition marched to Lhasa in 1903-4. Faced with such an unprecedented threat from South Asia, Tibet almost completely isolated and insulated itself from British India in particular and from all Europeans in general. This remained so for nearly 133 years (1775-1904). Tibet remained in splendid isolation while all around her was tense with revolutionary changes. Tibet fell because it failed to cope with changes in the modern world – more specifically Tibetan elites' failure to modernize their state structure, traditional economy and social system. In this monumental failure monastic conservatism played a pivotal role. On failing to modernize itself, Tibet virtually ceased to be an actor, however limited, in international politics at an age of active imperialism and rising nationalism. This made it easier for the great powers to redefine and decide the modern status of Tibet, almost behind the Tibetan back.

With the decline of Chinese power in Tibet, British India tended to progressively relax its constraint on Lhasa from 1912 onwards, even encouraging Tibetan operational independence. This line of policy was advocated by such British officials as Charles Bell, F. W. Williamson and Basil Gould.<sup>95</sup> But, on the whole, Britain appeared to be cautious, even

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during this period, about recognizing Tibet's *de facto* independence (1912–50) because its (Britain's) two conflicting imperatives continued to persist. Nevertheless, from the perspective of this chapter, British India functioned, during this period, for all practical purposes, as the informal protector of the lamaist state from the time of the XIII Dalai Lama. In this connection, we should recall how British India tried to persuade and pressurize China to reach a negotiated boundary settlement with Tibet at Simla in 1913–14 and how it tried to mediate and resolve the Sino–Tibetan conflict in Kham during 1930–32, as well as its offer to supply arms to Lhasa.

The fact that, on the whole, British diplomatic pressure and the occasional threat to use force sufficed to protect the fragile Tibetan autonomy from possible Chinese intervention for nearly 35 years meant that the power of Pax Britannica in South Asia was, of course far greater than that of a weak and divided China. And, in a larger military sense, the Chinese Communist takeover of Tibet in 1950 was facilitated by the change in the balance of power between East and South Asia since late 1940s.

Thus, one of the major difficulties in ensuring Tibetan autonomy is the drastic change in the balance of power between South Asia and Northeast Asia. This is the reversal of the international situation that prevailed during the British Raj which makes the protection of Tibetan autonomy through international pressures problematic. At least the British were in a powerful position as well as willing to protect the neutralized autonomy of Tibet through diplomatic pressure or armed intervention if necessary. Two instances will illustrate this point. When Russia's "intrigue" was suspected in Lhasa at the turn of the twentieth century, the British foreign secretary at once protested to the Russian ambassador in London. "With a map of Central Asia before me", he recalled later, "I pointed out to his Excellency [Russian Ambassador] that Lhasa was within a comparatively short distance of the northern frontier of India. It was on the other hand, considerably over 1,000 miles distant from the Asiatic possessions of Russia, and any sudden display of Russian interest or activity in the regions immediately adjoining the possession of Great Britain could scarcely fail to have a disturbing impact upon the population or create the impression that British influence was receding and that of Russia making rapid advances into regions which had been regarded as altogether outside her sphere of influence."<sup>96</sup>

Similarly when they heard of the Chinese Military Expedition against Tibet in 1909, Sir John Jordan, the British Ambassador to China, protested to the Chinese authorities that Great Britain "would not tolerate any attempt to reduce Tibet, who had independent treaty relations with Great Britain to the condition of a province of China and he warned the Chinese Government that grave complications might ensue if the Chinese expedition crossed the frontier into Tibet".<sup>97</sup>

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Such necessary protection of the Tibetan autonomy – by a great power situated in South Asia which had its own interests in safeguarding the Himalayan frontier – is now lacking, and this puts Tibet's autonomy at the mercy of China. The survival of a non-coercive regime, defined as a self-contained political system lacking in armed forces, to perpetuate and maintain itself in the early modern era of power politics and active imperialism, depended on two factors: (a) that the claimant power (i.e. China) remains weak and divided; (b) a great power capable of acting in South Asia as a deterrent against any possible takeover of the non-coercive regime by China. This deterrent power protects the non-coercive regime in Tibet largely to ensure a safe and secure frontier along the Himalayan region. By 1949 the above-mentioned two conditions had almost completely changed, adversely affecting Tibet's autonomy. China became strong and united under Communist leadership, ready to take over Tibet by 1949–50. The power that used to deter China from taking over Tibet had departed South Asia by 1947.<sup>98</sup>

## Part III

# Tibet in Communist China

*“Chinese irredentism and Communist imperialism are different from the expansionism or imperialism of the Western Powers. The former has a cloak of ideology which makes it ten times more dangerous.”*  
Sardar Patel<sup>1</sup>

*“Tibet is the roof of the world. If we build rocket-launching sites there and install missiles, does it not mean that we can easily strike where they point? Control over Tibet enables us to gain the strategic initiative.”*

People’s Liberation Army officer<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Durga Das, *Sardar Patel Select Correspondence 1945–50*, Vol. 10 (Ahmedabad: Navajvan, 1971), p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 9 September 1991, p. 31.



## Chapter 12

# The Problematics of the Sino–Tibetan Agreement of 1951

The Seventeen Point Agreement (1951)<sup>1</sup> is one of the most controversial and significant documents in the history of Sino–Tibetan relations since the 821 treaty. In 1951 the Tibetan plenipotentiaries were compelled or coerced, as we shall find out later, to sign and surrender Tibetan sovereignty for the first time in more explicit terms than any other Tibetan authorities had done under any Chinese regime, imperial or republican. The treaty has now become a quasi-legal instrument by which the Chinese Marxist missionaries sought to legitimate their takeover of Tibet and to integrate systematically with China in the name of Marxism.

With the internationalization of the Tibet issue since the late 1980s, the practical utility and current relevance of the Agreement to the continued Chinese occupation of Tibet cannot be underestimated. In 1991, the People's Republic of China (PRC) launched a year long celebration to mark the fortieth anniversary of “the Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet”.<sup>2</sup> The occasion encouraged several publications on the topic in the Chinese media and some academic contributions in the West also.<sup>3</sup> Above all, four out of five Tibetan delegates and their two translators have published their memoirs, all of which call for a reexamination of the event and the document in a somewhat clearer perspective than was possible before.

The Chinese Marxists left Tibet practically untouched until the end of their revolution. However, Tibet, along with Mongol and Turkic minority nationalities, figured occasionally in pre-1931 Communist documents.<sup>4</sup> Otherwise, the Communists concentrated on those minority nationalities such as Inner Mongolians and Hui (Chinese Muslims) who were within the theatre of their revolutionary activity. However, the Communists passed through Eastern Tibet during their Long March (1934–35).<sup>5</sup> This brief

encounter, during which the Communists faced stiff Tibetan resistance, might have sensitized Mao Zedong and other leaders to the fact that the Tibetans were far from ready for revolution or “liberation”, and that the most prudent strategy was to leave them alone for the time being until the Han Revolution was completed. At that point it might be accomplished through a combination of force and persuasion, as it was in October 1950.

As soon as the Communists came to power in Beijing in October 1949, General Chu De, the Commander-in-Chief of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) declared that Tibet was part of the PRC and that the next task of the PLA was to “liberate” Tibet and Taiwan.<sup>6</sup> This was followed by propaganda broadcasts from Beijing and Sichuan beamed towards the Tibetans. The Communist leaders had made their intentions clear from October 1949 onwards: “peaceful liberation” negotiation or armed intervention and forceful takeover.

In response to the Communist broadcast, the Tibetan Government sent a three-member negotiating team headed by Tsipon Shakabpa in December 1949.<sup>7</sup> Shakabpa was instructed to hold talks with the Chinese representative “near the border” either in Hong Kong or Singapore but preferably not in Beijing. The British Government, however, did not approve of the idea of holding Sino–Tibetan talks in territories under British rule; they hinted that the talks should be held in Delhi. The Chinese objected to this venue, and insisted that the Tibetan negotiators should go to Beijing. Being caught in the cross-currents of international pressure, the Shakabpa team had to wait in Delhi for nearly a year during which time they held negotiations with the Chinese ambassador in India.

On 7 October 1950, almost a year after the first announcement of “liberation”, two divisions of the PLA, the 52nd Division from the north and the 53rd Division from the south, launched a full-scale attack on Eastern Tibet. The 7,000 or 8,000<sup>8</sup> badly-trained and ill-equipped Tibetan troops were no match for the 40,000 battle-seasoned PLA troops. The Chinese crushed the Tibetans, killing 5,700 men out of 7,000 in Chamdo.<sup>9</sup> On 19 October 1950, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, Commander of the Tibetan crack troops and the Governor of Eastern Tibet (Kham), surrendered to General Wang Chimi. On 7 December 1950, he despatched two Tibetan messengers to Lhasa, informing the Dalai Lama and the Kashag (Cabinet) of the fall of Chamdo and enclosing a copy of the 10-Point Chinese peace proposal. The proposal was discussed by the Tibetan National Assembly (tsong ‘du) on 12 December 1950.

At the same time the Kashag and the abbots of the three great Gelugpa monasteries held a secret meeting on the security of the Dalai Lama in view of the advancing Chinese army.<sup>10</sup> Most felt it was not safe for the Dalai Lama to remain in Lhasa. On the night of 16 December 1950, the Dalai Lama, his two tutors and the Kashag members left for Dromo (Yatung), near the Indo–Tibetan border. Before leaving, the Dalai Lama appointed



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Lhukhangwa and Lobsang Tashi as the joint caretaker Prime Ministers (srid tsab) as well as two men (Sampho Tenzin Dhondup and Khenchung Thubten Legmon) to assist Ngabo in the negotiations. From Dromo the Kashag appointed and sent two more delegates, Lhawutara, Thubten Tendhar and Kheme Sonam Wangdu, with Chinese and English translators, Takla Phuntsog Tashi and Sandhu Lobsang Rinchen, respectively via India. On 29 April 1951 the Sino-Tibetan talks formally began in Beijing and ended on 23 May 1951. The talks actually lasted eleven days.

The preceding facts provide the background to and the context within which the Seventeen Point Agreement will be discussed.

Shakabpa in Delhi tried his best to forestall a full-scale invasion and to reach a compromise solution through peaceful negotiation.<sup>11</sup> Yet, by early October 1950, his almost year-long effort failed and the PLA launched their massive attack on Chamdo. The critical question is whether the British refusal to issue a transit visa to the Shakabpa delegation to Hong Kong precipitated the Chinese military action or whether a Maoist armed intervention (“liberation”) was already on the Chinese agenda. In the latter case, it was a matter of timing. The Communist leaders might have misperceived the British intention to assume a “fair policy” role in the negotiating process, especially with regard to its venue.

The British Government deliberately delayed issuing transit visa for Hong Kong to the Lhasa delegation, making it impossible for them to come to Peking. According to reports from various sources when the Lhasa delegation were loitering in India, the British High Commissioner Nye and other foreign imperialist elements used every effort to persuade the delegation not to come to any agreement with the Chinese People’s Government. Then on the 12th August, when the Indian Government saw that the operations of Chinese Government’s forces to enter Tibet were about to begin, they informed the Chinese Government that the British Government had withdrawn its refusal to issue visas to the Tibetan delegation and that facilities for the departure of the delegation for Peking were available.<sup>12</sup>

*The People’s Daily* with its ideological mindset, especially under Cold War conditions, lumps “the British High Commissioner Nye and other foreign imperialist elements” together. Actually the British, American and Indian policies on Tibet were quite distinct, if not divergent. The British Foreign Office and its overseas missions in Asia operated on their traditional assumption that China enjoyed suzerain rights in Tibet but that Tibet had also enjoyed autonomy in their (British) sense of the term; and that instead of fighting a futile “war”, it was advisable for the beleaguered Tibetans to negotiate with Beijing. But they differed on the venue of the negotiation.

While the Tibetan authorities, with their memories of former British imperial power, felt the negotiations should be held in a British territory

such as Hong Kong or Singapore so as to receive British moral support and an implicit political presence which would augment their (Tibetan) bargaining power, Britain thought Delhi was more suited for the venue, with independent India having a higher stake in the outcome of the negotiations. This was probably one of the main reasons for the procrastination over the visas. In such a vein the British tried to restrain the US officials and their agents who showed the most active interest in helping Tibet, short of open armed intervention. The British view was that a clandestine American interest in Tibet might create more suspicion in the Chinese mind and therefore might damage Tibetan prospects for negotiation. In this respect, there was some convergence between London and Delhi. Both in the end inclined towards peaceful negotiation rather than half-hearted intervention or futile Tibetan resistance, which in the face of the might of the PLA had little chance. However, the Indian view differed from both the US and British. Britain expected, with the transfer of power to Nehru's Government, that India would play a "leading" role in the Tibet question in which there was Indian self-interest. But Nehru and his associates had a different opinion. They were afraid of losing their influence on the PRC, especially on such international issues as the Korean war, by their fruitless involvement with Tibet. And they were completely against any Cold War entanglement which would inevitably result if they cooperated with or acquiesced in an American venture in Tibet.<sup>13</sup>

In mid-August 1950, the US Government "informed the Indian government of U.S. willingness to help Tibet with arms and ammunitions if the Tibetan government could arrange for transit of such equipment across neighbouring countries, that is to say, India".<sup>14</sup> Then on 12 August 1950 the Government of India "informed the Chinese Government that the British government had withdrawn its refusal to issue visas to the Tibetan delegation and that facilities for the departure of the delegation for Peking were available".<sup>15</sup> The Chinese Communists perceived a US intervention in Tibet by mid-October to be a great danger and this might be why they promptly enacted their full-scale military invasion in early October 1950. This is one plausible interpretation.

At the same time, there is some evidence to suggest that the Communist power elite's decision to move the PLA troops into Eastern Tibet (Kham and Amdo) was made as early as January 1950. As General Chang Kuo-hua of the 18th Corps of the Second Field Army, who led the Communist invasion of Tibet, wrote: "In January 1950, immediately upon the conclusion of the campaign of the liberation of the great Southwest, Army accepted the glorious task of advancing on and liberating Tibet." He further explained that the "brilliant directive" was from Chairman Mao himself transmitted to General Chang via "Commanders Liu Po-ch'eng and Ho Lung and Political Commissar Teng Hsiao-peng from the Southwest Bureau [of the CCP<sup>16</sup> Central Committee] and the Southwest Military District Command".<sup>17</sup>

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The most revealing part of his reminiscences of the invasion was Mao Zedong's Tibet-specific policy that the Tibet-bound PLA troops were instructed to follow while marching into Tibet. As General Chang Kuo-hua recalls,

Having exhaustively considered the special characteristics of Tibet, and having analyzed scientifically the complicated historical background and political situation of Tibet, the Chairman instructed our Tibet-bound forces to carry out earnestly the Party's nationality policy and policy toward religion, to do united front work properly by winning the support of the upper strata, influencing and rallying the masses, protecting patriotic and law-abiding lamas and monasteries, and respecting the freedom of religious beliefs and local habits and customs; to unite closely with the nationality, to strive to win over and rally patriotic forces that could be rallied, and to concentrate on dealing blows to imperialism and its faithful lackeys – the pro-imperialist secessionists.<sup>18</sup>

This sums up the basic Maoist Tibet-liberation strategy. It is written in Communist language which must be decoded. Mao and his close associates, and in particular Mao's men on the spot such as General Chang Kuo-hua, understood the Tibetan situation quite well. They also agreed that the task before the Tibet-bound PLA troops was fundamentally different from the one they faced in China proper, that is in the Han areas.

Unlike the Han peasants with whom the Maoists shared basic commonalities, the Tibetans differed in terms of common language, social history, religion, culture, social organization, all of which make the Tibetan people a distinct and different nationality from the Han people. This assessment was recognized and accepted by Mao and his close comrades. They warned their troops that they were dealing with a nationality different from their familiar Han race. Secondly, the Chairman was quite correct in stressing on Party's policy on religion (Buddhism) which permeates almost every sphere and psyche of the Tibetan people. Hence, he instructed the PLA to protect "patriotic and law-abiding lamas and monasteries" and to respect "the freedom of religious beliefs and local habits and customs". Thirdly, unlike China proper, in Tibet (both Outer and Inner) there was no "revolutionary situation".<sup>19</sup> This meant that the Communist "liberators" had to hide their radical ideological project, as they did so successfully in the Seventeen Point Agreement and their earlier policy on Tibet. In short, the "special characteristics", "the complicated historical background" and the "political situation" of Tibet dictated, from Mao's realistic point of view, a special policy for Tibet. But Mao's final advice was to "concentrate on dealing blows to imperialism and its faithful lackeys – the pro-imperialist secessionists", that is Tibetan nationalists and their foreign supporters. There was to be no compromise with Tibetan nationalism. This

explains the Communists' insistence upon Beijing as the only acceptable venue for negotiation, their resolute opposition to any external "interference", their uncompromising stand on Tibetan nationalistic rebels and their refusal to concede to the Tibetan authorities' repeated appeal that Tibet was not part of China. That Tibet is part of China was Chairman Mao's decision and so it became a Party decision.

While the Tibet liberation strategy was outlined by Mao, the situation specific tactics to be adopted by the Tibet-bound PLA were specified by Teng Hsiao-ping. "Political Commissar Teng Hsiao-ping pointed out the resolute execution of the Party's guidelines and policies would have decisive significance to our expedition to Tibet and liberation of Tibet, that we should depend on policy for movement and food." Being in Southwest China for a long time, Teng was evidently familiar with the situation in Tibet, and suggested that the projection of a new, clean image for the PLA and Communists was imperative for the success of the "liberation" of Tibet: "that with correct policy we must dispel the evil rumours and propaganda of Chinese and foreign reactionaries, remove the national barriers and prejudices left by history".<sup>20</sup>

The first task of the Tibet-bound PLA was not to fight but to propagate the Tibet-specific gospel and to project an image of a "new Han". This psychological warfare consisted of the following essential messages: that the PLA was totally different from any previous Chinese army sent to Tibet, that they would take neither a "needle nor thread" from the Tibetan people, and that they were sent to Tibet to help, not to rule over Tibet. This had an effect on some Tibetan officials. Ngabo tried to dispel the Tibetan government fears in this way, "to send troops to Tibet is by no means to arbitrarily interfere in Tibet's internal affairs, but because the world situation is turbulent at present."<sup>21</sup> Lhautara, a Tibetan delegate to the Seventeen Point delegation expressed similar apprehensions which he, living now in Lhasa under Chinese rule, says were ill-founded: "I feared that the People's Liberation Army might take over all the Kashag's powers, like the imperial troops used to do in olden days."<sup>22</sup> General Chang claimed a similar victory in propaganda and the conversion of Tibetans in Kham.<sup>23</sup>

In particular, Mao emphasized the good intentions of the PLA in Tibet in his meeting with the Tibetan delegates on 25 May 1951 after the conclusion of the Agreement. Takla Phuntsog Tashi, the Chinese translator from the Tibetan side recalls Mao as saying:

We the Chinese Communist Party [in Tibet] are to help in scientific and economic development [of Tibet]; we are not there to rule over you. We are not evil doers. If the Chinese working personnel [in Tibet] bully you, you should let us know.<sup>24</sup>

Khame Sonam Wangdu, the second ranking member of the Tibetan delegation also recalls that Mao told them: "Now Beijing is yours and if

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there is any qualified Tibetan, he can be our Chairman.” He further told them that for one or two years, the Tibetans should help the PLA in food and other matters; after that the Chinese would assist Tibet in its all round development.<sup>25</sup>

The Dalai Lama during his 1954 visit to China received similar assurances from Mao:

He [Mao] said it was the mission of China to bring progress to Tibet by developing its natural resources, and that the generals who were in Lhasa, Chang Chin-wu and Fan Ming, were there as representatives of China to help me and the people of Tibet. They had not gone there to exercise any kind of authority over the Tibetan government or people.<sup>26</sup>

Two comments may be in order. The Chinese-imposed and -imported revolution in Tibet might initially have begun with good intentions. The problem with “Marxist good intentions” is that they not only forced their project on an unwilling people but dangerously claimed that they knew what was good for the people. In so doing, the Communists ignored the invisible forces of society and history such as ethnicity and ethnic identity, religious orientation and other group characteristics that constitute a distinct society, people or a nation. They also underestimate people’s ingenuity and ignore their relative free will. However, whatever the initial premise, the Chinese Communist “good intentions” in Tibet have now degenerated into Han hegemony.<sup>27</sup>

Secondly, the Maoist psychological tactics, particularly their projection of a new image for the Chinese army, might have had an impact on some Tibetans, especially on the traditional ruling class. The main purpose of this PLA peace offensive was to reduce Tibetan resistance at the grass roots level and to make the “liberation” appear less like an invasion or an act of aggression against Tibet. This alone, however, was not enough. The Communist strategy consisted of a combination of peace offensive plus the threat of actual force throughout the year-long military campaign in Kham and during the month-long negotiating period in Beijing.

After the peace missions, such as those of Gaddi Rinpoche and Taktse Rinpoche failed “to persuade the Lhasa authorities to accept a peaceful solution”,<sup>28</sup> the Communists decided on a massive attack on the Tibetan garrison at Chamdo, the headquarters of the Tibetan official resistance force against the invasion. They knew<sup>29</sup> that their 40,000 battle-hardened soldiers could easily defeat the 7,000 ill-trained Tibetan soldiers. However, that was not their sole motive. As General Chang wrote, “The whole army had only one thought: catch him [the enemy or Ngabo], surround him! Do not let him escape. Strive for complete victory in the battle of Changtu [Chamdo]”.<sup>30</sup> Their tactic was this: after inflicting a crushing blow on the Tibetan troops, capture Ngabo and his officers, and from the strength of that position, force Ngabo to call upon Lhasa for peaceful negotiation.

This serious military blow, which was like a bolt from the blue, quickened a political division within the upper level ruling clique of Tibet. Under such a situation, the local government of Tibet finally responded to the appeal of the great nationality policy of our Central People's Government and Chairman Mao, and sent a peace delegation headed by Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, to Peking to open negotiations.<sup>31</sup>

Apart from their historical significance, the origins of the Seventeen Points of the Sino-Tibetan Agreement could answer the question of to what extent various articles of the Agreement were predetermined. Was there much scope left for free and fair discussion on the basic issues between the two parties? Was it a case of capitulation, compulsion or coercion?

Most of the general points of the Agreement were derived from the "Common Programme" adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on 29 September 1949. A copy of this document was given to Tsipton Shakabpa on 16 September 1950 by the Chinese Ambassador General Yuan Chung-Hsien in Delhi.<sup>32</sup> The Ambassador told him that Articles 50 to 53 would be implemented in Tibet; and indeed in the Seventeen Point Agreement, "The Common Programme" was mentioned four times as the basic point of reference. Article 50 states,

*All nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China are equal. They shall establish unity and mutual aid among themselves, and shall oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the People's Republic of China will become a big fraternal and cooperative family composed of all its nationalities. Greater nationalism and chauvinism shall be opposed. Acts involving discrimination, oppression and *splitting of the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited* (emphasis added).<sup>33</sup>*

Those underlined sentences or phrases are the points that have figured in the Agreement. The first part of Article 50 appears in the Preamble of the Agreement as "all national minorities have fully enjoyed the right of mutual equality, and have exercised, or are exercising, national regional autonomy". It is repeated towards the end of the Preamble as "in order the Tibetan nationality and people may be freed and return to the big family of the People's Republic of China to enjoy the same rights of national equality as all the other nationalities in the country". Defining equality as national regional autonomy, Point Three of the Seventeen Point Agreement stipulates in more specific terms, "the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government", citing from "The Common Programme".

The metaphor of the "big Chinese family" to which the Tibetans were expected – and indeed compelled – to return is repeated twice in the

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Preamble. And the very first point of the Agreement is the order: “The Tibetan people shall be united and drive out the imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet; that the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the motherland – the People’s Republic of China.”

The final underlined part of Article 50, namely, “splitting of the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited”, does not figure in its exact phrasing. However, its echoes pervade the Preamble of the Agreement. British India’s attempt to direct Tibet’s evolution into an autonomous buffer state between British India and China is depicted as “imperialist” penetration into “the Tibetan region”, carrying out “all kinds of deceptions and provocations”.<sup>34</sup> It further notes that “The Local Government of Tibet did not oppose imperialist deception and provocations, but adopted an unpatriotic attitude towards the great motherland” (Preamble).

Thus, the Preamble gives the strong impression that one of the primary objectives of the “liberation” was to create “national unity” by the forceful integration of Tibet with China. Western imperialism was viewed as the enemy of this supposed unity: “In order that the influences of the aggressive imperialist forces in Tibet may be successfully eliminated, the unification of the territory and sovereignty of the People’s Republic of China accomplished, and national defence safeguarded” (Preamble). This controversial part of the history of Sino-Tibetan relations was stated in more general and ideological terms. “Imperialism” was also a popular Communist metaphor for Western powers including the USA opposed to the Communist bloc during the Cold War.

Article 52 of “The Common Programme” says:

Regional autonomy shall be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated and various kinds of autonomy organizations of different nationalities shall be set up according to the size and respective populations and regions. In places where different nationalities live together and in the autonomous areas of the national minorities, the different nationalities shall each have an appropriate number of representatives in the local organs of political power.

Even though the subject of Article 52 is not listed among the Seventeen Points, it is repeated twice in the Preamble. In the first instance, the same phrasing occurs, “national regional autonomy is to be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated”. In the second case “national regional autonomy” is mentioned as “the right of national equality”. Why the question of “national regional autonomy” is expressed in more general terms in the Preamble and not listed, at least, explicitly among the Seventeen Points might have to do with the fact that the Communists wanted to conceal their future “revolutionary plans” for Tibet for fear that they scared the Tibetan delegates.

Article 52 says:

All national minorities within the boundaries of the People's Republic shall have the right to join the People's Liberation Army and to *organize local people's public security forces in accordance with the unified military system of the state* (emphasis added).

This article, in its exact phrasing, does not occur in the Agreement. But that does not mean it is unimportant. It is so important that its subject occupies four of the Seventeen Points (2, 8, 13 and 16). It had to be expanded to suit the Tibetan situation in which pre-1950 Tibet was a separate political entity having its own army, however good or bad that army may have been. Yet the Chinese Communists felt it was imperative that the PLA troops would not merely "liberate" Tibet but that they would station themselves there for a long time. The Chinese decision to send their occupation forces to Tibet contradicted the Tibetan authorities' determination to retain a high degree of autonomy which necessitated retention of some local forces.

Finally, we shall consider Article 53 of "The Common Programme":

*All national minorities shall have freedom to develop their dialects and languages, to preserve or reform their traditions, customs and religious beliefs. The People's Government shall assist the masses of the people of all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural and educational construction work* (emphasis added).

The first part of Article 53 forms the Ninth Point in the Seventeen Point Agreement: "The spoken and written language and school education of the Tibetan nationality will be developed step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet". And the second part figures in the Tenth Point of the Agreement as "Tibetan agriculture, livestock raising, industry and commerce will be developed step by step, and the people's livelihood will be improved step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet". The only difference is that reforms in Tibet would be characterized by gradualism, unlike other minority nationalities' areas. Thus, much of the Preamble material and two or three Articles of the Agreement have prefigured in "The Common Programme", eighteen months before the negotiation.

A more liberal application of "The Common Programme", specific to Kham appeared in a poster in Kham on 9 November 1950 within a month of the PLA entry into Eastern Tibet (7 October 1950).<sup>35</sup> Ngabo might have been given a copy of this poster and cites it as a "Ten-Point talk-proposal" published by the "Southwest Military/Political Command".<sup>36</sup> It has six paragraphs and foreshadows most of the Seventeen Points as applicable to the Kham situation.

The Kham situation was then, as it had always been, characterized by diffused authority and relative freedom from Lhasa or Beijing rule.



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Moreover, Khampas were warriors. It appears such details about Kham were taken into account while drafting the six-paragraphed poster. Its language is far less commanding; in fact it politely appeals for Khampa cooperation with the PLA entry.

Four of the six paragraphs begin with the PLA, and are designed to dispel any suspicion or fear from the Khampa mind regarding the “new” Chinese army. The poster has no Preamble such as that which would a year later appear in such declaratory and commanding style in the Seventeen Point Agreement. It mentions neither the Dalai Lama nor the Panchen Lama (whose seats were in Central Tibet), but addresses itself to “All lamas, officials and chieftains” or to the “Tibetan people”. Nor is there any reference to the “Local Government of Tibet” which becomes the official Chinese designation of the Tibetan government in the Seventeen Point Agreement. In other words, the Communists viewed Kham and Amdo, though ethnically Tibetan, as not falling under the jurisdiction of the Dalai Lama’s government in Lhasa. The terms and conditions of the Seventeen Point Agreement did not apply to Inner Tibet (Amdo and Kham); the Agreement applies only to U-Tsang, a term Ngabo repeatedly uses in his Tibetan text.<sup>37</sup>

We shall summarize the poster,<sup>38</sup> pointing out similarities to and departures from the Seventeen Point Agreement. The first paragraph states that the PLA had been ordered by Mao and Chu Te, to enter Tibet “for the purpose of assisting the Tibetan people to free themselves from oppression forever”. After having assisted the PLA “in ridding Tibet of imperialist influence and in establishing a regional self-government for the Tibetan people”, the Tibetan people should “together construct a new Tibet within new China”. The third paragraph contains the substance of Point Seven (religious freedom) and Point Ten (economic development) of the Seventeen Point Agreement. The fourth paragraph contains the substance of Point Four (maintaining the *status quo* of the “existing administrative and military systems of Tibet”), Point Eight (Tibetan troops will become a part of the PLA) and Point Eleven (no forced reform) of the Seventeen Point Agreement. The fifth paragraph is on the same subject as Point Twelve (reconciliation with pro-imperialist and pro-Kuomintang (KMT) elements) of the Agreement. The final paragraph is devoted to the new clean image of the PLA who would not take “even a needle or a thread from the people” – the Thirteenth Point of the Agreement. Thus, out of seventeen points, eight had already figured in this poster publicized in Kham six months before the negotiation.

Four articles of “The Common Programme” (29 September 1949) and the ten point poster circulated in Kham on 9 November 1950 may be considered, and they did become Chinese position papers and the subject of the negotiations. This would have been quite reasonable if the Tibetan position papers (which both Shakabpa and Khome had brought with them)

had been considered too. The Chinese, however, did not allow either presentation or discussion of the Tibetan position.<sup>39</sup> This is not fair. We shall, therefore, briefly discuss the details of the unsurfaced Tibetan position.

In response to Communist propaganda, in late 1949, announcing their intention to “liberate” Tibet, the Tibetan government sent Khenchung Thubten Gyalpo, Tsipon Shakabpa and Geshe Lodo Gyatso to hold talks with the Communist leaders. They reached Kalimpong (India) on 7 March 1950, carrying with them a longish letter from the Tibetan “National Assembly” (*tsong du*). The letter states the initial Tibetan position which later formed the substance of the Five Point Tibetan proposal that Khame was given by the Kashag. I will summarize the meandering letter as follows:

1. We have not lost our power/sovereignty to any foreign country – Tibet is independent.
2. Please instruct Communist forces not to encroach upon our territories bordering Kokonor and Xinjiang (twice repeated).

After the civil war, we may resume negotiations on those Tibetan territories taken over by China earlier so that Sino–Tibetan borders may become tranquil.

3. In reply to Communist propaganda broadcast by Beijing and Sichuan radios, we, the representatives of the Tibetan people, state that we are a deeply religious people and are happy and contented under the rule of the Dalai Lama, who is the embodiment of Avalokitesvara (*spyän-res-gzigs*).
4. Because of Manchu emperors’ devotion to the Dalai Lamas, there had been Manchu–Tibet relations in the spirit of priest-and-patron. But this does not mean Tibet is part of China. We are different by race, language, religion, dress and behaviour [from the Chinese].
5. Since Tibet is strategically located in Asia, it is imperative that Tibet remains independent in the interest of all neighbouring countries.<sup>40</sup>

The second Tibetan position paper, issued by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government to the Ngabo-headed delegation, exists in two versions in the Tibetan language. Takla’s version looks like summary points of the Shakabpa text<sup>41</sup> which we have just examined. To me, Lu’o yue-hung’s version looks more credible; he entered in his diary dated April 1951 (Kanze):

1. There is no imperialist influence in Tibet. The little relations that Tibet had with Britain started after the XIII Dalai Lama’s visit abroad. The relations with America are purely commercial relations.
2. Tibetan territories that have been taken by the old Chinese Governments as well as those that have been “liberated” should be returned to Tibet.

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3. If foreigners invade Tibet, we will seek help from the Chinese Government.
4. The People's Liberation soldiers who have arrived in Kham and Chang (Northern Tibet) should be withdrawn.
5. In future, China should not listen to trouble-making rumours spread by the Panchen Lama and Reting groups (in China).<sup>42</sup>

These two position papers show several basic features in common such as a strong sense of territoriality and claims to Tibet's independence. When the National Assembly issued Shakabpa the Tibetan position paper, the PLA was yet to enter Tibet, and therefore the points were made much more explicit and even somewhat assertive. Thus, Point One declares Tibet's independence; Point Four gives a Tibetan interpretation of the Sino-Tibetan relations as those between a priest and his patron, which from the Tibetan point of view, "proves" that "Tibet is not part of China". The document shows a strong sense of territoriality in Points Two and Three.

When the second position paper was drafted in Lhasa, the PLA had already captured the Tibetan forces in Chamdo, and there was tremendous pressure from the Chinese side. Therefore, Tibet's claim to independence is only implied, as Points One and Three indicate. However, even in this document, a strong sense of territoriality is retained and expressed, as Points Two and Four demonstrate.

Both "The Common Programme" and the six-point poster (circulated in Kham) maintained a diplomatic silence on crucial Chinese political demands such as Tibet's status as part of the PRC and the permanent stationing of the PLA in Tibet. Such issues were implicit in the two documents. But later (after September 1950) they were made the preconditions for negotiation in the course of "prenegotiation" talks between General Yuan Chung-Hsien and Tsipon Shakabpa in Delhi, between General Wang Chimi and Ngabo in Chamdo. Apart from handing over the copy of "The Common Programme", General Yuan, it is clear, did some plain-speaking to Shakabpa which the latter sums up as follows:

1. Tibet is part of China.
2. Tibet's defence will be handled by the Government of China.
3. Tibet's foreign relations and external trade relations will be conducted through the Chinese Government.<sup>43</sup>

The Kashag telegraphed their reply to the above points on 29 September 1950, saying that the Chinese demands were "too strong"; they would be discussed by the Tibetan Government soon. The Kashag's reply came on 12 October 1950, rejecting the Chinese demands: "If we accept the three points, we lose all our power and mandate deriving from our religio-political system".<sup>44</sup> The Kashag's telegrams of 12 and 17 October 1950 urged Shakabpa to request the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi not to advance

the PLA troops towards Tibet. The Communists were obviously increasing their pressure on Lhasa to accept their preconditions and come to the formality of a negotiating table. The Tibetan government telegram of 21 October 1950 to Shakabpa was desperate in its tone. It says that Chamdo Radio is not working and Chinese troops have advanced into Kham. In reply to the three points, the Tibetan National Assembly resolved that:

If [the Chinese can guarantee that] His Holiness the Dalai Lama's reputation, power and authority will not be damaged; similarly if "Tibet's religio-political system"<sup>45</sup> will continue to function independently, then we may recognize Tibet as part of China for external consumption. We do not accept the second point regarding Tibet's external relations. Since the stationing of the Chinese Army in Tibet would constitute a threat to our religio-political system, we can never accept the third point.<sup>46</sup>

In short the Kashag and the National Assembly accepted, with qualifications, only the first of the three points laid down by General Yuan.

It appears that, like the General Yuan–Shakabpa meeting in Delhi but certainly under less free conditions in Chamdo, General Wang Chimi began to pressurize Ngabo to accept the fundamental Chinese political conditions, namely: (a) that Tibet is part of Chinese territory; (b) that the PLA must enter Tibet. The Wang–Ngabo meetings must have begun soon after. Ngabo surrendered himself and his remaining elite troops on 19 October 1950, although they might have gone on for a couple of months. At any rate when Sampho Tenzin Dhundup and Khenchung Thubten Legmon handed over the Kashag's five-point letter to Ngabo, which was supposed to be the Tibetan position paper at the Beijing negotiation, Ngabo wrote,

As soon as I saw the Kashag letter, I thought there is no room for negotiation. For although [Communist] China has already decided to liberate Tibet, the local government of Tibet is thinking of Sino–Tibetan relations like the previous KMT–Tibet relations. This [position] does not recognize that Tibet is part of China and is against the People's Liberation Army's entry into Tibet.<sup>47</sup>

The Kashag's five-point position as Ngabo remembers it is as follows. First, the Delegation must make a claim for Tibet's independence, by arguing that past Sino–Tibetan relations were one of priest–patron relationship. If this position becomes unacceptable, then the delegation might concede: (a) that Tibet is part of China on the condition that the Tibetans enjoy complete *internal* independence; (b) that no Chinese troops can be stationed on the Tibetan borders; (c) that the Chinese representative (to Lhasa), his staff and guards must not exceed more than 100 persons; (d) the Chinese representative should preferably be a Buddhist.<sup>48</sup>

Ngabo called his delegation members for a discussion of the Dalai Lama's position paper, and he concluded that unless the PLA troops were allowed to enter Tibet, there would be no scope for negotiation with the Communists. He telegraphed the Kashag in Yatung to this effect. The Kashag's reply insisted that no Chinese troops should be stationed in Tibet. Instead, it proposed that the Tibetan army should be incorporated into the PLA and that such "rechristened" Tibetan troops should be responsible for border defence.<sup>49</sup> It therefore appears that Ngabo was either pressed hard by the Chinese at Chamdo during the six-month long captivity or that he understood the Chinese hints that there were two preconditions for dialogue: (a) that Tibet is part of China and (b) that the PLA must be stationed in Tibet. He had decided to accept these two crucial points before leaving Chamdo for Beijing.<sup>50</sup>

We have traced the origins of the Seventeen Points to "The Common Programme" published eighteen months before the negotiation, and to the Ten-Point poster publicized in Kham six months before the negotiation. Much of the material for the Preamble and two or three articles of the Seventeen Point Agreement was derived from "The Common Programme". Eight out of seventeen points of the Agreement were publicized well before the Sino-Tibetan negotiations began on 29 April 1951. Furthermore, this exercise has revealed a vital fact: General Yuan in Delhi and General Wang in Chamdo pressed Shakabpa and Ngabo (respectively) to accept that Tibet is part of China and that the PLA troops must enter Tibet as basic political preconditions for negotiation. Ngabo accepted these preconditions, and tried to convince the Lhasa authorities to sanction them. However, Shakabpa was reluctant, and consulted his government. Up to the end, the Tibetan government was determined not to yield to the stationing of PLA troops in any part of Tibet. However, regarding Tibet's external political status, it conceded a nominal Chinese "suzerainty" over Tibet by which the Tibetans could enjoy complete internal independence. Ngabo was correct in his analogy: the Tibetan government was willing to concede to the Communists no more than what it accepted under the KMT: nominal suzerainty.<sup>51</sup>

The Preamble, which was not open to discussion during the formal negotiation,<sup>52</sup> is of fundamental importance. Stripped of its heavily ideological language, it is a basic statement of China's historical claims over Tibet and of the Communist hidden agenda on Tibet. It begins with the declaration that "The Tibetan nationality is one of the many nationalities which *has a long history within the boundaries of China*". That is to say "Tibet has always been an integral part of China". Instead of this current expression, the text, throughout, uses the phrase "within the boundaries of China", which repeats three times in the course of the Preamble. It might indicate a strong sense of territoriality on the part of the Communists in the sense that they are claiming "Tibet is part of the Chinese territory"; but also

they may be saying something else. While Tibet is “within the boundaries of China”, its special status within the PRC is defined by the Seventeen Point Agreement.

The Chinese Marxists’ claim that Tibet has always been a part of China needs some rewriting of recent history, and this is second purpose of the Preamble. Tibet’s *de facto* independence from 1912 to 1950<sup>53</sup> is accordingly viewed as a function of “imperialist deception and provocations”, which the “Local Government of Tibet did not oppose”, but “adopted an unpatriotic attitude towards the great motherland”. The “liberation” is depicted as the successful elimination of the “influences of the aggressive imperialist forces in Tibet” (Tibetan nationalism) and the execution of “the unification of the territory and sovereignty of the People’s Republic of China”. In short, the Preamble establishes Chinese sovereignty over Tibet and views imperialism as the agent of Tibetan nationalism, seeking divorce from “the great motherland”. The term occurs three times in the Preamble.

The third theme that emerges from the Preamble is the hidden Communist ideological agenda on Tibet. The Communists took great pains to conceal their “revolutionary” intentions towards Buddhist Tibet. However, a close scrutiny reveals such Communist intentions were looming large in the background. While the Seventeen Points demonstrate that the Tibetan nationality is given a special treatment and separate status within the PRC, the Preamble points out the long-term Communist policy to which the Tibetans would be subjected. The Tibetan people are treated in very generous terms such as “one of the many nationalities” in China who, like “all national minorities” would enjoy “national regional autonomy”. The recurring metaphor of Tibetans “returning to the great motherland” might reveal Communist intentions of an all-round integration of Tibetans into the Han race and culture in the name of progress and revolution. Moreover, while Point Four of the Seventeen Point Agreement stipulates that China “will not alter the existing political system in Tibet”, the Preamble and Point Three mention “national regional autonomy” for all those “areas where national minorities are concentrated”, thereby strongly hinting Tibet’s future status within the PRC. This means that the Chinese Communists were either overconfident of their “revolutionary victory” in a deeply religious Tibet or had malafide intentions of imposing their system on the unwilling Tibetans.

Having declared their non-negotiable principles in the Preamble, the Communists listed the Tibet-specific issues on which some degree of discussion was permitted. But Points One to Three read like an imperial edict in Communist dressing: that the Tibetan people “shall be united and drive out the imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet”, and “shall return to the big family of the motherland – the People’s Republic of China” (Point 1); that the “Local Government of Tibet shall actively assist” the PLA to enter Tibet and “consolidate the national defences” (Point 2); that the Tibetan

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people “have the right to exercise national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People’s Government”, as “laid down in the Common Programme” (Point 3).

That the Tibetan people are deeply religious, and that Buddhism exercised enormous influence on almost every aspect of Tibetan life, society and polity, is a well-known fact. This social fact was peculiar to Tibet. Hence four articles deal with this subject: that Beijing “will not alter the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama (Point 4); that the “established status, functions and power of the Panchen Erdeni (Lama) shall be maintained” (Point 5). The next clause (Point 6) seeks to clarify and redefine what the Panchen Lama’s “established status” means “By the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni is meant the status, functions and powers of the 13th Dalai Lama and of the 9th Panchen Erdeni when they were in friendly and amicable relations with each other.”

As the Tibetan participants’ memoirs reveal, the delegates, especially Ngabo, deeply resented and resisted the Chinese forcing the Panchen Lama issue into what they regarded as a China-Tibet negotiation. The Communists’ keen interest in and resolute support for the boy Panchen may be connected with their future plan of real politik in post-1951 Tibet. As the 1950’s experience confirms, the Communists intended to use the Panchen Lama as a countervailing force against the Dalai Lama and Tibetan nationalism.<sup>54</sup> Concern for the religious sentiments of the Tibetan masses’ and for the huge monastic community is shown by Point 7, which guarantees religious freedom as laid down in “The Common Programme”. It also adds “The Central Authorities will not effect any change in the income of the monasteries.”

For their cooperation with the Communists, the traditional ruling class who mostly constituted the “Local Government of Tibet” received two benefits. Article 4 stipulates, “The Central Authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet. . . . Officials of various ranks will hold office as usual.” Article 12 condones Tibetan nationalistic officials under certain conditions: “In so far as former pro-imperialist and pro-KMT officials resolutely sever relations with imperialism and the KMT and do not engage in sabotage or resistance, they may continue to hold office irrespective of their past.”

True to their reputation, the Chinese Marxists show intriguing pragmatism in scheming out their imported revolution in Tibet. Their main focus was on the leading lamas and aristocratic officials while the masses of peasants and nomads (who were supposed to be the target of “liberation”) received benign neglect in the Seventeen Point Agreement. Point Nine states, “The spoken and written language and school education of the Tibetan nationality will be developed step by step in *accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.*” Again Point Ten envisages a similar plan:

“Tibetan agriculture, livestock raising, industry and commerce will be developed step by step, and the people’s livelihood will be improved *step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.*” In matters relating to “various reforms in Tibet”, the Communist leaders assure the Tibetan religious and political elite that “there will be no compulsion on the part of the Central Authorities. The Local Government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and when the people raise demands for reform, they must be settled through consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet” (Point Eleven). The emphasis is, as we have underlined, on gradualism dictated by local realities, In this way, Communist intentions are concealed and the local ruling classes’ fears assuaged.

The maximum number of clauses (5) dealing with a single subject is military. Point Two orders that the Local Government of Tibet “shall actively assist the People’s Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defence”. Point Eight declares: “The Tibetan troops will be reorganized step by step into the People’s Liberation Army, and become a part of the national defence forces of the People’s Republic of China.” Point Thirteen commends the good behaviour of the PLA entering Tibet who “will abide by all the above-mentioned policies and . . . will not arbitrarily take even a needle or a thread from the people” without paying for it. Apart from “national defence”, the PLA’s other function, equally important, is revealed by Point fifteen: “In order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the Central People’s Government will set up a military and administrative committee and a military area headquarters in Tibet.” (This Article, which contradicts Article 4, was questioned by a Tibetan delegate. This will be discussed further below.) Article Sixteen consoles poor Tibet: “Funds needed by the military and administrative committee, the military area headquarters and the People’s Liberation Army entering Tibet will be provided by the Central People’s Government.”

The Seventeen Point Agreement was essentially the result of Maoist armed intervention, the outcome of which was a foregone conclusion. Yet the Communists made an attempt to conceal the military dimension of the “liberation”, and to highlight its quasi-legality. The Agreement was in fact a quasi-legal mechanism by which they sought to legitimate their military takeover of Tibet. The dominant role of force was self-evident in the course of the negotiations. First of all, it was two PLA generals, Yuan and Wang, who pressed the Communist basic political demands upon Shakabpa and Ngabo in Delhi and Chamdo respectively. Additionally, out of the four Chinese delegates to the negotiation in Beijing, two were PLA generals involved in the invasion of Tibet, Chang Kuo-hua and Chang Jingwu.<sup>55</sup> As further evidence of the military emphasis, we can point out that the negotiations were held in “an Army headquarters in Beijing”<sup>56</sup> and that nearly one-third of the seventeen points dealt with military matters.



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The fact that, after the fall of Chamdo in late October 1950, the Communist takeover of Tibet becoming a reality, the Communists went through the whole motion and formalities of an agreement demonstrates that they wished to legitimate their military action. In November 1950, they called upon Lhasa for negotiation on “the peaceful liberation of Tibet”,<sup>57</sup> called the Tibetan delegate “plenipotentiaries”,<sup>58</sup> went through the formality of “discussing” the draft Agreement point by point,<sup>59</sup> even though Tibetan dissent was silenced; forged the seals (for the Tibetan delegates)<sup>60</sup> to sign and seal the Agreement; and arranged for the treaty document to be signed at the Chinese imperial palace in Beijing<sup>61</sup> and not at the Army Headquarters where the negotiations took place. Finally, the Communist delegates threatened to use force if their counterparts did not accept Point 15.

Of the five Tibetan delegates, four have gone public. So have the two official translators. Among the four Chinese delegates, only General Chang Kuo-hua has written down his reminiscences, dealing mostly with the military campaign and making only passing reference to the Seventeen Point Agreement.<sup>62</sup> A Chinese who accompanied Ngabo’s entourage kept a diary of the events.<sup>63</sup> However, the Chinese views are reflected in Ngabo’s and Lhawutara’s writings. This constitutes a major difficulty in assigning any weight to the opinions expressed in the memoirs and articles. They differ fundamentally, depending on whether the author was writing in China or in exile. This reflects both relative academic freedom and partisan loyalty. Nevertheless, we should pay close attention to the voices of the participants with the hope that they might shed some light on the “inside story”. I do so in order to give each participant’s voice a chance to be heard.

Since Ngabo was the chief Tibetan delegate to the negotiation and a high ranking (Kalon) Tibetan Government official, his value to the PRC as the living testimony to the Seventeen Point Agreement is enormous. As such his views on the Seventeen Point Agreement were given wide coverage in the Chinese media. In English language publications, Ngabo repeatedly makes two points: he conceded that Tibet is part of China and believed in the necessity of the PLA to enter Tibet; and that he and his delegation were fully authorized and empowered to sign the Agreement.<sup>64</sup> He does so not in the blunt factual way in which I have summarized above; he does so in a roundabout way through ideological gymnastics so that he cannot be accused of being a traitor. General Wang’s preconditions for negotiation pressed upon captive Ngabo at Chamdo were rendered in polite ideological terms:

The delegations of two sides had an identical stand on the fundamental issue of the negotiation, namely, the issue of strengthening the unity of Han and Tibetan nationalities (i.e. Tibet is part of China) and safeguarding the integrity of the country (i.e. the PLA must be

stationed in Tibet). In spite of disputes and disagreements on some issues between the two sides, the negotiations were held in a friendly, sincere and consultative atmosphere.<sup>65</sup>

Ngabo's speech (in Tibetan) to the Second Plenary Session of the Fifth Tibet Autonomous People's Congress provides more details explaining the circumstances under which he took the decision to accept the two Chinese preconditions which were not available for negotiation. He argued that without accepting the preconditions, there could be no negotiation with the Communists at all<sup>66</sup> thereby indicating that he was either convinced of or compelled to accept the Chinese terms while being a captive in Chamdo. This was what he conveyed to Lhasa through two messengers and discussed subsequently with his fellow delegates. He ridiculed the Kashag's lack of knowledge of Communists who, he rightly said, differed radically from the KMT. Therefore, he argued that Tibet's status under the Communists could not be similar to the status it enjoyed under the KMT. He seemed to have grasped the Communist meaning of "liberation"<sup>67</sup> as a military campaign with an ideological mission.

Ngabo got some justification for the first precondition when the Kashag instructed him (through the position paper sent through Kheme) to concede "Tibet as part of China" provided the Tibetans would enjoy complete informal, internal independence.<sup>68</sup> But he got no sanction to accept the second precondition, namely that the PLA must be stationed in Tibet, which the Kashag resisted to the very end. When he got the Kashag's negative reply on this issue, Ngabo took the decision almost by himself to accept this second precondition as well. The Kashag insisted that if the Chinese were determined to station PLA troops on the border, Tibetan troops could merge with the PLA and the rechristened Tibetan troops could be posted to the border. This was the last Kashag stand. Ngabo says he discussed the matter with Takla Tashi Phuntsog, Sandhu Pinchen and Gyaltsen Phuntsog and part of the official delegation. They agreed that "since the most important issue like Tibet is not independent is decided, all other matters (including the PLA issue) are minor. Therefore we all decided to sign the Agreement."<sup>69</sup>

It seems clear from all accounts that Ngabo might have been responsible for agreeing to accept the two basic demands, especially the PLA induction, made by the Communists in Chamdo. Subsequently, he sought to get indirect sanction from the Kashag by manipulating the latter's qualified and guarded instructions sent through Kheme, as we have seen. For the apparent approval of the second demand, he again manipulated a select group of the non-delegate members to support his decision. He was obviously pressurized to accept the two Chinese demands, but, having done so, he felt negotiation was a matter of minor details and formalities.

However, in the Tibetan text (1989) Ngabo mentions some other details as well. Two separate letters of agreement were also signed, he says. One

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promised that if the Dalai Lama were to go into exile, he could watch the progress and development in Tibet from outside for four or five years. And, after that if the Lama decided to return to Tibet, his status and power would be protected. The second letter of agreement promised that the Kashag could nominate one or two of its members to the Chinese proposed Military/Administrative Committee.<sup>70</sup> Ngabo also noted some objections to and disagreement with Article 15.<sup>71</sup> Finally he observed and hinted that the Seventeen Point Agreement and subsequent policy on Tibet, when compared with other minority nationalities, represented a special case and special treatment for Tibet.<sup>72</sup>

As a representative of “the Local Government of Tibet”, Ngabo tried his best to defend the limited identity, interest and integrity of that “local government” within the framework of the Seventeen Point Agreement. This was most clearly reflected on the strong objections he raised against the Communists’ inclusion of the 10th Panchen Lama issue into the Sino-Tibetan dialogue and into the purview of the Agreement. He felt it constituted Chinese interference in the “domestic” affairs of Tibet,<sup>73</sup> and threatened not to sign the Agreement.<sup>74</sup>

Lhawutara Thubten Tendhar was of the Tibetan delegates who accompanied Kheme Sonam Wangdi and went to Beijing via Delhi. He could not or did not escape and like Ngabo, he is living in China. This fact comes through his article quite powerfully. Even though he is most remembered by his Tibetan colleagues for raising the most fundamental question on Article 15 during the negotiation, Lhawutara himself is silent on this question. Instead he says, “since I was a monk-official representative, I asked more questions about religious freedom and monastic income”.<sup>75</sup>

Like Ngabo, Lhawutara says he and Kheme were given two letters by the Kashag: one public and the other confidential. The confidential letter instructed the delegates to “recognize Tibet as part of China and to agree to pay annual tribute” to China. Apart from this, the delegates were instructed “not to agree to anything else, and on important matters the Kashag must be consulted through wireless”.<sup>76</sup>

They also had a letter from the Dalai Lama addressed to Prime Minister Nehru, seeking the latter’s advice and mediation in the Sino-Tibetan negotiation. Nehru thought that the Tibetans had to accept that Tibet was part of China, as it was generally recognized to be by the outside world; that Beijing would insist on handling Tibet’s external relations, that it would also insist on the PLA’s entry into Tibet. But the last demand, Nehru advised, should be resisted at any cost.<sup>77</sup>

At the start of the negotiation, Lhawutara recalls, Chinese delegates presented a Ten Point draft proposal, and “we also presented a Nine Point position paper”.<sup>78</sup> None of other delegates and interpreters remember anything about this “nine point proposal”. On the conduct of negotiation,

he echoes the Chinese position when he writes, “Both sides negotiated on friendly and equal terms and reached consensus.”<sup>79</sup>

Lhawutara makes a couple of other interesting points. The Kashag’s original position, as noted by other delegates, was this: that Tibet was independent, that Tibetan territories acquired earlier by China must be returned; and serious Tibetan objection to the PLA entry into Tibet.<sup>80</sup> He also recalls that Ngabo and 36 officers from Chamdo wrote to the Kashag, pleading for its permission to negotiate with the PRC, on the grounds that the Dalai Lama’s power and Lhasa officials’ interests would be protected.<sup>81</sup>

Kheme (Khe-smad) Sonam Wangdu’s recollections have appeared in two texts. The 1966 version is based on a talk given to an audience of exiles in 1966; it emphasizes the coercive aspects of the negotiation.<sup>82</sup> The 1982 text appears as a chapter in his memoirs, based primarily on his 1966 talk but with fewer details and slightly edited.<sup>83</sup>

Kheme received the authorization letter with the Dalai Lama’s seal (‘bug-dam) and was instructed to “consult the Kashag on crucial matters”.<sup>84</sup> In a Calcutta hotel, the delegates remember meeting a young American who told them that if they went to Beijing, they would not be able to return.<sup>85</sup> Like Lhawutara, Kheme mentions the meeting with Prime Minister Nehru in Delhi. Nehru advised them to engage in a peaceful talk and try to resist the PLA induction into Tibet.<sup>86</sup> He explained that India was a new nation with little power and so could not mediate in the Sino-Tibetan talks this time. In the Beijing hotel where the Tibetan delegates were put, they were not allowed any contact with outsiders except Chinese. It was similar to “house-arrest”<sup>87</sup> (*bzang-btson*).

The Chinese Ten Point draft paper did not mention the Panchen Lama issue. It was forced into the negotiation by the Chinese negotiators. Ngabo objected to a “monastic issue” (the Panchen Lama) being raised in the Tibet-China talks; it was finally agreed that a separate committee should discuss it.<sup>88</sup>

When Kheme expressed the opinion that “Tibet had, from early times, been independent”, Li Weihai “forcefully shouted” (*tsig-rtsub*), “If this Agreement is not OK for you, you can go back any day, tomorrow or day after tomorrow. It is a matter of sending a telegram to our forces on the border.”<sup>89</sup> Since the Chinese were using such threats of force, “we could not consult our government” and were compelled to sign the Agreement.<sup>90</sup> The Chinese forged the seals for the Tibetan delegates, and kept everything – seals, pens, papers, ink – in the Chinese museum.<sup>91</sup> Kheme also notes that no discussion was allowed on the Preamble to the Agreement; the “Chinese achieved whatever they wanted with the threat to use force”.<sup>92</sup> When the Tibetan delegates expressed their wish to go back together via India, the Chinese did not allow Ngabo to go with the rest.<sup>93</sup>

Sampho (*bsam-pho*) Tenzin Dhondup was one of the members of the Tibetan delegation who lived under Communist rule until 1981. He and Thubten Legmon went to China via Chamdo where they met Ngabo.

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Sampho recalls the Panchen Lama issue as not being mentioned in the original Chinese Ten Point draft position paper. Nor were the Tibetan delegates authorized to recognize the young Lama, as there were other probable candidates. They, therefore, telegraphed the Kashag inquiring what to do. The Kashag replied that they could recognize the Chinese candidate but instructed them not to include him in the formal Agreement. Yet the Chinese forced the Tibetans to include the Panchen Lama issue in the Seventeen Point Agreement. “Is it not a clear case of using force to achieve the Agreement?”<sup>94</sup>

Similarly when Lhawutara raised questions about the purpose and function of the proposed “military and administrative committee” (Article 15) which contradicts Article 4, Li Weihan threatened to use force unless their “liberation” was accepted:

You are going against Communist China. If that is so, we cannot reach any agreement. You can all go back whenever you want to. It is, for us, a matter of sending a telegram to the [border] areas and there would not be any disagreement. Do you want armed or peaceful liberation? You choose between these two [options].<sup>95</sup>

To express “our protest against the forced letter which we had to sign against our will, we did not want to seal it with any Tibetan government seal”, even though Ngabo had his official one for Chamdo. “We all used the seals made by the Chinese”.<sup>96</sup> Sampho concludes “Leave alone equal discussion between two sides, there was no consideration that should be shown to an edict-receiver by the edict-giver.”<sup>97</sup>

Takla (stag-lha) Phuntsog Tashi was the official Chinese interpreter for the Tibetan delegation who went to Beijing via India. Takla confirms the delegates’ meeting with Nehru and his advice.<sup>98</sup> He also remembers the Kashag’s five-point letter that Lu’o *Yus-hung* notes in his diary.<sup>99</sup> When the Chinese Government invited the Tibetan delegates to receive the Panchen Lama at the railway station, only a junior officer and the two translators were sent in order to reduce the significance of the event.<sup>100</sup> Takla also confirms that the Chinese Ten Point proposal, circulated earlier in Kham, was made the basis for discussion but the Tibetan Five Point letter was not allowed to be brought to the negotiation table for discussion.<sup>101</sup> He also recalls the Lhawutara incident (about Article 15) in which the Chinese delegates threatened the use of force.<sup>102</sup>

Takla’s account is rich in detail about the Panchen Lama issue. Ngabo took a strong exception to it arguing that he was neither instructed nor authorized by the Tibetan government to discuss a “domestic affair” like the Panchen controversy. And if the Chinese insisted on this issue, Ngabo declared that he “would not be able to negotiate any further and stop signing it”.<sup>103</sup> The chief Chinese delegate, Li Weihan, then explained: the Panchen Lama was the first to greet the founding of the People’s Republic of

China. For 30 years, he and his entourage did not conspire orally with imperialist forces. They did not go abroad. Such factors distinguish the Panchen Lama case (from others). Was it, Takla rhetorically asks, not a case of coercion and bullying?<sup>104</sup>

Takla also writes that two letters of agreement were signed and exchanged with the Chinese, in which he personally participated. The first letter guaranteed the Dalai Lama's power and status in case he went into exile and then came back after two or three years. It was further agreed that all his expenses incurred during exile would be met by the Tibetan Government. On the subject of the second letter with five points concerning the stationing of PLA troops in Tibet, it was agreed that no more than a *chun* of PLA would be posted on the Tibetan borders and that the Kashag may appoint a Deputy Commander of the PLA troops stationed in Tibet. Although Article 8 stipulates that the Tibetan troops will gradually be merged with the PLA, it does not mention the limited forces to be retained by the Tibetan government. According to the second letter of Agreement, the Dalai Lama could keep 500 bodyguards and 1,000 soldiers to maintain law and order in Tibet. Again Article 14 declares that "the Central People's Government will handle the external affairs of the area of Tibet", but the second letter of agreement made it clear that Tibet's Foreign Bureau would merge with the Chinese Foreign Affairs branch in Tibet, and the Tibetan officials and staff would be re-employed in the new establishment.<sup>105</sup>

Of the seven Tibetan delegation members, only Thubten Legmon<sup>106</sup> and Sandhu Rinchen have not gone public on the Agreement. I managed to get an interview with the latter, who was the official English interpreter. He accompanied Kheme and Lhawutara via India, and they sought Nehru's advice. His recollection of Nehru's advice was similar to others' accounts. He vividly recalls the Lhawutara incident in which the Chinese threatened to use force if their terms and conditions were not accepted. Is this, he asked me, not a clear case of coercion? The Sino-Tibetan Agreement was a "walk over" for the Chinese, in which the Tibetan delegates had neither the power nor the force to disagree over, and it was "signed with seals made by the Chinese in China".<sup>107</sup>

In his chapter on the Seventeen Point Agreement, Professor Goldstein attributes 13 references to Rimshi Sampho, none of which concerns coercion.<sup>108</sup> Yet in his memoirs Sampho emphasized the coercive methods deployed by the Chinese "negotiators" in the course of the negotiation. He is not alone in his dissent. Of the seven Tibetan delegation members, six have gone public on the Agreement issue, and of those six, four have emphasized and documented the cases of coercion. Sampho, Takla and Sandhu cite the case of Lhawutara who questioned the Communists' future intentions (Article 15) and was threatened with the use of force. Kheme observes that there was no discussion of the Preamble to the Agreement (wherein the Chinese sovereignty over security and Communist blueprint for Tibet are

declared). When he tried to make a case for Tibet's independence, Li Weihan replied with a threat of force. Ngabo, Kheme, Sampho and Takla unanimously cite the Panchen Lama issue (which was not mentioned in the original Chinese Ten Point position paper) being imposed upon the Tibetan delegates as a clear case of coercion. Such coercive practices violate Article 52 of the Law of Treaties: "A treaty is void if its conclusion has been procured by the threat or use of force in violation of the principles of international law embodied in the Charter of the United Nations."<sup>109</sup>

Coupled with the Chinese coercion was Ngabo's crucial role that facilitated the formalities of the negotiation and the actual signing. He cleared two barriers that would have otherwise blocked the road to negotiation. The Tibetan Government's last stand on the crucial issues is fairly well documented. The delegates were to accept Tibet as part of China on the condition that Tibet enjoyed complete internal independence, *nañ-khul-du rän-brtsan räñ-bdag yin*.<sup>110</sup> External recognition was a mere formality by which Tibetans could enjoy genuine internal autonomy. The Tibetan Government's last stand on the PLA's entry into Tibet was similar in the sense the Tibetan troops would be merged with the PLA and these redesignated Tibetan troops should be posted along the Tibetan border. Just as Tibet is part of China only in a token sense, the border troops are to be Chinese in name but Tibetan in substance.

Now Ngabo should have known from Lhawutara's vital question about the Military and Administrative Committee (Article 15) – which he remembers and notes<sup>111</sup> – that if such a powerful Chinese committee were to be set up in Tibet, Tibet would not be able to enjoy complete "internal independence" and that Tibet's full autonomy would be jeopardized if the PLA troops were allowed to occupy Tibet. Well aware of the various implications of his action, Ngabo took the decision on these crucial issues through manipulation, without consulting his fellow delegates, the Dalai Lama, the Kashag or the Tibetan people.<sup>112</sup> Both Kheme and Lhawutara recall being specifically instructed by the Kashag to consult on important (gal-che) issues through wireless.<sup>113</sup> Yet, Ngabo consulted the Kashag only once or twice.<sup>114</sup> This contrasts sharply with Shakabpa's practice: between 19 September and 1 November 1950, ten telegrams were exchanged.<sup>115</sup> Ngabo, intentionally or unintentionally, deviated from the spirit of the Kashag's instructions, which constitutes a probable breach of trust reposed in him by the Dalai Lama and the Kashag. For nearly one month (22 April to 23 May 1950), Ngabo kept the Dalai Lama and the Kashag in the dark. Therefore, the Dalai Lama was surprised and shocked to hear the news:

Neither I nor my government were told that an agreement had been signed. We first came to know of it from a broadcast which Ngabo made on Peking Radio. It was a terrible shock when we heard of the terms of it.<sup>116</sup>

The role of Ngabo in the Seventeen Point Agreement is enormous. The Communists realized his political value as the living testimony to the Agreement in case it were repudiated by the Dalai Lama or his government. After the signing of the Agreement, the Chinese did not allow him to travel via India with the rest of the delegation members;<sup>117</sup> during the Cultural Revolution he was saved by the late Zhou Enlai from Red Guard's wrath and flown back to Beijing from Lhasa;<sup>118</sup> he is not allowed to live in Tibet; he is not allowed to visit any foreign country. He lives comfortably under conditions of virtual house-arrest in Beijing.

Ngabo is not a simple Tibetan. He is a complex and intelligent man who can manoeuvre things to his advantage. He worked out his strategy for personal survival before he left Chamdo for the formal negotiation in Beijing.

During his six-month long captivity, Ngabo witnessed what appeared to him to be the invincible power of the Communist army against which, he was convinced, the Tibetans could never fight without external intervention, which, as far as he was concerned, was remote. He was convinced of some good intentions of the Communists for the future of Tibet and showed an elementary knowledge of communist ideology. Therefore, he decided from early on that he had to accept the two unnegotiable conditions which were tutored by General Yuan and others in Chamdo. While making such a historic concession to the PRC, he at the same time tried to defend the limited identity, integrity and interest of the "Local Government of Tibet" as written in the Seventeen Point Agreement of that political entity. During the negotiation and its aftermath Ngabo was trusted by neither the Chinese nor the Tibetan Government.<sup>119</sup> For he first negotiated his personal position *vis-à-vis* the Communists, and then afterwards between China and Tibet. His survivability resides in his historical value as the living testimony to the Seventeen Point Agreement. Without Ngabo there would have been no Seventeen Point Agreement.

Who violated the Agreement is a controversial question. The Dalai Lama's post-March 1959 statements tended to repudiate the Seventeen Point Agreement which, he charged, was signed "under duress and at the point of the bayonet".<sup>120</sup> He specified the ways in which the Chinese violated the Agreement. The Chinese, on the other hand, maintain that "it was a handful of separatists who tore up the Seventeen Point Agreement" in March 1959 by launching "an all-round armed rebellion".<sup>121</sup> Such extreme and conflicting views may be understood when we situate the rebellion in its Cold War context. The fact is that both the Dalai Lama and the Chinese generals in Tibet seemed to have lost control over the momentum of the Khampa rebellion, which violently disrupted the implementation process of the accord. In this respect, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which aided the Khampa rebels, must bear a large measure of responsibility for subverting the Seventeen Point Agreement.



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The Dalai Lama's specific charges against the Chinese local rulers which violated the spirit and the letter of the Agreement included the following: The Dalai Lama had to, under Chinese pressure, dismiss his two Prime Ministers, Lukhangwa and Lobsang Tashi in April 1952. They were charged with involvement in an anti-Chinese movement and organization called *mi-dman tsogs-du*.<sup>122</sup> The Dalai Lama notes in his memoirs, "I did not appoint any successors. It was no use having Prime Ministers if they were merely to be scapegoats for the Chinese."<sup>123</sup>

The "Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region", which was established in 1956, sought to systematically undermine the "established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama" which Article 4 of the Seventeen Point Agreement promised to protect. It was also designed to reduce the constituency and the jurisdiction of the "Local Government of Tibet" by creating two pro-Chinese blocs in Outer Tibet: the "Chamdo Liberation Committee" in what remained of Kham and the "Panchen Lama Committee" in Western Tibet. Only fifteen members including the Dalai Lama were to represent the Tibetan local government, eleven were to be chosen from leading monasteries, religious sects and prominent public figures, ten each to the "Panchen Lama Committee" and to the "Chamdo Liberation Committee".<sup>124</sup>

These were both purely Chinese creations. Their representatives owed their positions mainly to Chinese support, and in return they had to support any Chinese position. . . . With this solid block of controlled votes, in addition to those of the five Chinese members, the Committee (i.e. PRCTAR) was powerless – a mere facade of Tibetan representation behind which all the effective power was exercised by the Chinese. In fact, all basic policy was decided by another body called the Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet, which had no Tibetan members.<sup>125</sup>

The Dalai Lama charged the Chinese Communists with "interference in the exercise of religious freedoms" in violation of Article 7 of the Seventeen Point Agreement. During the course of the suppression of the Khampa revolts in Eastern Tibet, the "Chinese Armed Forces destroyed a large number of monasteries. Many lamas were killed and a large number of monks and officials were taken and employed on the construction of roads in China."<sup>126</sup>

The Dalai Lama charged the Chinese authorities with obstructing the much needed reforms, including land reform, that he and his government had initiated in Tibet, thereby violating Article 11 of the Agreement.

We have no desire to disguise the fact that ours is an ancient society and that we must introduce immediate changes in the interest of the people of Tibet. In fact, during the last nine years several reforms were

proposed by me and my government, but every time these measures were strenuously opposed by the Chinese in spite of popular demand for them. The result was that nothing was done for the betterment of the social and economic conditions of the people. In particular it was my earnest desire that the system of land tenure should be radically changed without further delay and the large landed estates acquired by the State on payment of compensation for distribution amongst the tillers of the soil. But the Chinese authorities deliberately put every obstacle in the way of carrying out this just and reasonable reform.<sup>127</sup>

Finally, the Dalai Lama believed that Communist China had no intention of carrying out the Agreement.

While I and my Government did not voluntarily accept the Agreement, we were obliged to acquiesce in it and decided to abide by the terms and conditions in order to save my people and country from the danger of total destruction. It was, however, clear from the *very beginning that the Chinese had no intention of carrying out the Agreement*. Although they had solemnly undertaken to maintain my status and power as the Dalai Lama, they did not lose any opportunity to undermine my authority and sow dissensions among my people. . . . Far from carrying out the Agreement, they deliberately began to pursue a course of policy which was diametrically opposed to the terms and conditions which they had themselves laid down (emphasis added).<sup>128</sup>

In fact some of the terms and conditions of the Seventeen Point Agreement were contradictory and ambiguous which left sufficient scope for future revolutionary action, while the main tenor of the Agreement is a *status quo* with which the Tibetans were deceived. For example, Article 11, which states that regarding “various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the Central Authority” contradicts Article 3 on the Tibetan people’s right of “exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People’s Government”. The terms of Article 15, which states that “In order to ensure the implementation of this Agreement, the Central People’s Government will set up a military and administrative committee, and a military area headquarters in Tibet” contradicts with what Article 4 promises: “The Central Authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet”.

It is difficult to see how the antique Tibetan polity could have been maintained while a much more powerful parallel political system was being set up, designed as it was to carry out reforms. The latter would undermine the functions and power of the former and make it redundant in due course. In other words, the Agreement gives the Dalai Lama and his “local government” a limited time to continue while gradually and systematically

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preparing the groundwork for a Communist change in Tibet which would unavoidably require the undermining of the traditional authority structures. The Communists' verbal promise was *status quo* as a transitional arrangement but their intention and hidden agenda are "revolutionary change". Therefore, the Chinese policy and the Tibetan expectations were diametrically opposed. They diverged further when accelerated by the Khampa rebellion in Eastern and Central Tibet from the mid-1950s onwards.

From the Chinese point of view, any nationalistic Tibetan rebellion, in word and deed, runs counter to the spirit and the letter of the Agreement. This Agreement was signed on the basic premise that Tibet has been and is an integral part of China which virtually rules out any Tibetan expression of nationalism. To be a Tibetan nationalist meant falling under "the imperialist deception" and being "anti-national" in the larger Chinese sense of the term. Communists did not and do not tolerate any expression or act of rebellion that has nationalistic overtones. Thus, Lhukhangwa was dismissed on the charge of conspiring with an anti-national organization called "People's Conference"<sup>129</sup> which questioned the Chinese Marxist mandate in Tibet. Similarly China took the most serious view of the 1959 revolt which "tore the Agreement to shreds".<sup>130</sup>

In retrospect, the Chinese negotiators dictated most of the points in the Agreement as they desired but one thing they forgot to insert was part of Article 50 from "The Common Programme" ... "*splitting of the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited*". Tibet was so badly defeated and internationally so isolated<sup>131</sup> in the early 1950s that the Chinese did not perhaps anticipate any nationalistic reaction from the Tibetans. The Khampa rebellions in 1956 and the 1959 Lhasa Revolt took the Communists almost by surprise. These revolts practically derailed the plan chalked out neatly in the Seventeen Point Agreement.

In a larger and more objective sense the violators of the Seventeen Point Agreement were the Khampas whose homeland did not fall within the purview of the Agreement. The Agreement was applicable only to Outer Tibet. Secondly, the instigators of the violation of the Agreement were American agents. The USA was strongly opposed to the signing of the Agreement which, they rightly realized, legitimated Communist aggression. They tried their best to persuade and even pressurize the Dalai Lama, while in Yatung, to "disavow" the Agreement and seek asylum in Sri Lanka, Thailand or the USA. These were the critical conditions for American support for the Tibetan cause.<sup>132</sup>

When the Khampa revolts flared up in 1956, they at once caught the CIA imagination. Between September 1957 and January 1960 the CIA made 19 airdrops of 47 trained Khampas and 18 airdrops of arms inside Tibet. Two CIA-trained Khampa radio operators accompanied the Dalai Lama in his escape to India.<sup>133</sup> If American Cold War actors had derailed the

Seventeen Point Agreement through subversion, it is fitting that post-Cold War Americans are in the forefront of facilitating a dialogue between the Dalai Lama and Beijing for national reconciliation (see Chapter 15).

The most controversial and fundamental problems between China and Tibet were ironed out through Ngabo while he was still in captivity, with a combination of coercion and persuasion. The origins of the Seventeen Point Agreement suggest that most of its articles were predetermined. A content analysis of the treaty text reveals a more objective method to measure the military dimension of “liberation” in terms of the number of clauses devoted to the PLA (5) and the number of generals (2) who took part in the negotiation. The memoirs of the Tibetan participants reinforce our impression of coercion. Four of the six delegation members maintain that the Chinese threatened to use force on two occasions. All these findings suggest a *prima facie* case of coercion. If Ngabo capitulated, he did so out of a desperate situation in which there was simply no alternative but to sign the Agreement that at least promised Outer Tibet a high degree of internal autonomy. It was a capitulation dictated by the situation, not by free will, and between the two there is, I believe, a valid distinction.

Although the method of negotiation is questionable, the model of the Seventeen Point Agreement still has some utility. The Agreement signified, on the one hand, the liquidation of Tibet’s pre-1950 *de facto* independence and, on the other hand, it confirmed the conferment of a special status for Outer Tibet – that was not granted to any other minority nationality in the PRC.<sup>134</sup> This is the case that Ngabo also makes.<sup>135</sup> Tibet’s special status, as reflected in the Seventeen Point Agreement was, in several technical and functional respects, similar to the “one country, two systems”, status now offered to Hong Kong and Taiwan. The technical essence of this system is this: while the PRC retains its sovereignty over a contested territory, it nevertheless tolerates non-Communist systems of governance and economy to co-exist within the boundaries of Communist China. While the Seventeen Point Agreement declares that Tibet is part of Chinese territory and dictates that Beijing will handle all the defence and foreign affairs issues of Tibet (sovereignty), at the same time it promises that the Communists “will not alter the existing political system in Tibet”, nor alter “the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama”. The Agreement further guarantees freedom of religion. The only functional difference with that offered to Hong Kong is the duration of “the one country, two systems”. In the case of Tibet, this was not spelled out and it proved to be disastrous in that the Communist zealots hurried up reforms for which the Tibetans were not ready. In the case of Hong Kong, it is spelled out – 50 years.

The Seventeen Point Agreement is, therefore, the first historical case of “one country, two systems”. Dr Song Liming argues that if the Dalai Lama requests “real Tibetan autonomy, or one country, two systems on the basis

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of the Seventeen Point Agreement, the Chinese government would have difficulty in refusing it". Besides, if the Tibetans make clear that "all they want is one country, two systems", it would win "more sympathy and support among the Chinese especially those in Taiwan and Hong Kong".<sup>136</sup> Such a popular demand must be viewed as a political progression, under vastly changed circumstances, from the Seventeen Point Agreement, to such as the one Communists had signed on Hong Kong. In the latter case, "one country, two systems" was really negotiated between Britain and China on an equal basis. In the case of Tibet, the Seventeen Point Agreement was not really negotiated on equal basis; most of its terms and conditions were imposed by a strong China upon a weak Tibet. It was an "unequal treaty", which needs to be renegotiated in the post-Cold War and post-Communist era. A basic requirement for such renegotiation to take place is this: the Chinese Communists must realize that the Maoist model of "national regional autonomy" in Tibet is a practical failure. An appropriate "one country, two systems" model might solve China's Tibet problem. The Seventeen Point Agreement provides a convenient legal precedent and a structural framework within which specific details of negotiation could be worked out.

## Chapter 13

# The 1959 Revolt: In Defence of the Value System

Tibet in 1950 was an isolated, working theocracy,<sup>1</sup> possibly unique among the various political systems of the modern world. Tibet might earlier have been colonized by Britain had the prospect been economically attractive. Instead she was doomed to a virtually complete isolation as a result of conflicting British, Chinese and Russian imperialist interests in Central Asia and the manoeuvrings arising therefrom, reinforcing the natural mountain-bound isolation of her geography. Both the Anglo-Tibetan Convention of 1904 and the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 were basically aimed at making Tibet an area free from any struggle for spheres of influence and colonization.<sup>2</sup> In so doing, they indirectly denied Tibet any alternative source of social change.

If Britain were interested in policing Tibet and thereby enhancing Tibet's internal independence, China was opposed to any British presence in the region. It appears that the Chinese feared that while they were busy with revolution, Britain might colonize Tibet or encourage nationalistic Tibetans to modernize and "nationalize" their country. In other words, China was also interested in preventing any exogenous source of change coming into Tibet. The Chinese central objective was, and still is, to prevent the emergence of modern Tibetan nationalism that would "separate" Tibet from China. Thus, they interpret any period of Tibetan nationalist activity or even any sign of Tibetan nationalism during the first half of the twentieth century as British imperialist instigation and machination.<sup>3</sup> The assumption behind this Chinese thesis is that Tibetans were and are incapable of feeling nationalistic because they are assumed either to be so loyal to the Chinese state or to be politically backward. Modern Tibetan history contradicts both of these assumptions.

Although Britain did not think it worthwhile economically to colonize Tibet, it appears that she had no objection to a limited modernization

carried on by Tibetans themselves as long as it was under British auspices. The XIII Dalai Lama (1876–1933) was interested in this, thanks to his highly educational flight to India and Mongolia, but the conservative monastic community was totally opposed. This situation was skilfully exploited by the Chinese to their national advantage: they bribed and instigated the powerful abbots in Lhasa. It was customary for China, as patron of Tibetan Buddhism, to express concern over any anti-Buddhist (i.e. Christian) influence entering the holy land.<sup>4</sup>

There was also something in Tibetan social history between 1912–48 that encouraged complacency. The simple-minded Tibetan interpreted their easy expulsion of the Chinese troops from Tibet – which was really made possible by the 1911 Revolution and the speedy departure of the Younghusband Expedition in 1904 – as simply the work of their faith. This interpretation reaffirmed their belief in the existing value system and shut the door to any exogenous source of change.<sup>5</sup>

The absence of an exogenous source of change is not by itself an indication of the efficient functioning of a society. It may at best prolong a slow decline if the social structure is disequilibrated and the value system has ceased to be sacred. But this was not the case in Tibet by 1950. This fact is easily proven by a number of works,<sup>6</sup> especially those written by Westerners who spent several years in the country when the term “Tibet” was not a subject of political controversy. The French weekly, *L'Express*, asked a French Tibetologist a similar question about the Tibet which we are trying to discover here. His reply was:

Tibet is not only an ethnic group but a civilization. The Tibetans stand distinctly from the Chinese with whom they have nothing in common. Tibet was also one of those rare nations of the world that developed its own culture *till the twentieth century*, in complete isolation from external influences. It was a country where literacy was high, and where until 1959 many dozens of new books, on voyages, poems, and biographies were being published each year. It was *a religiously active* country where they were still constructing monasteries. Every member of the nobility had a library and artists were brought into their homes, at high prices. It was a civilization in *no way* on the decline, but on the contrary, having escaped colonialism, it continued to develop along its own lines.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, the historical development in Tibet was almost the reverse of the familiar patterns of Europe or elsewhere. Up to 842 AD, Tibet was a powerful monarchy in which the native belief system called Bon did not have the kind of hold over the State that Buddhism subsequently exerted. Four centuries later, however, the Buddhist revolution in Inner Asia had clearly succeeded; a lamaist “theocracy” had replaced the lay monarchy and Buddhism increasingly dominated both state and society. The

separation of “Church” and State, so vital in Europe in breaking the clergy’s monopoly of power and authority, did not occur in Buddhist Tibet until 1959.

Tibet differed fundamentally from the old China and even more so from the new China. The Chinese imperial tragedy in Tibet had been that, despite her repeated attempts at domination, Confucian China had not been able to influence the course of cultural developments in Tibet. If Tibet had shared a Confucian culture, the Communists would have faced fewer problems in their “liberation” and might even have avoided the Revolt altogether. Those who advocate the “tribute system” as the basis of universal inter-state relations in the pre-modern East Asia have considerable difficulties in accommodating the peculiar Sino-Tibetan relations in the Chinese world order.<sup>8</sup> For Sino-centrism, by definition, pre-supposes a universally-shared culture, without which its operation becomes problematic. Thus, China’s relations with Korea, Japan or even Vietnam were orderly in comparison with those with Tibet.

Since we are not concerned here with the legalities of the complex Sino-Tibetan relationship, we can safely assume that for all practical purposes Tibetan society was functioning independently of China. The relations that existed between China and Tibet before the Chinese Revolution as expressed in the priest-patron relationship (*bhikshu-danapati*) were confined to the dynasties and ruling Lamas, Beijing and Lhasa. It was a formal, ceremonial and above all a loose structure which meant little or nothing to the majority of Tibetans. “Our sense of independence was based more on the independence of our life and culture which was more real to the unlettered masses than on law or history, canons by which the non-Tibetans decide the fate of Tibet.”<sup>9</sup>

The wall that separates China and Tibet was experienced not only by the Tibetans when the Communists entered their country but also by the Chinese Communists when they passed through Eastern Tibet during the Long March in 1935. A participant in that March recalled: “I remember when we came out of the grasslands (Eastern Tibet) and broke through enemy lines into Kansu and saw Chinese peasants. They thought we were crazy. We touched their houses and the [Chinese] earth, we embraced them, and danced and sang and cried.”<sup>10</sup> And Dick Wilson comments: “Some small part of the tragedy of Communist China’s role in Tibet during the 1950s and 1960s may be owed to these experiences in 1935 when Tibetan hostility made the difference between death and survival for many comrades of soldiers who survived to take high positions in the Chinese Government and armed forces after 1949.”<sup>11</sup>

Thanks to such encounters which Mao himself experienced, the Communists were able to recognize the facts of the situation in Outer Tibet, at least, and this recognition was clearly reflected in the Chinese policy towards Tibet between 1951 and 1958. The Chinese Revolution, first



## *The 1959 Revolt*

of all, was “a purely Chinese affair” and failed to have any impact on Tibet before 1950. As George Moseley writes: “In contrast to the Russian Revolution in which peoples other than the Great Russians played a significant role, the revolution in China was a purely Han Chinese affair. To employ a crude but useful distinction, it took place in ‘inner’ China, for ‘outer’ China (Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet) had already drifted beyond the reach of the Chinese Government by the time the CCP came into being.”<sup>12</sup>

It was not because the Communists did not try to introduce revolution into Tibet earlier. When the Communists passed through Eastern Tibet during the long March in 1935, they at once established a “people’s government” there; they even managed to recruit two or three young Tibetans into the Red Army who later became high-ranking officials.<sup>13</sup> But, in Edgar Snow’s words, “the Reds for the first time faced a populace united in its hostility to them”,<sup>14</sup> and this made revolution impossible unless imposed from above, and with force. The absence of a peasant rebellion in Tibetan history is in stark contrast with China’s turbulent history, especially since the nineteenth century. While it does not prove that the Tibetans were happy and prosperous, it does suggest that their value system and social structure were in working condition. Communists, of course, can say that it was the “opiate of the people” that kept the peasants docile and contented, but the function of ideology is precisely that: the definition of the situation.

As we have observed earlier it was perhaps due to their experiences during the Long March that the Communist leadership was able to take into consideration all the three points we have been discussing in their policy towards Tibet: (a) that the Tibetan theocracy was functioning; (b) that Tibetan society, including its value system, was fundamentally different from that of China; (c) that the Chinese Revolution did not touch Tibet at all until 1950. As long as these basic points were kept in mind by those responsible for the execution of the Chinese policy in Tibet, there was far less likelihood of revolt.

Volume V of Mao’s *Selected Works* (p. 64) proves beyond doubt that the late chairman was one of the architects of the Chinese policy towards Tibet. In a policy directive dated 6 April 1952 and addressed to the generals who were leading the PLA forces into Tibet, Mao instructed:

Make every possible effort to use all suitable means to win over the Dalai Lama and majority of the upper strata and isolate the minority of bad elements in order to achieve long-term goals of transforming Tibetan economy and polity gradually without spilling blood.

Mao realistically warned that Tibetans were “completely different people” and that the situation in Tibet was “worse than that we face in Sinkiang where we have at least some support”, namely from Han settlers. Mao summed up the situation in Tibet when he said, “We have no material base

in Tibet. In terms of social power they are stronger than us, which for the moment will not change.”<sup>15</sup>

How was this policy translated into action? June Dreyer shows in her study how this policy was conceived and implemented generally for all national minorities. Specifically in the case of Tibet, I have written on this elsewhere and since no one else has so far dealt with this aspect, I may be permitted to repeat it here:

Under the so-called “peaceful liberation” policy, extending from 1951 to 1959, the Chinese Communists made no direct contact with the masses. This is surprising, as one would normally expect the Communists to urge the proletariat to “shake off their yokes”. But the only contacts that the common Tibetan had with the Communists were at the road camps and on journeys. The Chinese used the Tibetan people intelligently for their military preparation in Tibet. The blue uniformed comrades encouraged the Tibetans to work industriously on the roads, but they made no effort to indoctrinate them. They seemed to know that the Tibetans were stubborn and conservative, and that they would not exchange their own worst vices for the best Chinese virtues. They were deeply rooted in Tibet and in anything that was Tibetan. The majority were quite unreceptive to new ideas, especially to communism, which directly opposed the Spirit of their way of life. Admittedly there were a few Tibetans who responded to the Chinese call; in Sakya about six young beggars and orphans became “Chinese”.<sup>16</sup>

The 1951 agreement between China and Tibet signed in Beijing<sup>17</sup> never mentioned a word about socialism. It hesitated even to use the word “democratic” to qualify the “various reforms” to be introduced. Instead it guaranteed that (a) the existing political system, including the power and the position of the traditional ruling elite would function as before; (b) neither the income nor power of the “Church” would be reduced and religious freedom would be protected; (c) with regard to the unspecified “various reforms”, there would be “no compulsion on the part of the central authorities”. As far as policy implementation was concerned, the Chinese local authorities tried to adhere to the terms of the agreement to a degree that earned them the wrath of the radicals during the Cultural Revolution. “Why did Teng Hsiao-p’ing, as the general secretary of the Central Committee, try so hard to please, care for and support the former Tibetan local government headed by the Dalai?”<sup>18</sup>

For the majority of the ruling class there was no reason why formal cooperation would be unacceptable:

As far as education and natural ability went, they were still miles ahead of the masses, having generations of learning to their

advantage. Consequently, if they studied Communism and sent their children to school, they would undoubtedly occupy the best positions even in the new society. Names and titles might vanish, but in substance they would continue to enjoy the same privileges.<sup>19</sup>

If the Chinese demonstrated such flexibility and responsiveness to the situation demands in Tibet, we might ask what caused the Tibetan Rebellion of 1959.

The overall Chinese policy towards political Tibet (TAR) was undoubtedly realistic and imaginative, perhaps based on the United Front strategy. But with regard to ethnic Tibet (Kham and Amdo) the Chinese policy was based on a rigid legality and lack of realism: treat the ethnic Tibetans living in China – and twice as numerous as those under the Dalai Lama – as both *de jure* and *de facto* Chinese, since they were not under the jurisdiction of Lhasa. This was one of the fundamental flaws of Chinese policy in Tibet and a basic cause of the revolt. It was a great error to base the policy for such a sensitive issue on a rigid apparent legality so far removed from the actual situation. For the fact was, that in the 1950s, that no matter how far these Eastern Tibetans were away from Lhasa or even how relatively close they were to the Chinese provinces, they behaved and acted like any other Tibetan. And this social fact should have been taken into consideration.

This legalistic distinction actually has an important political and legal implication that China was probably unaware of at the time and would not hear of now: China recognized political Tibet, that is the territory under the effective political control of the Tibetan government, as a separate, if not independent, political entity. The recovery of a lost province may necessitate a treaty with a third country who had aided the rebel province but it would not require a treaty/agreement with the rebel province itself. Since this agreement was signed between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama's Government, its terms, most of which as we have observed were favourable to the traditional ruling class, were applicable only to that part of Tibet ruled by the Dalai Lama. This means that about two-thirds of the Tibetan-speaking population were subjected to a radical policy similar to the one pursued in the rest of China, and which proved eminently unsuitable.

Legally Chinese policy was perfectly correct. Well before the Communists came to power, a large part of Eastern Tibet, or what the British called "Inner Tibet" comprising Kham and Amdo, was gradually annexed and incorporated into the neighbouring Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan.<sup>20</sup> As the Chinese central government was unstable for almost the previous 100 years, Tibetans living in Eastern Tibet or what the Tibetans call Kham, which was considered *de jure* Chinese territory, enjoyed an incredible degree of independence both from Beijing and Lhasa.

While these Khampas were hostile to the Tibetan Government and in particular to the lay aristocratic ruling class, their loyalty to the Dalai Lama as an incarnation of the Buddha of Compassion, and as supreme pontiff of Tibetan Buddhism which was operative throughout Buddhist Central Asia, was unquestionable. This social fact should have been the basis of Chinese policy in “Inner Tibet” as it was in “Outer Tibet”, and it is directly related to the a etiology of the Tibetan Rebellion.

Since the Khampas and Amdowas, who were to become the core of the Tibetan Revolt, were considered legally Chinese rather than Tibetan, various social, economic and political changes (“democratic reforms”) in Kham and Amdo were attempted more or less at the same time as in other Chinese provinces such as Qinghai and Sichuan, around 1952–53. While “Outer Tibet” was granted an extension of six more years when there would be no reform, the Chinese tried to force social changes into a segment of a whole functioning Tibetan Buddhist society, separated only by an artificial legality.<sup>21</sup> In terms of a revolutionary situation, Kham was no more ready than Outer Tibet was for social change. The Dalai Lama was still considered by the population as the *real* incarnation of Avalokitesvara. The Buddha, Buddhism and *Sangha* (monastic community) together constituted the Tibetan equivalent of God, which was still sacred. The definition of the social situation provided by such a value system was still considered valid, simply because of the lack of an exogenous source of change that could have undermined such beliefs prior to the Chinese coming and the suddenness of the Chinese “democratic reforms” which had no time to upset the division of labour and to undermine the traditional value system.

The Tibetan Revolt, fundamentally, was caused by the inevitable clash of two diametrically opposed value systems. The “democratic reforms” affected not only the property relations but, more importantly as far as the Tibetans living at that point of time (early 1950s) were concerned, their value system. This calls for an insight into the Tibetan social structure and political institutions, all of which were premised and based on Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>22</sup> Thus, religion penetrated and permeated both the state and society. This inseparability of religion from the social system empirically means that there could be no social change without touching or undermining the religious foundation. In simple terms it would appear from all the evidence that, given the choice, Tibetan traditionalists opted for their value system that provided the definition of the social situation and sanctioned a political system which the Chinese Communists felt was unjust. The revolt was an expression of this choice. This is not to imply any value judgement, but merely to analyse the Tibetan Revolt in factual and functional terms.

Given the basic functioning and equal condition of the Tibetan society as a whole including Inner Tibet, and in particular its value system throughout

the Tibetan world, any revolt against the system itself was ruled out. Such an un-Buddhist, if not anti-Buddhist, act was almost inconceivable as far as the Tibetans living at that point of time were concerned, since Buddhism had an absolute ideological monopoly. Thus there was no natural cause, either necessary or sufficient, for an indigenous revolt against the system. But when a social system, and in particular the value system is functioning, there can be no revolt against the system, no matter how unjust others might think it to be, but in defence of that very system, when any power, external or internal, tries to tamper with it, no matter with what good intentions.<sup>23</sup> The whole history of the development of the Tibetan Rebellion testifies to this.

As long as the Chinese did not tamper with the objectively functioning social system and the value systems still considered sacred by the members of the society, as happened in Outer Tibet, there was no revolt, although the unprecedented Chinese presence in the country caused great resentment and anxiety. But the moment the Chinese tried to alter the functioning and sacred social system in Inner Tibet which they considered *de jure* China proper, the revolt began. Let there be no doubt about this: the Tibetan Rebellion was in defence of Tibetan Buddhist values, and the political and sacred institutions founded upon such values. "The Khampa uprisings were concentrated in those regions where 'democratic reforms' were most widespread. These comprised the areas of Liangshan, Apha, and Kanze, and Beijing was forced to admit that large populations of Khampas, Amdos, and Guluks were involved in the rebellion."<sup>24</sup>

It appears that democratic reforms were carried out in certain parts of Kham, for example, Gyalthang as early as 1953. The hero of the Khampa revolt, Gonpo Tashi Andrugtsang, described the hasty changes introduced by the Chinese and Khampa resentment against them in the following terms:

In the area of Gyalthang Anthena Kham, the following year (1953), the local population was divided into five strata and a terror campaign of selective arrests (was) launched by the Chinese. People belonging to the first three strata were either publicly humiliated or condemned to the firing squads. This ... alarming development reached such a state that the Chinese had destroyed thousands of monasteries in the areas of Bathang, Lithang, Gyalthang, Derge and many places in Amdo. ... Many Lamas and monks were imprisoned without reason, others subjected to various ignominies or condemned to death after a farcical trial. ... When the people began to learn how the Chinese were foisting their authority and their own system of government on the country, the simmering discontent against them, nurtured by the stories of atrocities in the east, grew into open resentment and hostility.<sup>25</sup>

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**Table 13.1** Revolts in Tibet, 1954–1987

<i>Date</i>	<i>Revolt</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Estimated number of partisans</i>
August–September 1954	Kanting Rebellion	Tachienlu	40,000
February–March 1956	Lithang Rebellion	Lithang Monastery	15,000
June 1958–March 1959	Chushi Gang-drug	Lhoka	5,000
March 1959	Lhasa Uprising	Lhasa	30,000
27 September 1987	Pro-independence demonstrations	Lhasa	21 monks
October 1987	Pro-independence demonstrations	Lhasa	2,000

*Sources:* Michel Peissel, *Cavaliers of Kham* (London: Heineman, 1972) pp. 73–94; George N. Patterson, *Tibet in Revolt* (London: Faber & Faber, 1960) pp. 125–35; Ronald D. Schwartz, *Circle of Protest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) pp. 74–108; Ken Herold, *Tibet and the United States of America* (San Francisco: International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet, 1994).

If the revolt was in defence of the value system, it was against the reforms that the Chinese were trying to introduce. This gives credence to the Chinese official interpretation of the revolt as one by the “upper strata reactionary clique”<sup>26</sup> to perpetuate their position, although the matter seems much more complicated than this. Suffice it to say that most of the upper strata was formally co-opted by the Chinese and the class composition of those who participated in the revolt cut along religious rather than on economic lines. The Tibetans, no matter to which class they belonged, were all united in their religious beliefs and supported the existing value system; they were more concerned with the latter than with economics. When the Chinese attempted to implement “democratic reforms” and asked the Tibetan peasants if they would like “land reforms”, which would necessarily involve taking away land from the monasteries which owned about 37 per cent of the arable land in Tibet, the Tibetans’ answer was “No”. It must be added that this was their reply then. It should also be noted that although there was an acute shortage of grain soon after the arrival of about 40,000 Chinese troops into Tibet, there was no revolt, only resentment. Nor was there any known peasant rebellion against the unjust economic disparity that prevailed under the old order.

People often tend to forget that the 1959 revolt was only the culmination of a revolt that started in Eastern Tibet in 1952–53, when “widespread fighting broke out in Kham and Amdo”. According to George Patterson, who perhaps knew more than anyone else about the revolt, over 80,000 rebels were involved in the initial rebellion, out of which “some”

12,000 were deserters from the Kuomintang. The revolt, however, died down with “no immediate help forthcoming from either India or America, and because the Chinese, at the persuasion of East Tibetan leaders, relaxed their policy of immediate land reforms”.<sup>27</sup> But by 1953 a “large number of activists including ordinary people joined hands with the guerrillas” and the following year the revolt spread gradually “all over eastern and north-eastern Tibet”.<sup>28</sup> The *New York Times* in August 1954 reported, quoting Taiwanese sources, that “40,000 farmers took part in an uprising in East Tibet, which was suppressed by the 18th Chinese Army”.<sup>29</sup>

But by far the most significant revolt in Kham was the one which has been termed “the Kanting Rebellion”, 1955–56. The Chinese central authorities issued an order that “every possible means should be put into action to weed out the Tibetan reactionaries and exterminate the rebels”. Anna L. Strong writes:

The Kanting rebellion broke out in the winter of 1955–56 and took the form of murdering Central Government officials and Han citizens, there being no PLA in the area. As soon as the PLA arrived, they easily put down the rebels, but these fled into deeper hills and eventually into Chando. Arms were easy to get, for at least fifty thousand muskets and rifles had been left in the area from the warlords’ battles between Tibetan and Szechwan warlords. . . . The Szechwan–Chando rebellion was basically repressed by the end of 1956, though isolated groups would remain as bandits as long as any monastery or until ‘local people’s council’ was organized. The bulk of the defeated rebels moved into Tibet. They were the Khampas, Sikan troops, cavalry, wild and undisciplined, accustomed to living by loot.<sup>30</sup>

Nor did China deny her armed suppression of the Khampa uprising. When the Dalai Lama’s first press statement in exile charged the Chinese with heavy-handed military suppression of the Kanting Rebellion in violation of the Seventeen-Point Agreement, China defended her strong military action on rigid legal grounds: that it was within *de jure* Chinese territory. China was evidently enraged at the Dalai Lama’s “interference in China’s internal affairs”. The New China News Agency replied as follows:

In the so-called “statement of the Dalai Lama” of April 18 [1959] the “Khampa rebellion” was mentioned in an attempt to prove that the Central People’s Government had violated the 17-article agreement on the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. But the so-called “Khampa rebellion” [Khampa is a Tibetan word] refers to areas around Kantse, Szechwan Province, in the eastern Sikang–Tibet Plateau, inhabited by the Tibetan minority nationality. The Sikang area was not even a part of Tibet. Formally it was Sikang Province and later became part of Szechwan Province.<sup>31</sup>

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Although China's stand was legally sound (and although such a stand strongly implied the recognition of Tibet as apart from China), it was a great error to base her policy and actions on an apparent legality rather than on the facts of the situation. In reality, the Tibetans in Inner Tibet were ethnically, culturally and socially no different from those in Outer Tibet (TAR); there was an objective need for policy to treat them equally. No matter wherever the Tibetans were, in China or in India, they were all united in one common objective during the 1950s: "we would rather live for one day and die under the Buddha than live for a hundred years in an abundance of food and clothing under atheist rule".<sup>32</sup>

Thus, sporadic uprisings were widespread in most parts of Eastern Tibet by the mid-1950s, fighting against one common enemy but in separate uncoordinated pockets "for their homes, for their faith, and for their very race".

And, indeed, forgetting their blood feuds and old disputes, all the tribes of Kham rose united against the Chinese; the ten clans of Nangchen, those of Nakchu and Rakshi Gumpa, the Horpas of Kandze, the Chengtreng herders of the south and the dozen tribes of Markham. Even beyond Kham, in Chinghai to the north the twenty thousand horsemen of the much-feared Goloks of Khangsar, Tsangkor, Khangring and Butsang, rose up in arms.<sup>33</sup>

A series of major uprisings started in Kham in 1956-57, moved to Amdo in 1958, and finally swept into Lhasa in 1959. Most fierce fighting broke out in Lithang, Bathang, Derge, Chando, Kanze, etc., places where the major monasteries of Eastern Tibet were located. Perhaps the heaviest fighting took place in Lithang Monastery, lasting for 64 days.<sup>34</sup> What all this demonstrated was that Chinese Communism faced strong ideological opposition from the traditional Tibetan ideology, Buddhism. By early 1956 Chamdo, Lithang, Bathang and Kanze were "temporarily over-run by Khampa irregulars" who numbered about 6,000.<sup>35</sup>

The Chinese determination and ruthlessness to suppress the Khampa uprisings in Eastern Tibet by military action, which starkly contrasted with their sweet reasonableness in Tibet proper (except during the 1959 Lhasa Revolt) cannot be underestimated.<sup>36</sup> Apart from the apparent legal premises on which they acted, the strong military action in Eastern Tibet was necessitated by China's high political stakes in Central Asia. If the Khampa revolt could not be controlled and contained in Kham and prevented, at all cost, from spreading to Outer Tibet, China could not afford to engage in fighting in an extremely strategic border region where an already explosive situation existed. It appears that what China most feared at the time was foreign intervention; and if no decisive military action were to be taken, the danger to the new regime did appear real and threatening. It would not only be a huge embarrassment to the new regime but it would question the



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whole validity and viability of the People's Republic that claimed to have been founded on the perfect equality and unity of all nationalities in China. Thus, "over 40 thousand" Chinese soldiers along with "29,000 trained militia from Chinese-operated communes", evidently from the neighbouring Chinese provinces, were deployed to suppress the Khampa rebellion.<sup>37</sup>

But if the PLA were able to end the fighting in Eastern Tibet, it was unable to "exterminate" the rebels. As the PLA carried on its extensive suppression campaigns all over Eastern Tibet, the majority of the Khampa rebels who survived began to march slowly towards Central Tibet and:

Looked to Lhasa, crying out with the blood of Tibet to the capital, to the holy city, to the Dalai Lama, to the very epicentre of the world and of the values for which they fought, asking Central Tibet to join in their crusade. But once more they encountered only obstruction and indifference.<sup>38</sup>

By 1958 over 15,000 families, all rebels and/or refugees from Eastern Tibet, pitched their tents in Lhasa. This further intensified the already tense situation in Lhasa.

If the "rebellion in Eastern Tibet were a result of local dissatisfaction with communist policies", as the chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association declared, the Lhasa Rebellion of 1959 was precipitated by a series of careless Chinese actions in 1958. When Lhasa was swamped with refugees from Kham, the Chinese authorities tried to deport them back home. First, all the Chinese refugees, approximately, 1,500 were deported to China; next, an official census of Khampas who had sought refuge in Lhasa was taken, followed by an announcement that no Khampa without a Chinese identity card would be permitted to live in Lhasa.<sup>39</sup> These thoughtless measures frightened the Khampas and drove them to an area south of Lhasa called Lhoka, where they began to organize themselves into a nationalist resistance movement. So far the Khampa resistance had not been organized under a single centralized command: about 23 separate groups fought against the Chinese, defending their own villages and local monasteries. Now, literally driven together by the Chinese measures, and inspired by what Peissel calls the "epicentre" of Tibetan civilization, the Tibetans – who were by tradition notoriously allergic to organization of any kind – began to organize themselves and try to coordinate their tribal fighting units into a single organization called *Chushi Gangdruk*, meaning "Four Rivers and Six Ranges", an ancient name for Kham, in Lhodrak (Dha[r]ma Dzong) on 16 June 1958. About 5,000 Khampa rebels including 300 "volunteers from various parts of Tibet", were organized under the command of Gombo Tashi Andrugtsang.<sup>40</sup>

Despite their attempt at organization, some of the Khampa chiefs deserted and "their lawless activities caused great resentment among the people and brought shame and disgrace to the volunteer force". What is

interesting, however, was the way in which the Chinese attempted to portray all Khampa rebels as robbers. According to Andrugtsang:

The Chinese administration fully appreciated the potential of the bandit menace for creating animosity and distrust between the freedom fighters and the local populace. They took advantage of a few disloyal Tibetans and exploited them to raid and pillage to countryside, masquerading as freedom fighters.<sup>41</sup>

As the Khampas moved their theatre of operation nearer Lhasa, the simmering discontent of the local people in Central Tibet grew into open resentment and hostility against the Chinese. Under this tense situation, the Dalai Lama and his government, whom the Chinese had so far used as an unconscious agent of their designs in Tibet, were under increasing pressure from all sides. They had an acute dilemma. By 1957 the traditional ruling class in Lhasa was split between those who sided with Ngapo Ngawang Jigme and the Dalai Lama, both of whom realistically thought that Tibet's future lay in collaborating with China, and those who felt, on the contrary, that Communist China and Buddhist Tibet had irreconcilable ideals.<sup>42</sup> The Dalai Lama in particular had a terrible dilemma because he had to openly oppose the very people who were trying to "defend" him and fight for all that he symbolized to them. He did so because he was a realist and due to his non-violent moral convictions and at the same time under Chinese pressure and persuasion.<sup>43</sup>

Both George Patterson and Michel Peissel, the two leading experts on the Khampas, have condemned the Dalai Lama and the ruling elite for their collaboration with the Chinese when Tibet was in revolt. In particular, Peissel's criticism is unequivocal:

A word from the Dalai Lama, one single proclamation and all Tibet would undoubtedly have stood up and faced the Chinese. The Dalai Lama's failure to act, to speak and to lead his people to war, is perhaps the greatest tragedy of Tibet's long history.<sup>44</sup>

However, the Dalai Lama seemed to have realized the futility of the Khampa rebellion against the Chinese; it was like "jumping off a cliff when you have eyes to see".<sup>45</sup> To China he was an important weapon second only to the PLA which China reserved as a last resort against Tibetan nationalist activities, regarded as anti-Chinese. Thus he officially had to sanction most of the "anti-Tibetan policies", dismiss his prime minister, Lukhangwa, condemn the Khampas as "reactionaries" and "order" them to lay down their arms, and outlaw the "Mimang Tsongdu", etc.

While the Khampa rebellion has been over romanticized in recent years, a genuinely popular rebellion called *Mimang Tsongdu* (literally People's meetings), remains almost unknown to the outside world. The movement began as early as 1954. George Patterson has written: "A powerful

underground anti-Chinese group known as the Mimang Tsongdu (People's Party) came into public prominence with demonstrations, placarding of walls, denunciations of Chinese interference with the Dalai Lama's power and the customs and religion of Tibet."<sup>46</sup>

Mimang Tsongdu openly criticized Chinese policies, declaring outright that as "representatives of the Tibetan peoples they wanted the Chinese to leave Tibet".<sup>47</sup> Sensing a the real danger, the Chinese dissolved the Mimang Tsongdu and imprisoned its ringleaders, one of whom died in prison in Lhasa. Thus, in 1957, the Dalai Lama and his government issued official edicts banning the Mimang Tsongdu and depriving those Tibetans in exile suspected of anti-Chinese activities on behalf of Tibetan nationality. The Tibetan government, as a rule, completely dissociated itself from the rebellion, though a few individual officials, such as Surkhang and Phala, had clandestine contact with the rebels. Thus, as the Khampas were fighting in Lhoka, the Dalai Lama and his government sent several delegations asking the Khampas to lay down arms. The ruling elite, on the whole, cooperated with the Chinese, some willingly, some reluctantly, as Michel Peissel explains:

Apart from the leaders of the Mimang, who came to place their own clandestine operations at the disposal of the Khampas, it would be fair to say that the majority of the influential personalities of Lhasa were jealous of the Khampas, and afraid of losing to them their personal power and prestige. They preferred, along with the traitorous minister Ngabo, a certain collusion with the Chinese who had so cunningly maintained them in place of privilege that they could never have hoped to keep under a free Tibet led by the rugged warriors from the east.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the Khampas' boastful accounts of fighting in Lhoka, they were continually chased, from the start, by the PLA troops. Between August 1958 and March 1959, Khampas engaged in a total of 14 skirmishes in the Lhoka area. There seems to be no end either to tragedy or to irony. All the Tibetan "scouting troops" were trapped by PLA units upon whom they were supposed to spy. It was really a series of battles between seasoned Maoist guerrillas and medieval crusaders, and the result was a foregone conclusion despite the Tibetan determination and courage inspired by their unshakable faith.

Meanwhile, popular anti-Chinese feelings in Lhasa had reached boiling point. Since the early summer of 1958, with the arrival of increasing numbers of Khampas and in particular when fighting was going on in Lhoka, barely 40 or 50 miles away from Lhasa, the situation in the city deteriorated progressively. The enraged public went beyond the control of even the Dalai Lama whom they were trying to protect, defend and fight for. From all contemporary accounts it would appear that the whole atmosphere in Lhasa and Central Tibet was charged with anger, fear,

suspense and suspicion. Between 13 February and 25 March 1959, momentous events and silly episodes took place in Lhasa, a blow-by-blow account of which has been written by Noel Barber.<sup>49</sup> What was needed to set the smouldering situation on fire was a petty incident or a slight provocation, and that was provided by a Chinese invitation to the Dalai Lama to attend a theatrical show at the PLA Headquarters on 10 March 1959, a date indeed, as the Chinese repeatedly claimed, was personally chosen by the Dalai Lama himself a month earlier.<sup>50</sup> Tibetan suspicions were supposedly aroused by the timing of the invitation, which coincided with the Great Prayer Festival (Monlam Chenmo) in Lhasa, and by the Chinese insistence that the Dalai Lama and his entourage come, unescorted by Tibetan troops, to the PLA Headquarters – again a practice for which there was a precedent. What enraged the Tibetan public and created most suspicion were the insistent reminders which the Chinese General sent to the Dalai Lama when the latter was taking part in a public ritual widely attended by Tibetans from all over Tibet. The immediate cause of the Lhasa Revolt was therefore trivial and “subjective”. But, as Noel Barber remarks, it was not so trivial to the Tibetans:

To western eyes, the reaction of Tibetans to these infractions of protocol may seem exaggerated (though one can imagine the hullabaloo in London if an invited diplomat chose to boycott the State Opening of Parliament). But one has to remember that Tibetans had been smarting under occupation for eight years, and if their emotions were exaggerated, then that is what happens when simple, devoutly religious people feel they have been affronted.<sup>51</sup>

Tibetans, under the circumstances, saw the invitation as a Chinese trick to kidnap the Dalai Lama and to try to stage a *coup d'état*. But it is clear from my own findings that Tibetan fears and suspicions were unfounded, and that the Chinese had no such intentions. They planned a series of more subtle *coups* in separate instalments, as they had been doing since 1951.

Word spread around Lhasa like wildfire and by 10 March 1959, an estimated 30,000 Tibetans from all walks of life had gathered around what they regarded as the symbol and essence of Tibetan civilization and Tibet, the Dalai Lama, to “protect,” defend and fight for all that he symbolized to the Tibetans. He was the personification of their faith and their country. Hence, the revolt symbolically took the form of surrounding, not the Chinese Army Headquarters, but the Dalai Lama’s palace to “protect” and prevent him from visiting the military theatre. It is also clear from my own inquiries that the Dalai Lama was personally against this angry demonstration which he thought was the quickest way to self-destruction. But the enraged public slipped out of his control.

What was so striking beneath this strange medieval, religious and folkish behaviour was a resolute and fanatical sense of anti-Chinese and

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anti-Communist feeling.<sup>52</sup> The slogans that were shouted had strong overtones of nationalism: “Drive away Chinese”, “Independence for Tibet”, etc. The NCNA communique on the revolt scornfully commented: “The spirit of these reactionaries soared to the clouds and they were ready to take over the whole universe.”<sup>53</sup> On 17 March the Tibetan rebels sent a “secret” telegram, which the Chinese intercepted, to their nationalist organization that had been operating in Kalimpong in India since the early 1950s. The message read in part:

The independent country of Tibet was formed on the first day the second month of the Tibetan calendar [that is 10 March of universal calendar, the day on which the rebellion started—NCNA editor]. Please announce this to all. . . .<sup>54</sup>

What triggered violence was an incident that further suggests the anti-Chinese character of the rebellion. Some in the anxious crowd that gathered around the Dalai Lama’s palace on 10 March sighted a Tibetan aristocrat-official who was well-known as a Chinese collaborator, and the angry crowd shouted at once: “Chinese spy! Chinese spy!” He was stoned to death. A little later a member of the Kashag (Dalai Lama’s Cabinet) arrived in a Chinese jeep with Chinese escorts. The enraged public at once started pelting stones at the high Tibetan official, but he managed to escape death, thanks to Chinese jeep.<sup>55</sup>

H. E. Richardson, who spent several years in Lhasa first as the British and then as the Indian Resident, writes that one of the most popular ways of expressing public opinion was in street songs that the people sang.<sup>56</sup> In Lhasa maids who fetched water for the aristocrat-official class often sang lampoons about the latest follies of their masters. In the late 1950s the most popular song throughout Tibet was the anonymous verse:

We would rather have the Dalai Lama than Mao Zedong;  
We would rather have the Kashag<sup>57</sup> than Uyon Lhan-Khang;<sup>58</sup>  
We would rather have Buddhism than Communism;  
We would rather have Ten-Sung Mag-mi<sup>59</sup> than the PLA;  
We would rather use our own [wooden] bowls than [Chinese] mugs.

The official Chinese interpretation of all this was conveyed in the following cryptic remark: “What is meant by independence here is in fact to turn Tibet into colony or protectorate of a foreign country.”<sup>60</sup>

Hence, at 10.00 a.m. on 20 March 1959, the PLA command in Tibet was “ordered to take punitive action against the clique of traitors who had committed monstrous crime.” The rebellion was suppressed after “more than two days of fighting”. An NCNA “rough count” showed that by 23 March, more than 4,000 “rebel troops were taken prisoner, and 8,000 small arms, 81 light and heavy machine guns, 27 mortars, six mountain guns and 10 million rounds of ammunition were captured”. Considering

Tibet's total population of 1.2 million, China thought the rebellion by "20,000 people, mostly people who were deceived and intimidated to join in" was not very significant. But the extent of popular participation in the rebellion may perhaps be better gauged by the following PLA proclamation which appeals and "hopes" that the Tibetan public would not help the rebels: "We *hope* that all the people in Tibet, lamas and laity, will energetically help our army in the campaign to put down the rebellion *and not shelter the bandits, supply the enemy or provide the rebellious bandits with information*" (emphasis added).<sup>61</sup>

To a large extent, religion was the basic cause of the revolt. This feature leads some scholars to regard the 1959 revolt as essentially "anachronistic", and indeed, from a twentieth-century perspective, it is. And yet if we keep in mind the kind of pre-modern society that existed in Tibet before 1950 or even before 1959, we should not expect anything else.

The Tibetans did not perceive the Chinese "invasion" as a threat to the territorial integrity of Tibet, although Tibet had assumed a distinct geographical entity as a separate country since the seventh or eighth centuries. It was seen more as a threat to their faith. The Chinese liberators were called *brtan dgra* – enemies of the faith; the Khampa guerrillas who led the Tibetan nationalist movement were popularly called *brtan sruñg* – defenders of the faith; and the main aim of the movement was the defence of Tibetan Buddhism as personified by the Dalai Lama.

The religious nature of the revolt was further reinforced by the devoutly religious nature of those who led it. Take, for example, the hero of the 1959 revolt. The Dalai Lama, in a foreword to the chief rebel's memoirs published posthumously in India, writes:

The Andrugtsang family for several generations has been acknowledged for its immense reverence and deep devotion to the *Dharma* (i.e. Buddhism). Every Tibetan knows the almost legendary story of the late Gompo Tashi sacrificed his wealth and life for the Dharma and the national freedom of Tibet.<sup>62</sup>

The rebellion was undoubtedly initiated and led by Khampas, Tibet's warrior class, but had other participants too including most of the "Tibetan army of only a little more than 3,000 men",<sup>63</sup> most of Lhasa's 20,000 monks,<sup>64</sup> a great number of the 10–30,000 public<sup>65</sup> that surrounded the Dalai Lama's palace and of course, the 10,000 Khampas<sup>66</sup> who had fled to Lhasa by 1959. In the course of the suppression of the Revolt, the Chinese had killed over 87,000 Tibetans.<sup>67</sup>

The scope of the revolt, however, was limited by the lack of modern organization and communications in a vast and mountainous Tibet whose scanty population is rather scattered. Given the popular cause, *ten-sung* (defend the faith), the rebels enjoyed popular public support and sympathy. The fact that they were able to sustain their fighting against the heaviest

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odds for about six years was a testimony to its public support. The revolt, therefore, was only “national in the sense that the sentiment of the majority of people of Tibet were involved”.<sup>68</sup>

The vast majority of the 23 Khampa leaders of the Tibet Revolt were merchants who had made their fortune since the “liberation”, as China kept pouring silver coins called *dao-yuan* into Tibet to pay the Tibetan ruling class and road workers. But instead of making more money or running away to India safely with their silver fortunes, Khampas spent the Chinese money on the purchase of arms and ammunition for the revolt:

Thousands of mules laden with Chinese silver dollars were sent by this route (lonely trails running southwards across the Brahmaputra) to Assam (India) to collect sealed cargoes of rifles and ammunitions purchased in great secrecy under the very nose of the Indian officials.<sup>69</sup>

What political sense can be made out of this apparently baffling revolt? In order to have a revolt against the Tibetan “theocracy” as such, Tibetans would have to become, as a minimum condition, secularized; and to have an indigenous revolution, the Tibetans would have to become anti-Buddhist. The whole value system would have to lose its meaning and sanctity. And the Dalai Lama must be proven to be a man, not a Buddha. As we have seen, the situation was far from being what the Chinese Communists would like it to have been. To impose revolution on a functioning society is like burying a man alive. In such a case one man’s conception of revolution inevitably becomes another man’s destruction. Hence, the Tibetan Rebellion.<sup>70</sup>

## Chapter 14

# The Political Economy of Communist Rule: Strategic Developments 1951–1998

Strategic affairs and defence matters are supposed to be state secrets, especially in China and India. Because of their sensitive and secret nature they are usually not considered a proper or respectable field of academic inquiry. Yet I have taken an open interest in this sensitive issue since 1972<sup>1</sup> for a number of reasons.

I have come to believe over the years that the brutal reality of Chinese Communist rule in Tibet could not be fully comprehended without documenting the solid strategic developments and defence infrastructures which have made the Communist “liberation” a reality. These are the projects the Communists have concentrated on for the past 25 years (1951–76), not on economic development. To be sure some of them, such as highways, can have dual use, and there has been, since the early 1980s, some evidence of economic benefits to the local population.<sup>2</sup> Such benefits are, however, side effects of the main purpose which is military- and strategic-oriented. This is suggested by the strategic routes that the highways take and by the order in which such highways were built in the 1950s as well as by continuing high defence expenditure on Tibet.

Secondly, the structure of Communist domination in Tibet consists of two equally effective components: an organizational monopoly of control and command that rules out almost any public space; this tight and systematic organizational control is reinforced by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), the People’s Armed Police (PAP), and local militia. The PLA was used in the 1950 takeover and the 1959 revolt; the PAP were utilized in the 1987 and 1988 pro-independence demonstrations; and the militia as a combat service support to the PLA during 1962 Sino–Indian war and the 1967 Nathula skirmishes. It is through this structural violence – a combination of Leninist organizational networks and the threat or actual use of organized force – that constitutes the substance and the mechanism



by which Communists rule Tibet. We cannot understand such intricacy without first documenting the way the Chinese armed forces were stationed in Tibet.

Finally, I have come to the conclusion that the Chinese emphasis on strategic development in Tibet has a lot to do with Tibet's strategic location and the consequent Sino-Indian rivalry in Inner Asia and the cis-Himalayas since 1949. To that extent Tibet may be considered a victim of Sino-Indian strategic rivalry. Seen from such a perspective, my interest in strategic developments in the trans- and the cis-Himalayas is part of my peace study and conflict resolution. For I have come to believe that without resolving the underlying strategic contradictions no peace plan can be workable in the long run. Hence, I discuss the possibilities neutralizing the contested territory in order to have an overall peace-producing effect on Sino-Indian relations in particular and on Asia in general.

Inner Asia has been of crucial strategic importance to the dominant powers of East and South Asia in the past just as it is now. The domination of the region by either power, directly or indirectly, has been an accurate indication of one power's supremacy over the other. At the turn of the century, it was the arena of the "Great Game" between Tsarist Russia and Great Britain.<sup>3</sup> And by 1950, when two nationalist regimes had emerged in China and India, Tibet became a matter of acute contention between the two countries.<sup>4</sup> The critical question was: Who should occupy the strategic frontier region between the two giants? India submitted to Chinese demands, hoping that both parties would respect the Himalayas as the limit of each other's political sphere and defence perimeters.

In March 1969 a group of Indian Parliament members led by one of India's respected leaders, Jayaprakash Narayan, urged their government to make a fresh appraisal of its policy towards Tibet. They cited Tibet's strategic importance to the national security of several Asian countries including India, in these terms: "Independent Tibet is vital not only to the national interest of India but also to that of the Soviet Republics of Central Asia, of Mongolia, of Pakistan, of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and of Burma."<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the magnitude of changes in the regional power equation, there is no doubt that the strategic importance of Tibet to the People's Republic of China (PRC) increased with the growing Indo-Soviet friendship, especially after 1971.<sup>6</sup> In the mid-1970s the Chinese media described Tibet as China's "southwest outpost against imperialism, revisionism and reaction",<sup>7</sup> terms that were specific references to countries then considered hostile to China. In Tibet, China confronted enemies No. 1 and No. 2 – the Soviet Union and India.

In November 1975 the Fourth Enlarged Plenum of the Tibet CCP<sup>8</sup> Committee report described Tibet as follows: "Tibet is located in the southwest frontier of the motherland. It occupies *an extremely* strategic position." It appears that the Chinese Communists' strategic perception

of Tibet has not changed since the 1970s. In late 1991 a pro-Beijing Hong Kong-based periodical published an article entitled “Inside Story on How CPC Exercises Strict Control Over Tibet”. Citing from the Central Military Commission (CMC) secret reports, the author’s quotes are worth reproducing here:

Informed sources disclosed that the CPC Central Committee attaches more and more importance to Tibet’s strategic value. Not long ago several CMC strategy experts gave another report to the CPC Central Committee, analyzing the strategic importance of Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia. The report maintains that with huge changes taking place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the strategic roles of these three regions have become particularly prominent.<sup>9</sup>

And Tibet caps them all in strategic value in the nuclear age. A PLA official was quoted, as saying,

Tibet is the roof of the world. If we build rocket-launching sites there and install missiles, does it not mean that we can easily strike where they point. Control over Tibet enables us to gain the strategic initiative.<sup>10</sup>

From 1950, and in particular after the 1959 Revolt, the Chinese became acutely aware of the strategic importance of Tibet. No sooner had the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) marched into Tibet than it began building roads. Strategic development continued there for more than two decades and by 1976 China’s basic strategic requirements had been completed.<sup>11</sup> It seems therefore that the most spectacular aspect of development in Tibet from 1951 to 1976 has been strategic or military. This is not to deny the economic aspect: it is merely to point out a simple fact, often concealed and ignored, that strategic developments overshadow all other aspects of the exported revolution in Tibet.

Most of the economic assistance that China claims to have rendered Tibet has actually gone into road building and other strategic developments. This is not surprising when we keep in mind that China used to spend about 10–11 per cent of its GNP on national defence and that, next to the borders facing the Soviet Union, Tibet was – and still is – probably one of the most strategic and vulnerable regions in the PRC. The Chinese poured silver dollars (*dayuan*) into road-building projects in Tibet in the 1950s. While it is difficult to know exactly how much China spent on these projects, we can get a rough idea if we piece together the available evidence. During the First Five Year Plan (1953–57), China spent \$4,232 million on “transportation and communications” (supposedly for the whole country), which constituted 11.7 per cent of the total development expenditure.<sup>12</sup> There is evidence to suggest that a large chunk of that amount was spent on building roads into or in Tibet. In his book on national minorities, Chang Chih-I, who was

then a Deputy Director of the United Front Work Department of the CCP wrote:

With respect to communications and transportation, the greater part of the new highway construction throughout the country since Liberation has been located in the frontier regions of the motherland and in areas inhabited by national minorities. . . . The highway routes involving major engineering were, among others, the following: Kangting-Tibet, Tsinghai-Tibet, Tsinghai-Sinkiang, Chengtu-Apa, Lanchow-Langmuszu, Kunming-Talo, Lhasa-Shigatse, Shigatse-Gyangtse, and Phari-Yatung.<sup>13</sup>

It should be noted that most of the highways listed above are in Tibet proper and the rest in the Xinjiang–Tibet border regions. In November 1997, Beijing stated that it had spent over four billion *yuan* during the past 40 years, building roads in Tibet. Now it had decided to allocate four billion *yuan* over the next 20 years to construct and improve the existing roads in Tibet.<sup>14</sup>

Objective factors dictated and continue to dictate the strategic development: (a) the strategic vulnerability of Tibet where China confronted both India and the Soviet Union who had been, in Chinese eyes, at least since the mid-1960s in their shared hostility towards China; (b) the persistent Tibetan resistance which by itself may not pose any real danger to the well-entrenched PLA in Tibet but always had the dangerous potential of inviting foreign intervention into a strategic region that could transform Tibet into a “Vietnam”. But are such strategic preoccupations valid any longer in the post-Cold War era? With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Russian presence and influence has departed from South Asia. And the Dalai Lama has, since 1987, repeatedly called for a reasonable settlement of the Tibet issue through peaceful negotiations.<sup>15</sup>

Prior to 1950 the lack of communications frustrated repeated Chinese attempts, both Imperial and Republican, to gain effective control over Tibet. The Manchu regime tried, at the turn of this century, to build roads in Kham (Eastern Tibet) but with little success.<sup>16</sup> The Communists realized that without modern communications, and in particular motorable roads, the enormous physical barriers would make any attempt at the “liberation” of Tibet meaningless. Thus, almost immediately after the conquest of Tibet in 1951, the Chinese began constructing highways that would link Tibet with China for the first time in their history. However, it was not until the Sino–Tibetan Agreement of 1951 and the Sino–Indian Treaty on Tibet of 1954 that the Chinese were able to launch their massive road construction programme using a Tibetan labour force.<sup>17</sup> By 1965 two highways effectively linked Lhasa with interior China. And by 1975 China had completed 91 highways totalling 15,800 km with 300 permanent bridges in Outer Tibet alone, effectively connecting 97 per cent of the region’s counties by road.<sup>18</sup>

The Sichuan–Tibet Highway (Southern Military Road) is 2,413 km long and is probably the highest highway in the world. With an average height of 390 metres, the highway crosses fourteen high mountain ranges and twelve major rivers, including the Salween and Mekong. Starting from Sichuan's capital, Chengdu, it passes through most of the important places in Eastern Tibet, and finally reaches Lhasa. From there the highway – under a new name, the Xinjiang–Tibet Highway – continues on to Xinjiang, passing through most of the important places in Western Tibet such as Shigatse, Lhatse, Gartok and Rutok on the way. The Xinjiang–Tibet Highway extends from Yechung in Xinjiang to Ngari in Western Tibet. It is 1,179 km long and the highest of its kind.

The second trunk road, the Qinghai–Tibet Highway (the Northern Military Road), was completed in 1955. Starting from Xining the highway passes through Amdo (Koko-Nor area), Golmud (Horak), Nagchukha and finally reaches Lhasa. There is a motorable road which branches off from the highway at Nagchukha and then joins the Drodam Highway in the extreme west via Taktong Naina and Dangra Tso. In the event of sabotage on the Sichuan–Tibet Highway (the target of Khampa rebels in the 1950s), the Qinghai–Tibet Highway would prove to be unreliable, especially in winter when heavy snowfall makes it unpassable. These conditions are too risky for the Chinese in view of Tibet's strategic vulnerability and their past experience with the Tibetan resistance.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, there are logistical problems associated with air transport in a mountainous region and the Chinese Air Force is too weak to cope with any protracted war on the roof of the world. The 2,122 km highway is paved with asphalt, and winds its way across the Kunlun and Tanggula mountains at an average elevation of 400 metres.

Recent information suggests that the Chinese have overcome this difficulty by completing a fourth trunk road that also links Tibet with China. This new trunk road, the Yunnan–Tibet Highway, starts from Xiagun in Yunnan Province in the south and terminates in Mankam in Tibet in the north, covering a distance of 664 km running through Tiching (Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture) in Yunnan, Chamdo in Tibet, and finally linking with the Sichuan–Tibet Highway leading to Lhasa. Some 423.21 metres above sea level, it crosses the Jinsha and Lanzang Rivers and two mountain ranges including the Hengtuan Mountain Ranges. Begun in 1967, it was completed only in mid-1976, probably because the Cultural Revolution (1966–69) disrupted the work.

While these four highways link Tibet with four neighbouring provinces in China, there are even more complex, more useful networks of roads connecting all the strategic and sensitive points on the international borders along the Himalayas. The Sichuan–Tibet Highway has several offshoots which link Lhasa with south and southeastern Tibet. One such offshoot goes to Tsethang Lhuntse, and Chayal via Jora and then climbs Sepa, northeast of Tawang in India.

In southeastern Tibet prior to 1973, roads were built only along the southern banks of the Tsangpo River (Brahmaputra), connecting the Sichuan–Tibet Highway to Dongdu Ma, East of Hyiti. However, by late 1973, the Chinese were able to overcome this bottleneck too by building a 259 metre-long bridge across the Tsangpo River south of Tsela Dzong. The bridge, which is wide enough for two-way vehicular traffic, is only about 12.8 km from the northeastern Indian border that proved to be most vulnerable to Chinese attacks in the 1962 Sino–Indian war. There is another bridge, equally large and built earlier, across the Brahmaputra. It should be remembered that Lhoka (Southern Tibet) was the stronghold of the Tibetan rebels in 1958–59, and that Tsangpo proved to be one of the biggest obstacles to Chinese military mobility in the course of the suppression campaigns. In fact, a French observer has argued that the Chinese Army was able to knife through northeastern India in 1962 so easily because of the Chinese strategic preoccupation with the Lhoka area and the army concentration there since the 1959 Revolt.<sup>20</sup> Since then, the communications network in the area has been further improved.

The Sichuan–Tibet Highway connects Lhasa with Shigatse, the most important town in western Tibet and the former seat of the Panchen Lama. From there the road branches off on to three different routes. One connects Xinjiang with Tibet. The second leads to the Tibet–Sikkim border (Nathula), taking the old trade route, and touches on the way all the old trading centres – Gyantse, Phari, and Dromo – in the Chumbi Valley. This area, the trijunction between Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan, is of great strategic importance.

As the British Younghusband Expedition of 1904 indicated, the Nathula Pass and Chumbi Valley is the route that invaders from South Asia are most likely to take. And the Sino–Indian border skirmishes on the same pass in 1967, when the Indian forces managed to hold on to their positions, once again drove home the strategic importance of the Nathula Pass and Chumbi Valley. It therefore appears that the Chinese strategic preoccupation since 1962 and particularly after 1967 shifted to the Chumbi Valley complex.<sup>21</sup> A new Shigatse–Yatung (Chumbi) road complex was begun in 1967 and completed in 1971. The new road, in addition to the old trade route, takes an extremely rocky and mountainous route, and only “an extreme military necessity could have made it a reality”.<sup>22</sup>

It is evident from refugee accounts that the Chinese are now well prepared to meet any eventuality. Not only was a new road complex built, which doubled Chinese military mobility in an otherwise bottleneck area, but the PLA concentration and other military preparations were greatly stepped up. In April 1972, a Tibetan refugee from Chumbi Valley reported that “nearly every village (in Chumbi) has a company or two of PLA stationed”, totalling about 21,000 troops in the valley. In 1967 fourteen underground military installation houses, all of which are guarded by tanks, were dug at Jema in the Lower Yatung Valley.<sup>23</sup>

Another offshoot of the Sichuan–Tibet Highway leads to the Nepal–Tibet borders via Shekar, Thingri, Nyanam Dzong and Talima. In 1965–66 Nyanam was linked with Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, a country with which China has very friendly relations. Another road from Thingri leads to Dokmar (in Kyedrak) opposite Solo Khumbu in Nepal. Refugee reports in 1972–73 indicated that the Chinese were still improving the communications network in this strategic area, which is close to Mustang in Nepal from where Khampa guerrillas once launched periodic raids into Western Tibet where Chinese forces were based or passing through, and also not too far from Ladakh, which was the second Chinese target in the 1962 Sino–Indian war. The Tibet–Nepal Highway starts from Lhasa, passes through Dham and reaches Kathmandu. It is 736 km long.

Shekar, the former Tibetan garrison post on the Tibet–Nepal border, has roads that reach strategic border areas in the northwest Himalayas, passing through Jorebuk, Sri Rigod-tsang, and others. The extension of this network forms the Western Road complex which touches Ngari on the Tibetan side and Ladakh on the Indian side, before reaching Xinjiang. The most controversial section of the Western Road is the extension across Aksai Chin, one of the areas in dispute in the 1962 Sino–Indian conflict. Work on the 1,200 km-long road across a most difficult and still disputed terrain was completed in 19 months with 179.2 km running within territory claimed by India. The strategic importance of this road cannot be underestimated, since “one major objective has remained unchanged since at least 1956 – unchallenged possession of the vital Aksai Chin link between Sinkiang and Tibet”.<sup>24</sup>

In short, four highways link Lhasa with China and another two highways, the Northern Road and the Western Road complexes, cut across the continental Tibetan plateau, running almost parallel to the Himalayan borderland at an average distance of 42–64 km from the international border. By late 1975 at least twelve vital offshoots reached the most strategic points on the international borders especially the Sino–Indian borders. Almost all of these roads were built by Tibetan labour under Chinese technical supervision and most of them are wide enough for two-way vehicular traffic and capable of taking seven ton loads. Groups of ten to twenty Tibetan labourers are posted along the important military roads at intervals of every 24 km to do repair work throughout the year.

Roads will continue to be the most important line of communication for the Chinese in Tibet, as there seem to be no immediate alternatives in sight. However, on 7 October 1994, a Chinese official in Lhasa announced China’s plan to construct a railway line linking Outer Tibet with China proper. The project requires “a total investment of over 20 billion yuan”.<sup>25</sup>

The 208 km project was first conceived and announced in the 1950s. In November 1977 the project was revived and a Railway Construction Preparation Office in Lhasa was set up. However, in 1980, after the then

Party Secretary Hu Yaobang's inspection tour of Tibet, the railway project was dropped or postponed, as Hu rightly felt more people-oriented economic programmes were what Tibet needed. The 1994 announcement suggests the reversal of this people-friendly economic policy and Beijing's determination to construct a railway line that has a more strategic and integrative purpose in mind.

There had been a debate as to whether the railroad should be built from Chengdu or Golmud. In the 1970s, the eastern route from Chengdu was favoured. At that time, most Han officials were from Sichuan and they might have favoured a direct link with their home province. However, since the railway to Golmud was completed in the early 1980s, the Golmud route appears to be the obvious choice because it is closer to Lhasa. Beside, this route has the mildest gradient and fewest mountains on its way.

The construction cost of the railway, estimated at 20 billion yuan, dwarfs all other development projects undertaken in Tibet since 1950; it renders funds spent on education, health or religious reconstruction minuscule. Even the 62 construction projects announced for Tibet by China in 1994 only represent 12 per cent of the cost of the railway project. The projected 20 billion yuan might equal the total amount of financial subsidies and basic construction investment that the PRC has provided for the last 40 years to the TAR. The railway might have a dual use in the long run, but its immediate purpose is threefold for the Chinese: (a) it will have a vital military use; (b) it will allow a massive increase in population transfer; and (c) it will speed up the *total* integration of Tibet with China.

In short, by late 1996 China had built 15 trunk highways and 375 feeder roads with a total length of 22,000 km.<sup>26</sup> Another Chinese source puts the total distance in Tibet at 21,842 km, of which 17,981 km, are considered first grade and 1,172 km second grade. A total of 374 permanent bridges have been built.<sup>27</sup> In these projects, we can observe certain strategic designs from the Communists' priorities. Their first and foremost objective was to link Central Tibet, especially Lhasa with China. Thus, the Qinghai–Tibet and Sichuan–Tibet Highways were built with great urgency and were completed in 1954. After having established their control over Lhasa by 1954, the Communists' next objective was to consolidate their power in Central Tibet by extending the highway networks to Shigatse and Gyangtse, two important towns in Central Western Tibet. Thus, the Lhasa–Shigatse and Shigatse–Gyangtse Highways were completed in October 1955. The third phase of the road construction was to put a connection through to the Tibetan–Himalayan borders. The Xinjiang–Tibet Highway was completed in October 1957, and the Nepal–Tibet Highway in 1962. The Lhasa–Yatung Highway had already been constructed much earlier.

After having firmly established their grip over Tibet through a highly strategic network of highways, the Chinese, since the early 1980s, have at

last started to consider the economic uses of the highways. For example, as part of the Ninth Five Year Plan (1996–2000), China plans to build a Lhasa-based highway transport network using the Qinghai–Tibet, Sichuan–Tibet and Tibet–Nepal highways as its arteries, based on the economic exploitation of fertile Southern Tibet. Chinese planners further envisage a special southwest economic zone that links Tibet with Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan. A report states that the western region is rich in non-ferrous metals, petroleum, natural gas, etc., and urges the strengthening of communication links with the east by opening up its trunk lines to the western region so as to form a regional network. It has recommended the development of railways, roads, waterways and airways to speed up economic development of the southwestern region.<sup>28</sup> The Lhasa–Lhoka highway is probably the only road built purely with economic intentions.

Meanwhile, China has renovated existing highways such as the Qinghai–Tibet Highway, and the China–Nepal Highway. From 1974 to 1985 China renovated the Golmud–Lhasa section of the Qinghai–Lhasa Highway by making it a second-grade asphalt road. In 1991 the Lhasa–Gongar Highway and Lhasa–Shigatse section of the China–Nepal Highway were paved with asphalt.<sup>29</sup> Otherwise, most of the highways and feeder roads, are mud, not asphalt, roads, built in the 1950s with great urgency – hence the need to maintain a permanent workforce every 15 or 20 km along the highways to repair roads, especially during the summer and winter months.

The experience of Indian aircraft in Ladakh, which has a similar altitude to Tibet, indicates that Chinese aircraft operating from airfields in Tibet are greatly restricted in their payload. For the Tibetan plateau features high elevation and fierce weather which includes violent thunder and hail storms, drifting sand and volatile air currents. These weather conditions pose enormous difficulties for aviation. Apart from the obvious problems of logistics and maintenance, the Chinese Air Force, which is believed to be weaker in this area than its Indian counterpart, cannot be considered well prepared for the protracted and large-scale operations that would be necessary in the event of a major confrontation. Yet the importance of landing facilities in Tibet cannot be underestimated; it still takes nearly 20 days by vehicle to go from Beijing to Lhasa. In organizational terms the basic line of communication is by road, supported, however, by the Chinese Air Force. Up to 1976, aircraft have been used primarily to carry important military personnel and supplies.

The first airfield in Central Tibet near Lhasa was built almost at the same time as the Qinghai–Tibet Highway – 1955–56. By 1963 twelve airfields were completed, most near the frontiers of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim (India). There are now 23 airfields,<sup>30</sup> the most important of them located near important military and administrative headquarters. However, an US source lists ten airfields<sup>31</sup> in Tibet. The new airfield near Lhasa has been in



operation since 1967 and is one of the two airfields open for regular weekly civilian flights between Lhasa and Chengdu. Next to Lhasa, Shigatse is the most important PLA headquarters commanding practically all the forward bases near the south and southwest Himalayas bordering Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal and Ladakh. The airfield near Shigatse was built by the PLA in great secrecy and was completed some time in 1970. Phari airfield provides a vital air link with a strategic point bordering both Sikkim and Bhutan, and all the important forward bases in the area. Work on the “sprawling airbase complex” near Gyantse was disrupted by the Cultural Revolution, but was resumed in early 1970.

Begun in 1966, Worag airfield was completed within 14 months. Since its completion there has reportedly been a weekly flight to and from Chengdu. During the 1967 Sino–Indian skirmishes on the Nathula Pass, the airfield was the scene of increased activity with several planes landing daily. Worag is the most useful airlink for PLA troops stationed in the central sector of the Sino–Indian border. In western Tibet, bordering Nepal and Ladakh, the most important airfield is at Thingri; it was completed “before 1969”. Thingri is connected by road to forward bases like Shekar, Jorebuk, Shri Rigod Tsang, etc. Another remote airfield at Chushul, about 112 km from Leh, the capital of Ladakh, was completed in early 1970. It is near the disputed Aksai Chin territory and also close to Xinjiang. In Eastern Tibet, Chamdo is the most important PLA headquarters, but other airfields in east Tibet were more active in the 1950s when the Khampas were in revolt.

A 1997 Chinese booklet on transport reveals that their aviation history in Tibet dates from before the early 1970s<sup>32</sup> during which, to be sure, most of the airfields and helipads were built due to the situation in South Asia at that time. From 1956 to 1965 repeated trial flights were conducted which suggested that 11–18 aircraft could adapt to highland flight conditions. Initially five navigation stations were set up at Xinlong, Chamdo, Shading, Nagchu and Qiankexi mountain passes. Equipment installed at the Lhasa Aviation Station upgraded radio communication and navigation. From 1–3 March, 1965, 11–18 (No. 204) aircraft began making maiden flights, marking the opening of the Beijing–Chengdu–Lhasa flight route. Between 1975 and 1985 the Lanzhou (later changed to Xian) Golmud–Lhasa flight route operated. From November 1969 to April 1970 the CAAC<sup>33</sup> An-12 (No. 201) planes conducted aerial photography and physical testing over Tibet. The Lhasa Aviation Station was in charge of 39 safety flights. In November 1966, the Lhasa Aviation Station was moved from Damshung to the Gonggar Airport. In 1985, the CAAC Tibet Autonomous Regional Administration was founded on the basis of the Lhasa Aviation Station.

Over the past 30 years, aircraft changed from the turboprop 11–18s used at first to Boeing 707s in December 1983 and Boeing 757s in August 1992.

The number of flight routes increased from one (Lhasa–Chengdu–Beijing) to five, with new routes leading to Beijing, Chengdu, Chongqing, Chamdo and Kathmandu (Nepal). Flights increased from once a week at the outset to 20 a week. From 1956 to 1983 aviation was essentially used for military purposes to back up the PLA stationed in Tibet – to transport military and political personnel. It was only in the early 1980s with increased tourist traffic, that Boeing jet services began. Boeing 707 and Boeing 757 flights to and from Lhasa to Chinese cities and Kathmandu (Nepal) mostly cater to Western tourists.

We can observe a similar strategic pattern in the development of aviation on the Tibetan Plateau as we saw in road construction. The feverish road-building activities of the early 1950s were dictated by the military–political need to strengthen the Communists’ grip on the Tibetan Plateau and to consolidate their power in Central Tibet. The spur to aviation development in the 1970s was occasioned by changes in the situation in South Asia: the Indo–Soviet Treaty of 1971, the Indian liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 and the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union in 1975 were perceived by the Chinese as a threatening prelude to a joint Indo–Soviet venture into Tibet. (It was during this period that Beijing shifted its nuclear weapons to Eastern Tibet.) Even now the Chinese Communists do not deny the strategic or military aspect of aviation in Tibet. They, of course, reverse the order: “The flight route plays an important part in Tibet’s socio-economic development and *China’s national defense*.”<sup>34</sup>

But airfields in Tibet have more alarming uses. John Ackerly writes: “Between 1968 and 1973, China brought its neighbours to the south within effective nuclear range by expanding existing Tibetan airfields and building new air bases in the Tibetan region.”<sup>35</sup>

China has three types of aircraft which can be used for nuclear bombing missions: the Hog-6 and the Hog-5 bombers, and the Qian-5 attack jets. The Hog-6 has a combat radius of 3,000 km and can reach the Indian subcontinent. Almost all of the three types of aircraft could land and take off from airfields on the Tibetan Plateau.

The main military air-bases in Tibet are Gonggar (near Lhasa), Chabcha (in Kokonor), Golmud (Central Qinghai). Chabcha and Golmud were used in the early 1960s as relay points for planes to refuel on their way to Outer Tibet and the Sino–Indian borders. Gonggar, which superseded Damshung, has been “the primary airfield and the main centre for Chinese forces in the border area”.<sup>36</sup> In 1987, China had deployed a squadron of J-7 fighters, the Chinese version of the Soviet Mikoyan Mig-21, to the Gonggar airfield; since 1985, American-made Sikorsky 570C Black Hawk helicopters have used the airfield to support military operations in the area.<sup>37</sup>

A 24-year old Tibetan who was a member of the PLA and who escaped into Bhutan in December 1973 replied, when asked about the “exact strength” of Chinese forces in Tibet:

It is impossible to estimate the Chinese occupation forces in our country because of the strict secrecy regarding anything that is “military” or “defence”. We were not allowed to talk about military affairs, and are supposed not to know the exact strength of even our company. Tibetans in the PLA are not permitted to mix with the Tibetan populace. If we want to visit another army camp, we have to apply for a permit.<sup>38</sup>

In 1975 Tibetan sources in India estimated the PLA strength to be 300,000, while the Indian Defence Ministry’s annual report estimated a range of 130,000 to 180,000.<sup>39</sup> These figures may well have been true for the 1970s when the Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s military actions in South Asia caused apprehension and suspicion in the Chinese mind. However, since then there has been a considerable reduction in tension on the Sino–Indian border up to May 1998. Several confidence building measures including regular meetings between the border commanders of the two sides “have been instituted and are working well”. At the eighth meeting of the Joint Working Group, held in August 1995, the two sides agreed to pull back four posts, two on each side, located in immediate proximity to each other in Sumdorong Chu Valley.<sup>40</sup> This disengagement was completed in October–November 1995. Thus, at the moment the PLA strength in Outer Tibet may be 150,000 and on the Himalayan border 40,000.<sup>41</sup>

The Tibetan plateau falls under the defence jurisdiction of four of China’s seven military regions. Westernmost Tibet including Rutok has been under the Xinjiang Military Regional Command since it was incorporated into Xinjiang sometime in 1970. Amdo, incorporated into Qinghai, forms a military district under the Lanzhou Military Regional Command. Large portions of Kham are incorporated into the Sichuan Military District under the Chengdu Military Regional Command, while yet another part of Kham is under the Gansu Military District, which is subordinated to the Kunming Military Regional Command. The PLA forces in Tibet were demoted from a Regional Command to a military district in December 1970 and are now subordinated to the Chengdu Military Regional Command. This reflects a Chinese tactical shift towards South Asia. As we have seen, Outer Tibet has been well developed in terms of military preparedness from the mid-1950s. But by making TAR a military district the Communists might have signalled that it has no military intentions towards its southern neighbours. But the real Chinese strategy is to move forward troops, weapons, and equipment rapidly to Outer Tibet in case of any conflict along the Sino–Indian border.

Lhasa is now the PLA “district” headquarters, the highest military authority in Outer Tibet; other important subdistrict headquarters are at Chamdo, Nagchu, Shigatse, Nyingtri and Lhoka. In general, Lhasa is the

general headquarters and directs PLA units in Lhoka (South Tibet), while Shigatse and Chamdo direct those in Western and Eastern Tibet respectively.

Whatever the size of the army, there is little doubt about the preponderance of the PLA in the administration of Tibet. Perhaps more than anywhere else in China, the PLA shared, and in practice dominated, local power and politics in Tibet. The PLA role can be understood largely in terms of Tibet's strategic importance and China's experience with the Tibetan resistance movement for well over a decade.

It is generally true that in Communist political practice the line between "civilian" and "military" is rather blurred. But in Tibet the PLA's position has been too conspicuous and too consistent for anyone to miss the point that this is not a case of a military usurpation of civilian authority but a definite design on the part of the Communist Chinese government. Since 1951 and especially after 1959, it has been Army generals who have ruled Tibet. From 1951, Zhang Guohua was the Commander of the Tibet Military Region (TMR) and concurrently first secretary of the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet until he was transferred to Sichuan in 1967. Tan Guansan, a Political Commissioner of the TMR and also Secretary of the Secretariat of the CCP Tibet (Autonomous) Regional Committee, was another Army official involved in Tibetan politics from 1951 until he was also transferred and, in July 1967, appointed as Vice-President of the Supreme People's Court. By the mid-1960s both Zhang and Tan had become so identified with Chinese "unrevolutionary" policy in Tibet that they had to face vehement criticism from Red Guards. As a face-saving compromise, Beijing discretely transferred the two "local emperors" to less volatile regions.

The commander of the PLA in the Tibetan Military District in early 1979 was Ren Rong, also a general before ranks were abolished. Like his predecessors, he was also first Secretary of the new Party Committee in Tibet set up in 1971. Tian Bao, whose Tibetan name is Sangey Yeshe, is the Political Commissar of the PLA in Tibet, and perhaps the most powerful Tibetan in both the Army and the Administration in the region and probably the whole of China. He was a vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Committee established late in 1968, and was elected a full member of the CCP Central Committee at the 10th Congress.<sup>42</sup>

Tian Bao was one of the few Tibetans who joined Mao's Red Army during its Long March in 1935. However, since then and especially after 1959, the number of Tibetan recruits has evidently increased. Recent refugees explain that because the PLA men are better paid, many young Tibetans are eager to join the Army. Besides, the monasteries, which used to absorb about 15–20 per cent of the Tibetan male population, are no longer open. The criteria for recruiting young Tibetans are "proletarian" class background and political loyalty. It should be noted that even Chinese PLA

men used to be handpicked and given a special Tibetan orientation course in Chengdu before entering Tibet.

The local people's militia, "full-time peasants and spare-time soldiers" in Tibet probably were first organized in 1962 at the time of the Sino-Indian conflict. Before that time, each town or village had only rudimentary public security committees (midman srungskyobs) whose primary duty was to prevent Tibetans from fleeing the country. However, the militia movement was intensified in 1971–72, probably occasioned by the Bangladesh crisis and the 10th Anniversary of Mao's instruction on militia building. The Anniversary received wide publicity in China and received equally wide publicity, if not more, in Tibet in view of the Indian action in Bangladesh, which China alleged was backed by the Soviet Union. At that time there was a feverish exhortation to "get ready for war". The movement was then particularly active in border towns.

It is again difficult to estimate the total number of militia (*yul-dmag*) in Tibet, but we can get a rough idea from the reported number of militiamen in three small villages around Shekar – Gyalnor, Bartso and Langtor, which had 130, 82 and 230 youths respectively.<sup>43</sup> According to reports from Tibet, the Chinese have mobilized almost the entire youth population for militia training, which would mean that there may be half a million Tibetan militia-men and -women.

In 1975 a conference on the militia was held in Lhasa where it was claimed that the militia had also undertaken "intensified military training to improve its skills against the enemy". In 1974 Lhasa's militia had achieved remarkable results in target shooting, using "three different types of infantry weapons with live ammunition and hand grenade throwing".<sup>44</sup> Since local militia is typically a Maoist revolutionary strategy to mobilize large numbers of the local youth population for warfare emergencies, one might associate its decline in the post-Mao era with the modernization of the armed forces. This is not true. The latest "White Paper on China's National Defence" (1998) states, "The Chinese People's Armed Police Force undertakes the tasks for the maintenance of security and social order entrusted by the state. The Militiamen, under the command of military organs, perform combat service support and defence operations, and help to maintain social order."<sup>45</sup> Nor is there much change in the Maoist characteristic emphasis on a strong army. On 21 February 1996 General Liu Huaqing, member of the CCP Central Committee Political Bureau Standing Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Central Military Commission visited the Guangzhou Military Region and explained to the soldiers that despite relative peace and prosperity in recent years, the country must still have a "powerful army" to protect it.<sup>46</sup>

The People's Armed Police (PAP) is playing an increasingly dominant role in Tibet with persisting nationalistic unrest there. It was the PAP units that suppressed the 1987 and 1988 pro-independence and pro-democracy

demonstrations in Lhasa. Its present strength in the TAR might range from 15,000 to 20,000.<sup>47</sup> A Chinese scholar has recently written that ethnic unrest in outlying regions continues to pose problems for the PAP. It has, therefore, “steadily built up its forces in Tibet, Xinjiang and other remote provinces in recent years to deal with periodic bouts of separatist and religious unrest, and expand coordination with local military, militia, and law enforcement organs”.<sup>48</sup>

The relationship between the PAP and the PLA is close, though separate. The PLA assumes no operational responsibility for the armed police during normal times when the latter is supposed to guard the “domestic front”. But during the times of war or national crisis, the PLA takes command of the PAP. Therefore, the PAP was originally designed to take over the PLA internal security duties so as to enable military top brass to concentrate on rebuilding the PLA into a professional force. In order to project a clean public image – whether for ideological or political reasons – the PLA would not be used against “one’s own people”; law and order would be maintained by the armed police. Thus, Tibetan unrest is not a freedom struggle but a problem of law and order, according to this PAP design.

### **Nuclear Tibet**

Speculative reports about a possible Chinese nuclear base in Tibet first began to appear in the world press in the wake of the Sino-Soviet clashes along the Ussuri River in 1969. At the time China was said to be “seriously considering” the transfer of its nuclear testing center from Lop Nor, which was thought to be too close to the Soviet border to survive a Soviet preemptive strike. However, as early as December 1968 there were reports of a Chinese missile base in Tibet with an arms dump. The actual transfer from Lop Nor to Tibet was reported to have begun a year earlier with “gaseous diffusion plants for atom bombs and nuclear warhead production and research”. The transfer was detected by American observation satellites even though the Chinese left a bogus installation to fool aerial detection.<sup>49</sup>

Four years later the speculation was reactivated by a news item in the *Tibetan Review*<sup>50</sup> which was subsequently picked up by newspapers around the world, including those in the former Soviet Union. The report identified the location of the nuclear base as Amdo village in Nagchu. Since Tibetan refugees, or for that matter even those who managed to infiltrate into Tibet, would not know what a “nuclear base” is, the report was based on two related observations: (a) Amdo village was guarded with the utmost secrecy and extreme caution; even the PLA units moving from one post to another were not allowed to go anywhere near Amdo Hsien, which was heavily guarded by “special PLA units”; and (b) a new “industrial” township (nuclear research centre?) exclusively populated by Chinese technical experts had sprung up in a nearby place called Golmud.<sup>51</sup>

But of course it is almost impossible to verify such reports and reach any definitive conclusion. In the absence of corroborative evidence, it is perhaps common sense more than anything else that makes some observers feel that the Chinese have either shifted their nuclear testing base from Lop Nor to Tibet or have built a new base in an attempt to disperse their nuclear installations. If we look at the map of Tibet and in particular at the Nagchu area, we find that Amdo Hsien is surrounded by a high range of mountains which not only makes aerial detections difficult, but could shield any nuclear installations from possible Soviet preemptive strikes. Tibet has a huge land mass with a sparse population, and would thus pose fewer problems in the event of radioactive fallout. Lastly, the dense black clouds that cover the Tibetan atmosphere most of the year and the high mountain ranges that surround Tibet like a wall make the region a safe and more suitable place than anywhere else for a nuclear base.

In late August 1974, the Russian Novosti Press Agency (NPA) released a lengthy news report that argued along the same lines as the Tibetan report published five months earlier. The report said: “China already has more than 200 atom and hydrogen bombs ready for action” and that their delivery vehicles were deployed on “open sites, in silos and caves of the Himalayas”. China is now capable of hitting most of the South and Southeast Asian countries. Hence the nuclear threat “will grow immeasurably for these countries after the commissioning of another nuclear center in Tibet”. NPA also reported that the “Chinese have built powerful radar and tracking stations” near the Indian borders.<sup>52</sup>

There has been no comment from US sources, although in the past American satellites reportedly detected a large modern space-cum-missile launching station at Shuang Zhengzi (Inner Mongolia) and also a “missile tracking station in western Tibet”. The existence of “massive radar” stations on Nagchen Ta-gyori and Phutak Zoling mountains in Zonga Dzung and Rutok (all western Tibet), which Tibetan refugees reported in 1970, was confirmed by the Indian Government in November 1971, and even earlier by American aerial detection.<sup>53</sup>

The latest report published in 1993, and probably the most detailed and highly documented study so far with 55 pages, demonstrates that preceding speculative stories were not entirely without foundation, even though there had been some inaccuracies with regard to the location and nature of nuclear activity on the Tibetan Plateau.<sup>54</sup> *Nuclear Tibet* states that the Chinese top-secret nuclear facility known as the Northwest Nuclear Weapons Research and Design Academy (or simply as the “Ninth Academy”) is located in the Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai (Tibetan: Amdo) Province, near the shores of Lake Kokonor. In other words, it is within Qinghai Province, and not within Tibet Autonomous Region. But the pertinent point is that it is located on the Tibetan Plateau with serious consequences and that too in a Tibetan culture

area in Qinghai. The Ninth Academy at Haibei remains today an important and high security military weapons plant; its primary nuclear functions “may have been relocated”.

Haibei, as a suitable site for a nuclear research centre, was selected by Li Jue, who had been a deputy commander and chief of staff of the Tibet Military Region. In May 1958 Deng Xiaoping, then as CCP General Secretary, approved of the site and plan. By the end of that year over 10,000 construction workers set out for Haibei on the eastern shore of Lake Kokonor. In 1963 key Party leaders, technical experts, and scientists from theoretical, experimental design, and production fields began an “all-out attack” to build China’s first atomic bomb. In 1964, the Ninth Academy conducted the first 1:1 model blast experiment at a site near the facility.

With the deterioration in Sino–Soviet relations in the late 1960s and the Chinese fear of a Soviet surgical nuclear strike, the Ninth Academy was moved to neighbouring provinces. Its various critical nuclear functions were gradually moved to Sichuan province; Sichuan was considered the safest site for nuclear installations in the whole of China.

Some might argue rather quasi-legalistically that the Ninth Academy is strictly not within what we today call Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR or Outer Tibet). For the Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Amdo, though a Tibetan culture area, was incorporated into the Chinese Qinghai Province in the early 1950s and is, therefore, a part of China proper rather than that of the TAR. The Communists probably knew this and felt the need to build a nuclear reactor in Lhasa. The plan was proposed by the Ministry of Energy in Beijing in 1992, which then asked the Tibetan officials in Lhasa to announce it as if they (Tibetans) independently mooted the idea. But the Panchen Lama and other Tibetan officials opposed the plan on grounds of finance, expertise and lack of public support. The Panchen Lama reportedly said: “What will happen tomorrow if the people demonstrate against it? This will become one issue which will be difficult to control.”<sup>55</sup> The Lhasa Nuclear Reactor was scrapped in its early phase.

However, there is little doubt that Kham and Amdo (Inner Tibet), those Tibetan culture areas now incorporated into Qinghai and Sichuan provinces, have become the favoured sites for Chinese nuclear research and related activity. A major uranium enrichment plant at Hongyuan, southern Amdo, now under Ngapa Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, was reported in the early 1980s. Hongyuan is a new town built during the last 40 years; its inhabitants are almost entirely Han. Nearby in Ngapa Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture is a large uranium mine which explains why the enrichment plant was built there. Other uranium deposits in large quantities are found around Lhasa, Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province and near Da Qaidam in Qinghai Province.

The first nuclear weapon was brought to the Tibetan Plateau in 1971.<sup>56</sup> The year is significant. The PRC perceived perhaps the greatest threat to its



occupation of Tibet when, India backed by the Soviet Union, intervened in East Pakistan and created Bangladesh. The Chinese literally asked themselves, what next? So in 1971 the Chinese Communists brought their nuclear weapons to Inner Tibet and stationed them in the Qaidam Basin in northern Amdo, now within Qinghai Province. To the west of Haiyen, Beijing established a nuclear missile deployment and launch site for DF-4 missiles in the Qaidam Basin in the early 1970s. The Da Qaidam site (37.50N, 95.18E) has two missiles stored horizontally in tunnels near the launch pad. Fuel and oxidizer is stored in separate tunnels with lines to the launch pad. The Xiao Qaidam site (37.26N, 95.18E) appears to be organized along similar lines as the Da Qaidam. The missiles were moved to both sites in 1971. Nuclear missiles are believed to be stationed only at Xiao Qaidam and were moved to Da Qaidam during the early 1970s emergency. Another nuclear missile site on the Tibetan Plateau is located at Delingha (37.6N, 97.12E), about 200 km southeast of Da Qaidam. This is the missile regiment headquarters for Qinghai which houses four associated launch sites. By the early 1980s a new nuclear division has been established on the Tibetan Plateau on the border between Qinghai and Sichuan provinces, in Amdo. Here four CSS-4 missiles were deployed which have a range of over 12,000 km, capable of striking the USA, Europe and all of Asia.<sup>57</sup> Most of the other nuclear sites on the Tibetan Plateau have DF-4 missiles. The DF-4 is China's first intercontinental ballistic missile and when initially deployed in 1971 had a range of 4,800 km. It could still not reach the desired targets. During the 1970s the range was extended; the modified version has a range of 7,000 km putting Indian targets easily within reach. New Delhi is approximately 2,000 km from Da Qaidam.

Several strategic analysts, both in the East and West have commented in the past on the strategic suitability of the Tibetan Plateau for nuclear experimenting and testing. This has unfortunately come true. In this context we might recall a Chinese military cadre's remark made at a 1991 PLA conference and which we quoted at length earlier: Since Tibet is the roof of the world, "our" missiles placed there can strike anywhere in the world. "Control over Tibet enables us to gain the strategic initiative."<sup>58</sup> Hence, China's first attempt at nuclear research was made in 1958 at Amdo (Haibei) on the Tibetan Plateau and armed in 1971 when Beijing perceived a serious threat from the Soviet Union and India. By the early 1970s China has brought South Asia and the former Soviet Union within their effective nuclear range and reach.

The fact that the Maoist strategists had chosen Amdo and Kham (near the Sino-Tibetan border) for their nuclear sites might have other implications and motives, beside geographical suitability and nuclear safety. By this mighty nuclear act, they might have cemented and concretized their claims over Inner Tibet. If this is so, then they might not easily give up Kham and Amdo, even though these two "provinces" are

linguistically, culturally and socially Tibetan as Outer Tibet is. However, there may be hope for a future negotiated settlement on the TAR.

During the 1950s and 1960s several observers viewed the Chinese occupation of Tibet and subsequent strategic development there as a threat to South Asia, implying Chinese expansionism. This view, of course, fitted with the Cold War image of the type of Communist China that most people had at the time. George Ginsburg and Michael Mathos were typical: "He who holds Tibet dominates the Himalayan piedmont; he who dominates the Himalayan piedmont threatens the Indian subcontinent; and he who threatens the Indian subcontinent, may well have all of South Asia within his reach, and with it all of Asia."<sup>59</sup>

The PLA in Tibet seems to have two basic functions: (a) to "defend the frontiers of the Motherland" where it confronts both its No. 1 and No. 2 enemies; (b) to suppress any signs of Tibetan nationalist resistance, which might invite foreign intervention and which would prove doubly dangerous in a strategic frontier region. Thus, in view of Tibet's strategic vulnerability and past record of resistance, the PLA is deeply entrenched and well-equipped for conventional warfare to meet both external and internal challenges to Chinese supremacy in Inner Asia.

China, backed by its great military strength in a strategic Tibet appeared more interested in competing against India for "spheres of friendship" in the Himalayan states. The Chinese aim seems to have been to transfer Tibet's former buffer functions to Nepal and, if possible, Bhutan. The implication is that even if China recognized Tibet as the "natural" and geographical limit of its power, it felt that the Himalayas alone were not enough to guarantee its national security in the modern age, especially given Tibet's strategic location. China ideally wants a chain of small friendly neighbours, obviously more friendly to it, on the cis-Himalayan region separating the two Asian giants. Such links appear to be its aim, not war. This desire is quite clear from its official attitude towards Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim.<sup>60</sup> It makes no strategic or military sense to the Chinese to "liberate" the Himalayan states which are geographically within the Indian subcontinent. Such an eventuality would bring China face to face with India. Moreover, it appears that China does not want any kind of war for a while anywhere near Tibet that might "internationalize" the Tibetan situation and question. What the Chinese have encouraged, however, is strong independent, nationalist regimes in the countries that lie between Tibet and India. Such nationalist regimes functioning as buffer zones are in the interest of Chinese national security.

It is with this fundamental objective in mind that China has always called for and supported the right to national self-determination in Kashmir, Nagaland and Sikkim, while at the same time rejecting Tibet's claim to such a right. The same objective has prompted the Chinese to encourage anti-Indian nationalism in the Himalayan states. Whether in a

birthday greeting or a congratulatory message, the Chinese message to their neighbours is essentially the same: safeguard national independence and territorial sovereignty. Any problem in the bilateral relations between India and the Himalayan kingdoms used to be interpreted by Beijing as a veritable case of “a big nation bullying small nations”.<sup>61</sup>

When the PLA troops invaded Tibet in October 1950, the Himalayan states’ reaction was one of fear and suspicion. What next? they asked themselves. There existed some ties between such states and the Qing dynasty via Tibet, and it can be argued that they formed part of the ancient Chinese world order known as the tribute-paying system. It was probably on such grounds that Mao made his claims over the Himalayan states in the 1930s. Since such historical claims were used to justify the Chinese liberation of Tibet, the Himalayan states naturally became fearfully apprehensive of Chinese intentions towards them. The anxiety of the Himalayan states was that after the takeover of Tibet, the PLA might move to the cis-Himalayan region. Thus, the political climate on the Himalayas throughout the 1950s and well into the late 1960s was anti-Chinese and pro-Indian.

It was under such circumstances that Prime Minister Nehru was able to forge a common defence system embracing the Himalayan states. It was designed and directed against a probable Chinese threat emanating from the Communist takeover of Tibet. New Delhi apparently “decided that it was essential to reach an agreement with the Ranas before the Chinese had established themselves in Tibet”.<sup>62</sup> India and Nepal signed treaties of peace and friendship, and trade and commerce in July 1950. Although the treaties did not have a defence clause, they were accompanied by an exchange of letters which stipulated: “Neither government shall tolerate any threat to the security of the other by a foreign aggressor. To deal with any such threat, the two governments shall consult with each other and devise effective countermeasures.”<sup>63</sup> Article 5 of the treaty granted the Nepalese government the right to import “arms, ammunition or warlike materials and equipment necessary for the security of Nepal” through India, a right which the British Indian government had denied Kathmandu. Thus, Nehru declared in March 1950, that “we cannot tolerate any foreign invasion from any foreign country in any part of the Indian subcontinent. Any possible invasion of Nepal would inevitably involve the safety of India.”<sup>64</sup>

In 1951, New Delhi signed a treaty with the Maharaja of Sikkim retaining that state as a protectorate, whose defence and foreign affairs came to be handled strictly by India. In 1958, Nehru made a personal visit to Bhutan to discuss with the Bhutanese king Wangchuck, the common policies to be pursued by their respective governments. He suggested that Thimphu accept Indian aid and, among other things, start constructing a road connecting India with central and western Bhutan which would have strategic and economic significance. “By and large, the Bhutanese shared

the Indian prime minister's concern over the strategic and security implications of a Chinese-controlled Tibet."<sup>65</sup>

After their initial shock from China's absorption of Tibet which necessitated the preceding defence arrangements with India, the Himalayan states gradually realized that the Chinese presence was limited to the trans-Himalayan region, as indicated by the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951 and Sino-Indian Treaty of 1954 (on Tibet). Such trends were most reassuring to the Nepali elite in particular who were the first to comprehend the Chinese limited intentions in Inner Asia. Once they realized that the Chinese had no intentions of exporting liberation beyond Tibet and that they instead sought to make the Himalayan states strong, independent nationalist states, acting as a buffer zone between New China and New India, the Himalayan states – Nepal in particular – began to enjoy the Chinese conferred position. They had learnt from history that when Tibet was made the buffer zone, all the Himalayan states became subordinated to the British imperial system in South Asia; they subsequently enjoyed little autonomy in external and defence matters. The new role envisaged by Chinese Communists promised full independence *vis-à-vis* the dominant South Asian power. This pleased the Himalayan states, who were tied to India in various ways, not only during the British Raj but to independent India since the Communist takeover of Tibet. They began to cash-in on their newly acquired strategic importance with varying degrees of success. Nepal has had some success in gaining a greater degree of independence from India by exploiting the Sino-Indian rift and by occasionally playing the two giants against each other. The late Chogyal of Sikkim tried to emulate the Nepali pioneering example in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but was caught out in the process. Bhutan, however, seems to have been more cautious, being aware of the risks involved in this delicate balancing game. But if Thimphu moved from isolation to dependency on India after 1960, there is no guarantee that this position will continue in the face of Chinese encouragement to play a more autonomous role.<sup>66</sup> In this respect we should note that the Chinese delegates to the Sino-Indian boundary talks in 1960 refused to deal with Bhutan-Tibet border when the Indian side raised the issue, thereby questioning New Delhi's "special relationship" with Bhutan. Beijing preferred to discuss the Sino-Bhutanese border issue directly with Thimphu, and lately, several rounds of such talks have been held in their respective capitals. Such actions are calculated to encourage more autonomous actors in the cis-Himalayan region. Hence, the Bhutanese elite began to give a new interpretation to the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of 1950: Bhutan can consult New Delhi on external matters but is not obliged to implement such guidance.

Although there has been a surprising degree of convergence of political interest between the Himalayan states and China, the transformation of popular anti-Chinese attitudes in the Himalayas, prevalent during the 1950s

and 1960s, into friendly postures, owes in no small measure to the Chinese diplomatic effort in the region. Chinese policy has been intensive and persuasive. It has three essential components designed specifically for the Himalayan situation. First, the Chinese have made it clear on numerous occasions and in various indirect ways that the People's Republic of China had no intention of extending its power beyond Tibet. The Himalayan states have nothing to fear from New China; instead – and this is the second aspect of their policy – beware of their southern neighbour, India's special relationship with the Himalayan states was indirectly questioned. Thirdly, the Chinese Communists never allowed their ideology to interfere in their relations with the Himalayan states. They showed little inclination to export revolution to the Himalayan states, even though the latter are as feudal as Tibet and, therefore, in need of liberation. This ideological non-interference contrasted sharply with that of democratic India. Lastly, we may mention China's economic assistance, of which Nepal has been the major recipient.<sup>67</sup>

In an historic sense, by 1950, India had lost the ideological and strategic battle to China in Inner Asia, a continental area where Buddhism had reigned supreme for centuries and which used to be the British Raj's exclusive sphere of influence. With Tibet under its complete domination, China now finds itself militarily in a stronger and more strategic position *vis-à-vis* India; diplomatically, too, it has been in a favourable environment with considerable scope for diplomatic manoeuvring in the Himalayas. In such a situation, the major "peaceful" function of the Tibet-based Chinese Army is to support Chinese diplomatic initiatives in the Himalayan region. Thus, under the constant shadow of a well-entrenched and well-disciplined Army in Tibet, China confidently and adroitly pursues its competitive diplomacy and tries to build its own "spheres of friendship" in the cis-Himalayan region. Its ideal and, therefore, long-term goal appears to be this: to encourage actively the emergence of independent buffer states in the cis-Himalayan region between itself and India, with the hope that they will be more friendly to China than to its adversary, India. What seems to be China's aim, in more immediate and concrete terms, is to combat the Indian influence in the region and prevent the possibility of the Himalayan states becoming forward bases for any attacks against "China's Tibet", like Nepal's Mustang.<sup>68</sup>

What accentuated Sino-Indian rivalry along the cis-Himalayan region, however, was the Soviet influence in the subcontinent; and in this sense, the rivalry may be viewed as one of the functions of the Sino-Soviet dispute. In such a context, it is instructive to recall the "Great Game" played between Tsarist Russia and Great Britain in the same region at the turn of the twentieth century.

Although it is difficult not to view the Soviet concern in the Himalayas as an extension of the Sino-Soviet dispute, Russian interest in Central Asia seems to run deeper than mere exercises in a new Cold War. Specifically,

Soviet interests in Tibet seemed to be threefold. At a propaganda level, Moscow found the question of Tibet an outstanding example of how Chinese “chauvinists” mistreat small nationalities, thereby proving that Maoists have deviated from the Leninist principle of nationalities. But what added weight to this battle of words has been Russian national interests. As one of the principal countries neighbouring Xinjiang, the Soviet Union has national interests and high strategic stakes in Inner Asia, which is now dominated by China. And what lent credibility to this idea, from a Chinese point of view, was the close Indo–Soviet cooperation and friendship, since both powers have vested interests in an independent Tibet. It should be noted that China saw the Soviet Union behind Indian initiatives and actions, both in Bangladesh and Sikkim. As far as the continued occupation of Tibet is concerned, the Chinese fear of India did not stem so much from New Delhi as from Moscow, and the Soviet media during the 1970s has given Beijing enough cause for apprehension. Russian reports on Tibet, both in broadcasts and the press, have characterized Chinese rule in Tibet as “colonial” and “Han-chauvinistic”.<sup>69</sup> The *Literaturnaya Gazeta* even characterized the Tibetan resistance movement as the Tibetan “people’s national liberation struggle”.<sup>70</sup>

However, the likelihood of China attacking India in the near future, though widely speculated in the summer of 1987, seems remote for a number of reasons. First, with improvements in Sino–Russian relations, Beijing does not perceive any danger from India. This assessment is very different from that of the early 1970s when India, backed by the Soviet Union, engaged herself with the liberation of Bangladesh and the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union. Such concerted Indo–Soviet cooperation constitutes, according to the Chinese perception, a probable danger to the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

The sense of security that China now feels is not confined only to her southern neighbour; it is reflected in the overall Chinese position in the world as a whole. This is in no small measure due to China’s improved relations with the USA and Russia. Thus, since 1980, China’s announced defence budget dropped from over 6 per cent of GNP to less than 3 per cent. Other measures include the reduction of the People’s Liberation Army by one million, the General Staff Department by one half and the elimination of four Military Regional Headquarters.<sup>71</sup> There is, however, no evidence of any reduction in number of Chinese armed forces in Tibet, which may be due more to a need to suppress possible domestic rebellion than to any anticipated external danger.

Secondly, as long as the Tibetan people are not reconciled with Chinese rule in Tibet and continue to remain resentful of the Chinese presence on the plateau, it is not prudent for China to get involved in a border war with India. Such a war might prove to be like fighting two wars simultaneously: one against an external foe and one against a resentful population. That is

partly why China quickly withdrew and declared a ceasefire in 1962 after two weeks of fighting. Similarly after the crushing defeat of the Tibetan troops in Chamdo, the PLA called Lhasa for talks. As long as the Tibetan population remains uncooperative with the PLA in Tibet, China cannot rationally afford to engage in any protracted war with India.

Judging by recent events, we can predict that the situation in Tibet (i.e. the Tibetan population resentful of the Chinese presence) is likely to remain unchanged in the foreseeable future. If this is so, then the likelihood of any protracted Sino-Indian war is ruled out for some time to come. This calculation is largely based on the current history of Tibetan resistance against Chinese domination. Tibetan resentment sometimes lies dormant and sometimes surfaces, depending on the Chinese policy in Tibet, but it nevertheless seems to be persistent. The paradox of this popular resentment which might perhaps explain its veracity, is that it expresses itself during a period of leniency and relative freedom. In the 1950s, Chinese rule was characterized by an extremely liberal policy and yet resulted in the 1959 rebellion. Since 1980, the pragmatic Chinese leadership publicly acknowledged the Red Guard excesses in Tibet and introduced a liberal policy reminiscent of the honeymoon period in the 1950s. Again, this relative freedom was used to revolt against the Chinese rule in late September and early October 1987. The manner and timing of such anti-Chinese revolts indicate that the Tibetan population at large is far from being reconciled to Chinese rule; no amount of appeasement on the part of the Chinese rulers has so far satisfied fundamental Tibetan resentment against unprecedented Chinese dominance in Tibet. Such a situation might remain unchanged in the foreseeable future.

Thirdly, we must examine the argument often heard in Indian defence circles: "The India of today is not the India of 1962." This is true for both sides. As we have seen, most of China's development projects during the past two decades, which she projects in her propaganda as being for the Tibetan population's benefit, are primarily defence- and strategy-oriented. Technically speaking, therefore, China in Tibet is much more prepared today than it was in 1962. But because of its traumatic defeat in 1962, India has spared no effort and resources to modernize the Indian Army and build strategic roads all along the Himalayan border region. The 1967 Nathula skirmish between India and China may be considered as a test for comparative defence preparedness under Himalayan conditions. The Indian side firmly resisted and held their position. When they found that the Indian Army was prepared and demonstrated a will to resist, the PLA withdrew. Since then (1967), there have been no border clashes between China and India.

In this context, we should briefly review the comparative military performance records of the two Armies in their respective fields. Despite their great past reputation, the PLA had not done so well in the Korean war

(1950) nor in their recent attack against Vietnam (1979) as they did in the anti-Japanese war and the subsequent civil war in China. Particularly noteworthy is the PLA's poor performance in war against small Vietnam. And if this can be taken as any indication, there may well have been, as many observers suspect a slight decline in PLA morale since their heroic days. On the other hand, the Indian Army has, since 1962, witnessed more active service than the PLA. Though Pakistan cannot be compared with India in terms of its size and resource-base, the Indian Army performed quite well in Bangladesh (1971) and on the western front (1947/1965). However, in the event of any possible war under Himalayan conditions, the Chinese with military bases in Tibet are obviously in a logistically more advantageous position. If this acts as a restraining factor against any Indian adventurism, the hostile Tibetan population performs the same function in the case of Chinese adventurism.

If an aggressive war is ruled out, what is the motivation of the unprecedented Chinese military build-up in Tibet? As it stands now, the motivation behind Chinese strategic development in Inner Asia and the function of the PLA concentration in Tibet appear to be designed with a threefold purpose: (a) to defend the Sino-Indian frontier where, in Beijing's view especially during the 1970s, China confronted Indian and Soviet power acting in concert; (b) to suppress any signs of the Tibetan nationalist movement which might invite foreign intervention; (c) to ensure and encourage the emergence of anti-Indian nationalist regimes in the cis-Himalayan region, hopefully encouraging them to be more friendly towards China than to its adversary.

Apart from the controversial Sino-Indian border war of 1962, the political situation in the trans- and cis-Himalayan region following the Communist takeover of Tibet in 1950 has been characterized by intense Sino-Indian rivalry in the remote region. If the Chinese Communists "liberated" Tibet, Sikkim "merged" with India in 1975. If Aksai Chin is under Chinese control, the disputed NEFA was transformed into Arunachal Pradesh in 1987. If Chinese influence is stronger in Nepal, Indian influence is stronger in Bhutan. Because of such intense rivalry in this vital strategic region, the prospect for a final resolution of the Sino-Indian border dispute seems remote; it might stalemate for some time to come.

The second aspect of Sino-Indian rivalry, at least since the early 1960s, has been characterized by mutual interference and involvement in each other's domestic problems. China supports the Pakistani stand on the Kashmir dispute. Although India recognizes Tibet as part of China, Beijing still refuses to recognize Sikkim's merger with India. There is evidence of Chinese involvement in Naga insurgency and the Naxalite movement. China is also extending her influence in Myanmar. Because India is an open society and China a closed one, New Delhi has been in a comparatively



weaker position in this respect. The only way in which India can play in this game of mutual interference is to use the Tibetan card.

Sino–Indian rivalry is not confined only to the Himalayan region; it was intense in Africa in the 1960s; it continues even today in South and South East Asia. I am inclined to think that such rivalry springs from their past and present situations in Asia. Historically, it was Indic Buddhism that posed the only intellectual challenge to Confucian hegemony in East Asia for centuries. Economically, since modern China and India are in similar stages of economic development, their economies are not complementary to each other but are competitive. Politically, the two new nations have rival ambitions of being leaders in the Third World, as characterized by Gandhi and Mao, Nehru and Zhou Enlai. Above all, the PRC continues to perceive any growth of Hindu power in South Asia as essentially inimical to China's security and power ambitions in Central Asia in particular and Asia in general. What, therefore, makes for continued Sino–Indian rivalry in the future is this: similar past glory, similar scales of economic potential, and similar power ambitions in Asia. Neither side seems to be willing to submit to the other. This is the seed of rivalry.

One of the conclusions that emerges out of our analysis is the fairly consistent Chinese strategic thinking that envisages a new buffer zone along the cis-Himalayan region. If this is so, then it raises a more general question. Is the concept of buffer state still relevant in an age of decolonization and nuclear weapons? Ideologues in post-independent India dismissed the concept as an undesirable legacy left by British imperialism. On the other hand, the Chinese Communist strategists think, as our analysis demonstrates, that a buffer zone between two great rival powers is strategically necessary to the overall national security of China. In this sense the Marxist-Leninists have tended to show a sharper perception of strategic thinking than some others have. Here we might recall how the nascent Soviet regime virtually created the People's Republic of Mongolia, whose historical relations with the Chinese Empire were in many respects similar to Tibet's, as a new buffer state between the Soviet Union and China. It is in this sense that India has suffered, since 1950, the ultimate loss in the strategic game – the Chinese occupation of Tibet. The British Raj used to have two layers of defence along the 2,000-km long northern frontier: the outer rampart (Tibet) and the inner rampart (the Himalayan states).<sup>72</sup> With the capture of the outer rampart, often described as the Himalayan piedmont, China, since 1955, has been attempting to create a new buffer zone along the inner rampart which is next to India's doorstep. Thus, we can conclude that the concept of a buffer state is not culture bound, in the sense confined to the era of imperialism; it is dictated by geopolitics and the near-symmetry of great powers which seek to create structures of peace in mutual interest. This is the basic strategic conflict between India and China. The Indian elite now feel that the necessary buffer ought to be Tibet;

and China behaves, both in word and in deed, as if it believes that the new buffer line should be the cis-Himalayan region.<sup>73</sup>

But the main conclusion that emerges from of this chapter is not an alarmist one, although the potential for conflict cannot be ruled out due to the constant rivalry that characterizes Sino-Indian relations. Our endeavour has been to do a comparative analysis of Chinese and Indian strategic thinking as manifested in their attitudes towards Tibet and the Himalayan states over a 50-year period (1947-97). Our findings tend to challenge conventional wisdom. The Chinese Communists who are supposed to be revolutionary are, surprisingly, found to have been practising strategic doctrines associated with imperialism. Their strategic doctrine is akin to that of the British imperial strategists, albeit suitably modified to enhance their national security *vis-à-vis* India. Today Beijing finds itself in exactly the same advantageous position that British India occupied *vis-à-vis* China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since 1951, Tibet has become, for all practical purposes, the inner Chinese rampart where no external intervention is tolerated. And since 1955, China has been in the process of creating an outer rampart out of the Himalayan states.

Undoubtedly, Chinese strategic thinking, backed by unparalleled military strength, is much sounder than Indian counterpart in terms of national security. As we have seen, the first generation of Indian leaders, imbued with romantic idealism, dismissed the notion of buffer zones as an undesirable legacy of imperialism. Instead, they sought to reduce the external threat to national security by building friendly relations. However, the Indian experience since 1962 would suggest that national security cannot be purchased with friendship, no matter how desirable it is. The so-called security dilemma forces the arms race which goes on almost everywhere despite universal protest.

Chinese strategic thinking began right from the inception of the People's Republic of China in late 1949. Since then, there has been very little change in their strategic vision; over the subsequent years they have constantly rationalized their strategic means to enhance national security. We attribute such sound strategic thinking to the Marxist-Leninist tradition which is steeped in techniques of revolutionary strategy and tactics. Whereas, in India, strategic thinking is confined to a small professional elite community, in a Communist society like China, strategic thinking is inculcated in every sphere of life like a popular mode of socialization. During the revolutionary struggle, especially guerrilla warfare, strategic thinking is called forth daily to calculate the forces for or against revolution. After revolution, a nascent Communist regime usually drew a hostile international reaction which again called for strategic thinking. Above all, Leninism and Maoism have reduced the class struggle to a strategic manipulation of subjective forces to achieve revolution. Thus, even to this day, every Communist Party Congress

document in China begins with a strategic analysis of international forces and puts given national goals into such a strategic context.

It is clear that strategic thinking is very much a part of Communist socialization for which the non-Communists have no equivalent. How else can we explain the deep concern shown by Communist leaders for their states' national security from so early on, when they should have been imbued with revolutionary fervour? Finland was granted independence because it was conceived as a necessary buffer between Scandinavia and the Soviet Union. The People's Republic of Mongolia was carved out of the Chinese Empire as a necessary buffer between the Soviet Union and Communist China. Similarly, after World War II, Stalin conceived Eastern Europe as the necessary buffer zone between the Soviet Union and Western powers. The same strategy can be seen in China's military action in Tibet and friendly policy towards the Himalayan states.

We have described the Chinese Communist-initiated strategic developments in Tibet during the last 47 years, and drawn their implications to Tibet's future, to Sino-Indian relations and to the political status of the Himalayan states. However, India's nuclear tests on 11 May 1998 might affect what has been said here. It appears that the conventional arms build-up on both sides of the Himalayas might no longer be a warless rivalry between China and India. A nuclear arms race might ensue which could transform the traditional rivalry into conflict, given the unresolved contentious issues pending in Sino-Indian relations. Given such an eventuality, Nepal and Bhutan may not continue to enjoy the political benefits conferred by the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Their buffer status might come under a nuclear cloud. In such a dangerous situation, what would be the possible alternatives for easing out the possibilities of a nuclear war? What makes such a fearful question pertinent is the fact that just as Hindu India is determined to become a nuclear state, Communist China opposes it doing so with an equal determination which might spill into Sino-Indian relations, engulfing the Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayan states in the process.

We need to understand why China strongly opposes India's nuclear explosions.<sup>74</sup> Apart from the various dimensions of Sino-Indian rivalry described earlier, nuclear India might have upset Communist China's neat strategy for the twenty-first century.

When Beijing said on a number of occasions before 11 May 1998, that China was interested in peace and stability, which are the prerequisites for economic development, it was probably true. All this was uttered, it seems, with almost cocksure confidence in their national security, both nuclear and conventional, as well as of their predominant position in Asia, which the Western powers and the USA in particular, have tended to encourage. Thus, the *White Paper on China's National Defence* (August 1998) repeats three times the need to "subordinate work in defence to and in the services of

the nation's overall economic construction".<sup>75</sup> This was premised upon the security that China had found all around her borders: "The political security situation in the Asia-Pacific Region is relatively stable." On the China–Central Asia borders (the scene of 1969 Sino–Soviet border clashes), Beijing achieved a remarkable result in April 1996. China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed an agreement which stipulates that military forces deployed in the border areas shall not be used to attack each other; that each party shall refrain from staging military exercises directed against the other; that there shall be restrictions on military exercises in terms of scale, area and the number of such exercises; that all the important military activities of one party in the areas between the border and 100 km from the border line shall be notified to the other which shall be invited to observe the troop exercises, etc. In short, a peace treaty on the 800 km long border was established.

In November 1996, China and India reached a similar agreement on the Sino–Indian border in the Himalayas. The agreement provides that each side should not engage in military activities that threaten the other side or undermine the peace, tranquility and stability of the border areas; that they should strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the border areas and neither side should overstep the LAC in their activities pending an ultimate resolution of the boundary question, etc. So, the Himalayan 3,200-km long border, the scene of the 1962 Sino–Indian conflict, was stabilized until May 1998.

On the nuclear front too, the PRC had appeared to be a confident and contented conservative *status quo* nuclear power. As a permanent UN Security Council member and one of the five nuclear club members, Beijing's nuclear hegemony in Asia, though subtly implicit, seemed assured in the twenty-first century. In 1994, China and Russia agreed on no first-use of nuclear weapons and detargeting of strategic nuclear weapons against each other. In the same year, China presented a draft for the Treaty on the no first-use of nuclear weapons to the USA, Russia, Britain and France. In June 1998, President Bill Clinton and President Jiang Zemin agreed not to target each other with the strategic nuclear weapons under their respective control.<sup>76</sup>

Thus, there is good reason for the PRC appearing so confident before May 1998 and so upset after that. In the pre-May 1998 global balance of power in Asia in particular and the world in general, China had occupied a very favourable position with most of their security problems under control. Under such favourable conditions, Beijing's strategy had been to concentrate on economic development so as to make its superpower status in Asia ambition a reality in the twenty-first century. China might have calculated that to immediately strengthen its nuclear weapons, a status already recognized by the West, might alarm its neighbours and Western powers. Instead a focus on economic development in the post-Cold War era

would send the right message. Meanwhile and in so doing, China would prepare herself for twenty-first century Asian leadership through economic and political development which would make her present claim a near-future reality. This neat and rational calculation has been upset by India's nuclear explosions in May 1998, an event which seems to challenge China's nuclear monopoly in Asia. If I understand the neo-Confucian strategists, they do not do what appears obvious and direct. With their mandarin finesse they strategize indirectly and subtly.

It is possible that there might be, following India's nuclear tests, a realignment and reconfiguration of powers in Asia and the West. But in more immediate and concrete terms, China's two perennial problems, Taiwan and Tibet, might be reactivated in the process. The White Paper described the security situation in East Asia as "relatively stable"; "relatively" because of the unresolved Taiwan problem. It therefore warns: "The issue of Taiwan is entirely an internal affair of China. Directly or indirectly incorporating the Taiwan straits into the security and cooperation sphere of any country or military alliance is an infringement upon and interference in China's sovereignty."<sup>77</sup> What develops in this regard might largely depend on nuclear India's relations with Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

In any case, the nuclearization of the Tibetan Plateau and India will have a profound effect on the Tibet issue. Tibet is thereby transformed into a nuclear launching pad, and there is an urgent need to make the TAR, at least, a nuclear free zone, creating along with Nepal's nuclear free zone, which China supports, an enlarged nuclear free area in the Himalayas. Otherwise, the danger of a nuclear strike, targeted or accidental is not remote. The Chinese Communists have condemned India's nuclear tests in no uncertain terms, probably for the reasons explained earlier, and it has already affected the Sino-Indian relationship. In June 1998 the Indian Expert Group of Diplomatic and Military Officials had a two-day meeting with their Chinese counterparts in Beijing. "The Chinese side is understood to have point blank refused to stick to the agenda and both days went in sharp exchanges over India's nuclear tests."<sup>78</sup> The annual meeting of the Joint Working Group set up since Rajiv Gandhi's 1988 China visit should have been held in Beijing before the end of 1999, but China "seems to have decided not to play ball for the moment, leaving New Delhi dangling and anxious about the future of the JWG".<sup>79</sup> All this indirectly affects the Tibet Question because the disputed status of Tibet and the Tibeto-Indian boundary question are, directly or indirectly, the core issues woven into the very structure and history of Sino-Indian relations.<sup>80</sup>

Beijing's main concern is whether or not India will decide to deploy their nuclear weapons. If New Delhi decides to deploy along the Sino-Indian border, which seems likely, according to the Vajpayee Government's threats,

then China might also decide to do so more openly and actively. As John Ackerly has documented, China's "Los Alamos" is on the Tibetan Plateau, and India is well within its nuclear reach.

Seen from such a perspective, a nuclear arms race is more likely to be between India and China, and is less likely between India and Pakistan because the latter, due to its limited resources, cannot keep up. Other supporters, such as China, might find it too costly to continue to aid Pakistan in a nuclear arms race with India. It might be as effective for China to confront and concentrate on India directly rather than through an expensive proxy nuclear race. If such a reading is correct, then the nuclear danger involving the Tibetan Plateau, the Himalayan region and South Asia is real. The nuclearization of the Tibetan Plateau and South Asia is sure to increase tensions along the Sino-Indian border; it might trigger a nuclear arms race and the possibility of a nuclear conflict cannot be ruled out, given the pending, emotive, contentious issues between the two sides.

Faced with such grave dangers to regional peace, the responsible task of an area specialist with an interest in strategic studies is not to instigate war. Rather it is to research and present relatively objective or realistic structural suggestions that minimize the chances of conflict.

Nuclear China is a well-recognized fact all over the world now, and that is why Beijing perceives India's nuclear tests as a challenge to its nuclear dominance in Asia. But India's recent nuclear explosions are a new reality which, though not on the same scale as China's capability at present, have to be recognized and taken into account when we propose any enduring peace plan.

What makes the nuclear arms races in Asia so dangerous, is the sheer proximity of the Chinese and Indian nuclear sites. When nuclear weapons were placed in the former Soviet Union and the USA, geographically long distance from each other, the nuclear crisis could be managed. But when Russian nuclear missiles were moved to Cuba, a serious nuclear crisis immediately ensued. At present the Chinese nuclear sites in Tibet are roughly 2,000 km from New Delhi. And if India decides to deploy its nuclear weapons along the Himalayan border, we face a dangerous face to face situation. It will allow no peace of mind to either the Chinese or the Indians, and much less to the Tibetans who inhabit the plateau. Therefore, there is an urgent need to increase the buffer space between the two nuclear states. I would not say total disarmament, however desirable, because that is unlikely to be accepted by China or India.

In a similar vein, I would not suggest, even though it would be ideal, to make the entire Tibetan Plateau and the cis-Himalayas a nuclear free zone. For almost all the Chinese nuclear laboratories are located in Inner Tibet close to the traditional Sino-Tibetan border; therefore Beijing is unlikely to entertain such sweeping proposals. However, it is realistic (and it is on the American agenda) that Outer Tibet (or the TAR) should be transformed

into a nuclear free zone and join Nepal's proposed nuclear free zone. Another reason why I suggest the TAR is that the resumed Sino-Tibetan dialogue is increasingly narrowing down to Outer Tibet as a realistic subject of negotiation rather than the entire Tibetan Plateau.

Finally, the neutralization and denuclearization of Outer Tibet that immediately borders India would have an overall effect of producing peace on both sides of the Himalayas because it removes, almost automatically, one major cause of Sino-Indian strategic rivalry in Inner Asia and the cis-Himalayas.

Denuclearization will also bring peace dividends to both the parties – a reduction of defence expenditure without damaging national security. India's daily defence expenditure on the Himalayas is 50–60 million rupees.<sup>81</sup> China's defence expenditure on Tibet may be even more. The Chinese have to burn 3–4 litres of petrol in order to bring 1 litre of oil to Outer Tibet. It costs China four times more to feed and clothe a soldier in Tibet than in China proper.<sup>82</sup> And the cost of the nuclear arms race between China and India is beyond our simple calculation. It benefits neither the Chinese nor Indian peasants who constitute over 80 per cent of their respective populations. Nor does it benefit the average Tibetan nomad or peasant. In short, neutralization and transformation of the TAR into an autonomous nuclear free zone would increase the chances of peace and stability in Asia; cut down Chinese and Indian defence budgets which could be redirected to economic development. I believe this to be in the interests of all the parties involved – Chinese, Indians and Tibetans. It is a small concession that a great power like China can well afford to make for the Tibetan people whose struggle has enjoyed worldwide support.<sup>83</sup>





## Part IV

# Tibet in International Politics

*“The issue involved is the extinction of the people, the Tibetan People ... Sir, that is a tragic fact, but what I have in mind is the extinction of the Tibetans as a distinct people, with its traditions, its own way of life and its own type of religion.”*

Tsiang, China’s Permanent UN Representative<sup>1</sup>

*“The United States should make the treatment of the Tibetan people an important factor in its conduct of relations with the People’s Republic of China.”*

US Public Law 100–204<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Tibet in the United Nations 1950–1961* (New Delhi: Bureau of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, n. d.), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *International Resolutions and Recognitions* (Dharamsala, India: Department of Information and International Relations, 1994), p. 49.



## Chapter 15

# The Tibet Factor in Sino–American Relations 1948–1998: From Secret Service to Public Pressure

The Tibet issue has, since the late 1980s, gained a high degree of salience in US relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The issue, however, is neither new nor so sudden as it might appear. It has 56 years of American engagement (1942–98) which, however, has fluctuated from strategic silence and covert operations to a high-profile public espousal of the "Tibetan cause".<sup>1</sup> Such fluctuations may be, to a large extent, related to the changing phases of US strategy in their Asia and China policy in particular. In this sense the Tibet issue has functioned as an instrumental means to regulate US relations with China, either positively or negatively, as and when the international situation demanded.

However, since 1987, a new dynamic element in this US–China–Tibet diplomatic complex has emerged. The arena of the Tibetan Question, has shifted from the secret confines of the US CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), which had exclusively handled it for over 20 years, to the American public domain where it has almost unintentionally become part of the post-1989 China Policy Debate.<sup>2</sup> During this period, Tibetan lobbies,<sup>3</sup> have exploited the bipartisan nature of the China debate, made major inroads into the American public, media and the Congress. Today the American Presidency finds itself torn between an American public demand that the Tibet issue be put high on its foreign policy agenda and a State Department that insists on treating Tibet as part of the PRC.

What complicates a Presidential middle path, as attempted by Bill Clinton during his 1998 China visit, is that the Tibet issue has become a contest between the American people's democratic rights and public opinion on one hand, and the State Department's procedural prerogative to formulate and pursue foreign policy as it sees fit. It raises some embarrassing questions for a mature democracy, like America. Do people's opinions matter in the pursuit of foreign policy goals? Can the State

Department formulate and pursue foreign policy regardless of public opinion? The Tibet issue has tested the limits of the American people's role in foreign policy decision making. In so doing the character of the Tibet issue has changed enormously in American society from a Cold War tactical weapon (carefully concealed from public view) to an openly-declared American infatuation with almost anything Tibetan.

Even though America is a place of permanent revolution, the Tibet issue has scratched below the surface of the American mind; and as long as the USA remains the leading champion of democracy and freedom, and as long as the Great China Policy Debate continues in the West, the Tibetan Question is likely to impinge on an otherwise smooth bilateral Sino-American relationship in the twenty-first century. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the patterns of the past in order to shed light on the present and help shape the future.

The basic features of the Cold War policy as applied to Tibet from 1949 to 1972 remained fairly constant. The Tibet issue was deployed as part of the global policy of containment of communist expansion and consequent counter-communist crusade. "The Cold War and Korean War as well as the US commitment to Taiwan and perceived aggression on the part of the Communist Chinese acted as external influences in the development and execution of US foreign policy in Asia."<sup>4</sup> Specifically it was designed to contain Chinese communist expansion in Asia, "and Tibet occupied a place in the US strategy arrived at isolating and overthrowing the Chinese Communist government".<sup>5</sup> For it was feared that the Chinese Communists might expand, using Tibet as a base, into South and Southeast Asia.<sup>6</sup>

Seen from the perspective of America's overall Asia strategy, the Tibet issue has several significant utilities: as one of the main fulcrums of the American strategy in Northeast and South Asia, as a powerful tactical weapon in the Cold War, as a media-friendly propaganda tool and as an intelligence gathering network.

Power considerations in US policy, then as now, dictated "that Tibet and its related issues were subordinate to greater interests in the region, primarily those related to India and the Nationalist Chinese government on Taiwan from 1953 to 1961, for a variety of reasons, US Tibet policy remained secondary to larger concerns in the region".<sup>7</sup>

Taiwan acted as a major constraint on US Tibet policy, for the Kuomintang (KMT) China was an old US ally and Taiwan, the American-recognized "real" China up to 1972. In fact, the Eisenhower administration used the Tibetan issue in its campaign to keep the PRC out of the United Nations (UN) and to enable Taiwan to retain the Chinese seat.<sup>8</sup> Also, the Khampa guerrillas in their covert counter-Communist operations during the early phases created tensions in US-KMT relations. But in this case – probably out of Cold War necessity – the US government

decided in Tibet's favour, dealing directly with the Khampas via the Dalai Lama's brother, Gyalo Thondup.<sup>9</sup>

The India factor also considerably impacted on the evolution and the conduct of US Tibet policy.<sup>10</sup> President Eisenhower wrote, on a couple of occasions, to Prime Minister Nehru, warning the latter of the impending Communist threat to South Asia and the need to improve Indo-Pakistan relations.<sup>11</sup> The President exploited the Tibet issue, pointing out the Communist takeover and subsequent Sino-Indian border problems.<sup>12</sup> The main thrust of the American effort, using the Tibetan case, was to persuade and pressurize Nehru to change the course of his non-aligned foreign policy and to bring it closer to the counter-Communist strategy in Asia. For India's part, Nehru tried to restrain US Tibet policy and covert actions in and outside Tibet.<sup>13</sup> However, after 1961, Indo-US coordination and collaboration on the Tibet issue increased. This remained the case from 1962 to 1972.<sup>14</sup>

The subordination and the exploitation of the Tibet issue to larger American concerns in Asia was begun by Roosevelt, and continued by Truman and Eisenhower. This real politic tradition still continues, though to a lesser degree. President Nixon and Dr Kissinger froze the Tibet issue during their tenure (1969-76) in deference to the PRC; the Clinton Administration appointed Gregory B. Craig as "a special coordinator for Tibet", on the last day of President Jiang Zemin's 1997 US visit, as a means of applying pressure on China; and Craig's high-profile journey to India to meet the Dalai Lama and others indicated that the Tibet issue still has political utilities to the USA in addition to the human rights issue.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile the American public began to show increasing interest in an involvement with Tibet for a wide variety of reasons ranging from the Shangrila myth to lama meditation. Even during the 1950s when the CIA concealed its Tibet operations from public view, the Tibet issue enjoyed widespread support within American society surging with popular counter-Communism. Tibet was popularly perceived as a classic case in which the "evils of Communism" were most dramatically demonstrated: Asia's most powerful army invading a powerless and peaceful country; godless Communists subjugating a God-fearing people, a classic case of David versus Goliath. The Tibet issue, therefore, as packaged in America then, "went deeper into our tradition and our national soul,"<sup>16</sup> as Lowell Thomas noted in 1959. It was presented in the American media to the public as a burning public issue in which basic American values were at stake.

In short, the US Tibet policy during the Cold War operated at three levels. As part of the counter-Communist strategy in Asia, the CIA-funded and directed Khampa covert paramilitary operations were designed to contain Chinese Communist expansionism into South and Southeast Asia as well as to deny the Maoist regime any legitimacy and acceptability in the world. At a higher policy level, Tibet policy was subordinated to larger American concerns in Asia, such as in KMT China, on Taiwan and India.

And at a public level, certain romantic and pathetic images of Tibet, especially those of 1950 (takeover) and 1959 (the revolt and the Dalai Lama's escape) caught the public imagination, feeding on and reinforcing the prevailing counter-Communism ideal in American society. We shall now examine what evidence exists, in terms of actual policy and related activity, for the above theoretical outline.

US political interest in Tibet began in 1942 when the office of Strategic Services<sup>17</sup> sent a two-man mission to Lhasa to seek Tibetan permission to allow the USA and its allies to use Southern Tibet as an alternative supply route from India to war-torn China. The Tibetan government declined permission on the grounds of its neutrality in the war. The next US-Tibetan contact occurred during 1947-48 when the Tibetan government decided to send a trade mission to India, Britain, the United States and China, as an exercise seeking international recognition. Despite KMT protests, the trade delegation managed to meet the Secretary of State, George Marshall. But otherwise the State Department showed significant deference to KMT claims over Tibet, and it declined any higher official recognition or promise of future assistance.<sup>18</sup>

Explanations for subsequent changes in US Tibet policy would differ from scholar to scholar. My analysis suggests that the policy change had a lot to do with the fall of KMT in China in 1949 and the Communist takeover of Tibet in 1950. As long as the KMT remained as the declared counter-Communist force in East Asia, Washington took KMT claims over and views on Tibet into account when dealing with Tibetan affairs. Similarly, British views were initially sought partly out of respect for the imperial experience of dealing with the Tibet Question. But it became increasingly evident that British views tended to coincide with the KMT views on Tibet. It became another way of legitimating the KMT stand and making such views prevail as long as KMT China was the US ally in the Far East. However, once the KMT lost its utility as the major counter-Communist force in China, post-1950 Tibet came to be progressively viewed, on account of both its media value and counter-Communist credentials, as a major focus of the counter-Communist strategy in Asia. Tibet then competed with Taiwan, and often won in terms of CIA attention and patronage.<sup>19</sup> From then on Washington began to think about the Tibet issue independently of British antecedents and KMT claims.

In January 1949, the US ambassador in India proposed that should the KMT fall in China, the USA should be prepared to recognize Tibet as an independent<sup>20</sup> state. A year later, the State Department wrote to the British embassy in Washington, stating that the right to self-determination should also apply to Tibet and that "should developments warrant, consideration could be given to recognition of Tibet as an independent state".<sup>21</sup>

If KMT China and Great Britain functioned as consultative parties on the question of Tibet in Washington, India figured in much more concrete

ways, after 1947, in the execution of US Tibet policy. As a successor state to British India, with which Tibet had signed four or five treaties or conventions, the Indian views had to be consulted, more so than those of the British. For the fact is, that any American assistance to Tibet, which is landlocked, has to pass through India (or Pakistan as the CIA did in the late 1950s).<sup>22</sup> This necessitated Indian permission if not cooperation to execute US Tibet policy, especially in its more interventionist phases.

The State Department approached India correctly and cautiously. In mid-1950 when the Communist victory was nearing and their takeover of Tibet appeared imminent, the State Department prepared a position paper on Tibet. It argued that the impending Communist takeover of Tibet “might offer a base for the extension of Communist penetration and subversive activities into Nepal and Bhutan and eventually, India”.<sup>23</sup> Owing to its geographic position and special trade and other relationships with Tibet, India is the only country which could assist the Tibetans. Indian interests were, the paper concluded, most immediately and directly concerned. The US government, therefore, carefully instructed the Tibetan officials first to approach the Indian government for additional aid<sup>24</sup> and, if refused, to seek India’s friendly cooperation by permitting passage of the aid it wanted to secure from abroad,<sup>25</sup> that is from the USA.

For its part, the State Department and the US embassy in New Delhi continued to consult Pandit Nehru and his government on most of the American policy initiatives on Tibet.<sup>26</sup> Obviously the American officials or agents saw a common interest between anti-Communist USA and Nationalistic India threatened by the People’s Liberation Army’s takeover of Tibet. However, New Delhi refused to cooperate with Washington on Tibet, more on ideological grounds than due to any strategic consideration.<sup>27</sup>

By March 1951, US policy on Tibet changed fundamentally. The reason was probably the Sino-Tibetan Seventeen-Point Agreement which legitimated the Communist takeover of Tibet, and would have almost completely resolved the Tibet question if the Dalai Lama had agreed and had cooperated with the Communists. That is why US officials tried so hard, through various channels, to persuade the young Dalai Lama to repudiate the Seventeen Point Agreement, and to take asylum in Sri Lanka, Thailand or the USA.<sup>28</sup> From then on, the USA was no longer willing to “appease” India; it was willing to suffer a deterioration in relations with New Delhi if necessary.<sup>29</sup> This action was justified as the need to counter Communist aggression in Asia.

In other words, the counter-Communist strategy was the American global strategy to which regional factors such as India and KMT Taiwan were subordinated, and sacrificed if and when necessary. Thus, since 1951, Tibet, more or less, captured the centre stage of American counter-Communist strategy in Northeast Asia.

## *Tibet in International Politics*

On 3 September 1949, the CIA began covert operations in Communist countries. A year later the US Joint Chiefs recommended a study on similar action in Tibet.<sup>30</sup> In 1951 the CIA established contact with the Dalai Lama's elder brother, Gyalo Thondup who, ever since, has been the CIA's key contact person on Tibetan matters.<sup>31</sup> A couple of years later a top secret State Department team reviewed the US's China policy and put Tibet on a par with Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam.<sup>32</sup> Between September 1957 and January 1960, the CIA made 19 airdrops of 47 trained Khampas and 18 airdrops of arms inside Tibet (see Table 15.1). It started in 1956 and ended in 1972 just before President Nixon's China visit.<sup>33</sup> Selected by Gyalo Thondup, Lhamo Tsering and Andrug Gonpo Tashi, the Khampas were trained by the CIA in highly secret places, such as Camp Hale (Colorado) and Saipan, without the trainees' knowledge as to where they were. Between 1959 and 1962, some 170 Khampas passed through Camp Hale. After their training, the Khampas were parachuted into revolt-affected areas, once again under great secrecy. According to the initial plan, 500 such men were to be trained in the USA and then sent back to Tibet. But, writes a CIA operative involved with the Tibet operations: "No Americans were ever with any of the Tibetan resistance groups on the ground in Tibet. There was never any involvement of any kind of the Chinese Nationalists in any phase or part of this program".<sup>34</sup>

When the covert operations inside Tibet became ineffectual after 1959, the CIA shifted the Tibetan base of operations to the remote Mustang Valley (Nepal). There the CIA made six airdrops of supplies and seven of trained Khampas (see Table 15.1). A whole complex base with better organization and more facilities, was established there. By the end of 1960 more than 2,000 Khampas joined the guerilla force. The USA abandoned this project following its rapprochement with China in 1972.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps the scale or duration of the US venture into Tibet (1957-72) cannot be compared with some of their other operations, such as Vietnam or Korea. But what is so intriguing about it was the utter secrecy and highest confidentiality with which the whole operation was mooted, planned, financed and executed. It is this aspect that reveals the motives and hidden agendas of the CIA operations in Tibet: the whole clandestine operation was part and parcel of its global counter-Communist strategy and was really peripheral to the Tibetan cause *per se*. Secondly, the conspiratorial nature of the covert operations – as well as the fact that several Asian countries including India and Nepal were not part of the American alliance system in Asia – dictated high degrees of secrecy. Thirdly, the USA was most fearful of Chinese Communist charges of "Western imperialist intrigues" in Tibet if any evidence of American involvement came to light. Hence, the highest secrecy was maintained, however difficult or impossible it became, as the following incidents reveal.



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**Table 15.1** Parachuted missions into Tibet

<i>S. No</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Team</i>	<i>Drop site</i>
1.	September, 1957 (20th of the eighth Tibetan month, 1957)	<i>Team One</i> Lithang Athar Lithang Lotse	Athar and Lotse parachuted near Samye
2.	3 September 1957	<i>Team Two</i> Lithang Gyato Wangdu Lithang Chu Bhulu Lithang Tsewang Dorje	Parachuted near Lithang
3.	19 September 1959	<i>Team Three</i> Markham Tenpa Thinley Markham Phurba Pon Yeshe Wangyal Bapa Legshay Lithang Andrug Nagawang Phuljung* (2nd group) Lithang Doli Puljang* (2nd group) Lithang Achog* (2nd group) Lithang Dolma Dhondub* (2nd group) Lithang Lobsang Geleg* (2nd group) Kyirong Choenyi Yeshe* (2nd group)	Parachuted at Ring Tso, near Jang Namtso
4.	15 September 1959	Three teams consisting in all of 18 men were dropped at Chakra Pembar in Kham. They were dropped at Tingka near Pembar monastery. <i>Team Four (Chakra Pembar Group):</i> Derge Sey Dhonyod* Markham Yeshe Wangyal Markham(?) Yeshe Gyatso* Derge Yeshe Phuntsog* Karze Loga Tsakha Lhotse Gyay <i>Team Five (Kham Zayul Group)</i> Derge Bhuchey* Lithang Aphel* Gyalthang Losang Gyaltzen Lithang Wangchen Lithang Losang Wooser Lithang Gaden* (2nd group) <i>Team Six (Amdo Tomay Group)</i> Alak Sangsang Tulku* Lhasawa Karchen* Dagyab Tsering* Amdo Nasar Tashi Tsering (Tashi Tsephog) Amdo Thinley	The second led by Bhuchey (who was later at Mustang) were supposed to go to Kham. But they remained at Pembar along with Team four after last-minute orders from HQ  After the first arms drop, this team led by Tashi Tsering (Tashi Tsephog) went towards Amdo Tomay to the north

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<i>S. No</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Team</i>	<i>Drop site</i>
5.	15 January 1960	<p><i>Team Seven</i> Lithang Ngawang Phuljung Lithang Doli Phulijung Lithang Achok Lithang Dolma Dhondub Lithang Losang Gelek Kyirong Choenyi Yeshe</p> <p><i>Team Eight</i> Gapa Rigzin Tsewang Gyantse Tashi Dhondub (Three more men)</p> <p><i>Team Nine</i> (Five men)</p>	In response to the messages sent by Tsephog's group, three teams totalling 16 men were dropped northeast of Nagchukha near the Nira Tsogo
6.	15 January 1961	<p><i>Team Ten</i> Phurba Pon Yeshe Wangyal (Tim) Gyantse Damdul (Philip) Dorjee Phuntsok (Colin) Tsawarong Ugen Dorgee (Duke) Lithang Tashi Gyalsten (Aaron) Lithang Lobsang (Luke) Nyemo Bhusang (Ken)</p>	A seven-man team was parachuted into Markham

### CIA arms drops in Tibet

#### DRIGUTHANG

July 1958

First arms drop to Chushi Gangdrug at Digu Lathang (Diguthang). Athar was in India at the time

22 February 1959

Second arms drop to Chushi Gangdruk. Athar and Lotse distributed the weapons to Chushi Gangdruk soldiers (I think Athar mentioned 150 in his interview) who had come to escort His Holiness to India. They did hide it in the beginning

#### CHAGRA PEMBAR

16 October 1959

One plane made arms drop at Chagra Pembar

November 1959

Arms drops at Chagra Pembar

15 December 1959

Two planes dropped vast quantities of arms and supplies at Chagra Pembar

6 January 1960

Three planes dropped a large amount of arms and supplies

#### JANG NIRA TSOGO

13 December 1959

Two planes dropped a large quantity of arms and ammunition at Jhang Dihu Dey Dzong near Nira Tsogo

10 January 1960

Two planes came but only one was able to make a drop. Another sizeable quantity of arms and ammunition (Nira Tsogo)

15 January 1960

Four planes dropped arms and supplies. Sixteen men also parachuted (Nira Tsogo)

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### MUSTANG

15 March 1961	Three transport planes, late at night, drop arms and ammunition enough to equip four companies of soliders. Seven instructors and wireless operators are also parachuted along with the supplies. The drop is made inside Tibet, about a day's march from Kore La Pass, the traditional boundary between Tibet and Mustang
10 December 1961	Two plans make second air drop at Mustang itself
17 May 1965	The third and final arms drop is made in Mustang

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Sources: Lhamo Tsering\*, 21/6/98, Dharamsala; Tenzin Sonam and Ritu Sahai 5/6/98, Sidhpur, H. P.

When the first group of Khampas arrived at Camp Hale (Colorado) in July 1959, a cover story was put out: atomic tests were to be conducted at the reopened base.<sup>36</sup> The area was declared out of bounds, and military guards were given orders to shoot to kill any unauthorized person. A similar incident took place there in 1960. A convoy of Tibetan trainees from the camp were delayed in reaching a nearby airfield by deep snow. When they arrived at the airport after dawn, the airfield employees observed the strange looking Khampas. "To preserve the secrecy of the operation, Army soldiers held forty-seven American citizens at gun-point in the name of a dubious national security, and told them it would be a federal offence to talk about it."<sup>37</sup> Before taking off for their destination, after the training at Camp Hale, the Khampas were carefully inspected to make doubly sure that all USA markings or labels were removed from their clothes, equipment and medicine bottles.<sup>38</sup> In 1963 a Kathmandu-based English daily, *Motherland*, was closed down for suggesting that something should be done about the Khampas in Mustang.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, for over 15 years (1957–72) the Tibet operation became part of the USA's national secret and security about which only the President, the CIA Director and the Joint Chiefs had any knowledge.<sup>40</sup> The rest, including the American public, knew almost nothing about it until early 1970s when the Sino-American *entente cordiale* began.

Therefore, if the core American policy and action from 1951 to 1972 was characterized by utmost secrecy, the policy post-1989 has become the opposite of its Cold War phase: relative official transparency on and full-throated public participation in the Tibet issue. The CIA cannot now control the course of American policy toward Tibet. From the confines of the CIA, the Tibet issue has been taken to the American public arena where it is advocated and contested, debated and discussed as never before. If this is so, then we must, briefly, explore the origins and developmental stages of this revolution in American public consciousness regarding Tibet. This is necessary in order to explain the unprecedented public support for the

Tibetan cause while the State Department still resists public demands that the Tibet issue be put high on the American foreign policy agenda.

Contemporary American folklore about Tibet begins with a certain sailor from Virginia named Anderson who claimed to have travelled to Tibet in the 1810s, as the emissary of an “East Indian prince”. A more realistic beginning in the sectorial awareness of Tibet in American society may be dated to the early 1930s. James Hilton’s *Lost Horizon* (1932) and its film version (1937) – greatly appealed to an anxious public caught in the Depression. The utopia of “Shangri-La” entered the American public consciousness and the popular vocabulary. It still remains as a powerful and enduring American image of Tibet. Such images were further reinforced by the visit of the American broadcaster, Lowell Thomas, to Lhasa in the late 1940s. The spectacles of Potala and the rituals of the ceremonial state in fantastic colours in Lhasa tended to lend some basis to what Hilton imagined about Tibet.

Secondly, being a religious people, some Americans, especially in New England, Massachusetts and California, had shown an interest in Buddhism from the nineteenth century onwards, but not on a popular scale, as it is now. For this to happen, the lamas had to wait for the postwar boom generation who would make the counter-culture movement and New Age politics possible.

When the first Tibetan lamas (such as Trungpa Rinpoche and Tarthang Tulku) entered the Dharma scene in the mid-1960s, American society was in turmoil, caused by the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement. Youth was in revolt, some with a cause but many without causes, resorting to drugs and free sex. In such a situation, Tibetan lamas proved themselves to be timely and valuable counsellors, helping many American youth to refrain from drugs, giving them a “new” sense of purpose and meaning in life, encouraging them to get back to their professions, advising them to be kind and respectful to their parents. This went beyond Tibetan mysticism and was much appreciated by both the parents and the public in general.<sup>41</sup>

A positive image of Tibetan culture was thus created in American society. The credit goes to some lama pioneers such as Trungpa Rinpoche, Tarthang Tulku, Lama Thubten Yeshe, Geshe Lobsang Tharchin, Deshung Tulku, etc. Today there are 217 Tibetan Buddhist meditation centres spread across America<sup>42</sup> and four medium-sized publishers<sup>43</sup> who specialize in publishing the translations of Tibetan texts as well as lama teachings into English. This quiet Buddhist revolution at the grassroots level in America has been going on since the late 1960s.

Then two events in 1989 transformed this cultural interest into a political passion. The ruthless suppression of the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstrations unleashed waves of hate against Communist China, bringing home the truth of the Tibetan tragedy to the American people. Secondly, the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama

internationalized the Tibetan Question almost overnight. Finally, the end of the Cold War gave the Dalai Lama a wonderful opportunity to expound on pan-human concerns such as international peace, human rights, the environment, democracy and freedom. This also suited the Western audience as the USA shifted its policy posture with the end of the Cold War from big strategic questions to pan-human concerns.

Although he has, since the 1980s, finely turned his international role and activity to Western interests, the Dalai Lama must be considered a phenomenal success by himself. His excellent rapport with the media, his timely messages to the post-industrial society, his West-friendly role, and above all his personal charm have endeared himself to the American people. All this has been possible because of the hidden fact that American leaders enjoy full and direct access to the Dalai Lama in exile, which was not the case when he was in Tibet. The ceremonial slowness associated with the traditional due process by which access to His Holiness the Dalai Lama was to be gained in Tibet had infuriated and frustrated the impatient American officials.<sup>44</sup> His two brothers, Gyalo Thondup and Thupten Norbu, broke all those traditional barriers and brought the American leaders into direct contact with the Dalai Lama.

Elite consensus has allowed the American media to lionize the Dalai Lama to an extent that they have done to no other Asian leader. He is associated with several powerful images in the American imagination: he is the Buddhist pope, the undisputed leader of the Tibetan people, the champion of international peace, the most charming personality from Shangri-la, etc. These images, broadcast widely by the American media, have widened and deepened American public interest in and commitment to the Tibetan cause.

The Dalai Lama's strategy in America has been to focus on its mass media and Hollywood stars, as a means of mobilizing of American public opinion in Tibet's favour. He has attracted film stars such as Richard Gere, Harrison Ford, Steven Seagal, Goldie Hawn, etc. who have raised much publicity for Tibet. The San Francisco based Milarepa Fund has organized, so far, four "Free Tibet Concerts" in major American cities, bringing together some of the best rock groups and attracting crowds of between 30,000 and 60,000. In addition, there are nearly 350 Chapters of "Students for Free Tibet" in American universities and colleges as well as 41 adult "Tibet Support Groups". They constitute the core of the pro-Tibet political activists in America, championing the various facets of the Tibetan cause such as human rights violations, environmental degradation, freedom and democracy.

Because the USA is a mature democracy, public concerns at the grassroots level are reflected in Congress. The Congress, in turn, pressurizes the Presidency and the State Department to change their policy. There is compulsion for Congress to act, since Congressmen owe election to office to

their respective constituencies across the nation, and must think about the next election, they are responsive to popular concerns and the public mood.<sup>45</sup> This is particularly true of the Tibet case.

There is a popular feeling of guilt in the USA regarding Tibet: that they had used Tibetans during the Cold War. Now that the Cold War is over and no such strategic compulsions exist, they feel they should try to help the Tibetans as much as possible. There are also other favourable factors: the positive image of Tibetans as created by the Shangri-la myth, on appreciation for Tibetan culture as exemplified by the early lama missionaries, and, of course, the Dalai Lama's successful mass mobilization of Western opinion in Tibet's favour. All these have created a pro-Tibetan mood in the USA, which members of Congress have to take into account.

Between September 1987 and October 1992, the USA Congress passed eight resolutions and enacted six public laws on or about Tibet.<sup>46</sup> Together they reflect the American legislators' synthesis of popular American concerns about Tibet today and tomorrow. After the Sino-American rapprochement in the early 1970s, the concerned American elite's consensus seemed to have been to encourage a dialogue between the Dalai Lama and Beijing for a negotiated settlement on Tibet.

On 24 July 1985, 91 members of Congress sent a signed letter to Beijing, suggesting direct talks between Beijing and the Dalai Lama.<sup>47</sup> This theme is repeated in three resolutions. The September 1988 resolution (S.Con.Res.129) supports the Dalai Lama's Strasbourg Peace Proposal (1988) and calls upon Beijing "to respond positively to the proposal of Dalai Lama and enter into earnest discussions with the Dalai Lama, or his representatives, to resolve the question of Tibet along lines proposed by the Dalai Lama" (Pt.3). It, at the same time, urges the President and the Secretary of State "to use their best efforts to persuade the leaders and Governments of the People's Republic of China to enter into discussions with the Dalai Lama, or his representatives, regarding the proposal of the Dalai Lama and the question of Tibet" (Pt.4).

Again the March 1989 resolution (S.Res.82) ends with a call upon "the Government of the People's Republic of China to meet representatives of the Dalai Lama to begin initiating constructive dialogue on the future of Tibet" (Pt.9). The second resolution of the same year (H.Con.Res.63) supports "all efforts, including those of the Dalai Lama, to peacefully resolve the situation in Tibet and urges both sides to pursue a constructive dialogue for a peaceful resolution of the situation as early as possible" (Pt.7). This agenda has been enacted into Public Law 100-204 (1987) as well. The Foreign Relations Authorization Act for fiscal years 1988 and 1989 states that "the United States should urge the Government of the People's Republic of China to actively reciprocate the Dalai Lama's efforts to establish a constructive dialogue on the future of Tibet" (Pt.4). The American determination to encourage and facilitate Sino-Tibetan dialogue

was emphasized even more by the Clinton Government. On 19 June 1993, while passing the funding authorization bill for the State Department, the USA Information Agency (USIA) and other related bodies, the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee required that the USIA establish an office in Lhasa for “promoting discussion on conflict resolution and human rights”. President Clinton openly and publicly raised the Tibet question with the Chinese President during his 1998 visit to China and appointed Gregory B. Craig as “special co-ordinator for Tibet”.

The seriousness shown by the American legislators towards the Tibet issue is reflected in their attempts to make the issue an important factor in the USA’s relations with China. This puts the Tibet issue on the official agenda of USA–China relations. The March 1989 senate resolution (S.Res.82) “urges the United States to make the treatment of the Tibetan people an important factor in its conduct of relations with the People’s Republic of China” (Pt.6). The 1989 resolution (H.Con.Res.63) states “Consistent with section 1243 of Public Law 100-204, urges the President to continue to make respect for human rights (including the treatment of Tibetans) an important factor in United States conduct of relations with the People’s Republic of China” (Pt.5). And as stated before, Public Law 100-204 in its statement of policies, reiterates that “the United States should make the treatment of the Tibetan people an important factor in its conduct of relations with the People’s Republic of China” (Pt.2). In 1993 the White House mentioned Beijing’s willingness to resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives as one of the conditions for the renewal of Most Favoured Nation Status for China in 1994.<sup>48</sup>

As the PRC showed no serious or sincere intentions of dialogue with the Dalai Lama, the Americans became impatient and Washington toughened its stand on Tibet *vis-à-vis* China.<sup>49</sup> If my reading of the relevant documents is correct, the American message to the PRC seems to be this: either negotiate with the Dalai Lama for autonomy or we will support the Tibetan struggle for freedom. The April 1991 resolution (S.Res.107) resolves that “as the Tibetan people and His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet go forward on their journey towards freedom the Congress and the people of United States stand with them (b); and it is the sense of the Senate that all Americans are united on the goals of freedom and human rights for Tibet” (c). On 28 October 1991 both the Senate and the House of Representatives legislated perhaps the most important legal pronouncement on Tibet. The Foreign Relations Authorization Act, fiscal year 1992 and 1993 (Public Law 102-138 [H.R.1415]) declared “Tibet, including those areas incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai, is an occupied country under the established principles of international law; (2) Tibet’s true representatives are the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile as recognized by the Tibetan people”, and finally calls for Tibetan people’s right to self-determination by recalling that

(7) “numerous United States declarations since the Chinese invasion have recognized Tibet’s right to self-determination and the illegality of China’s occupation of Tibet”. A milder form of this statement, in passing reference can be found in Public Law 100-204 (1987) in section A4: “beginning October 7, 1950 the Chinese Communist army invaded and occupied Tibet”. The resolution of April 1991 (S.Res.107) implied US recognition of Tibet’s independence by citing the International Commission of Jurists’ Report that “Tibet demonstrated from 1913 to 1950 the conditions of statehood as generally accepted under international law”.

As is to be expected, condemnation of human rights violations in Tibet and support for Tibetan human rights figure prominently in most of the US Congress resolutions and public laws we have discussed. Human rights discourse may carry American conviction in the sense that their way of life is based on freedom and democracy. But in the Tibetan context it is more than that; it is a more legitimate way of fighting for the Tibetan cause by raising international awareness on and about Tibet. The 1992 resolution resolved that “the United States Government should raise human rights abuses in Tibet with senior officials of the People’s Republic of China”. Public law 100-204 (1987) suggests the “President should instruct United States officials, including the United States Ambassadors to the People’s Republic of China and India, to pay greater attention to the concerns of the Tibetan people and to work closely with all concerned about human rights violations in Tibet in order to find areas in which the United States Government and people can be helpful”.

Several resolutions condemn the deaths that occurred since 1950 as a result of Chinese occupation, continuing religious and cultural persecution as well as Han population transfers that marginalize the native population. A Senate joint Resolution 275 authorized the President to designate 13 May 1990 as the “National Day in Support of Freedom and Human Rights in China and Tibet”.

While the Congressional support for Tibet has been overwhelming, it would be misleading to suggest some sort of unanimity on the part of the Presidency and the State Department. In fact, the executive branch has been rather critical of Congress’s pro-Tibet stand. The Reagan Administration refused to join the Congressional attacks on Chinese policies and practices in Tibet. One State Department official described the Senate amendment of December 1987 as “inaccurate, incomplete and misleading”.<sup>50</sup> J. Stapleton Roy, the then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, criticized the Dalai Lama’s political activity during his 1987 visit. He warned that adopting the Dalai Lama’s peace proposal would be “contrary to US policy” and would constitute “interference in the internal affairs of another country”.<sup>51</sup>

To retaliate against such strong criticism as unleashed by the June 1987 legislation, Beijing invited former President Jimmy Carter and his wife on a



two-day visit to Lhasa. And if the *Beijing Review* quoted him correctly, Carter was: "pleased to see that freedom of religion and freedom of worship are flourishing" in Tibet. He also commented that if the members of Congress had seen such conditions, they might have had "a different view on the amendments".<sup>52</sup>

Thus, while both the legislative and executive branches share similar concerns on human rights abuses in Tibet, they differ considerably on the political question of Tibet. Seeing such resistance from the State Department, Congress has adopted a clever strategy. Most of the radical statements supporting Tibet, such as the ones made in 1991, 1994 and 1995, were pushed through by the Congress as amendments to budget bills whose passage depended on Congress approval. Thus, Congress's commitment to the Tibetan cause appears to be fairly deep and consistent, as indeed the American public desires it to be. But the State Department represents the state power structure and has been pursuing state-and-Big-Business-perceived interests in relation to China. In such cold calculations, political and economic interests are paramount and human interest issues like Tibet are peripheral. This study shows the American Presidency to be the mediator between public concerns in society and state interests. President Clinton is a classic case.

In keeping with one of the dominant strands of American official policy, Clinton appears to recognize that Tibet is part of the PRC. But, unlike some of his predecessors for example Nixon or Reagan, Clinton is not willing to sacrifice the Tibet issue for the sake of USA-PRC friendship, as that would be going against the will of the American people. He seems to agree with the Dalai Lama that a middle path between the Tibetan people's demand for complete independence and total Communist domination might be possible. His policy statements and actions may be seen from such a perspective. Clinton met the Dalai Lama twice, albeit briefly (1993 and 1995); the Secretary of State Madeline Albright raised the issue twice (1997 and 1998) with the Chinese authorities, and Clinton's public statement on Tibet during his China visit (1998) reveals such a middle path.

Despite strong Chinese opposition, the Clinton Administration established, as sanctioned by Congress, the *Voice of America* Tibetan programme in 1995 and the Radio Free Asia in 1998 which includes also a longer Tibetan programme. He also appointed, in 1997, Gregory B. Craig as "special coordinator" to promote and facilitate Sino-Tibetan dialogue.

Communist China strongly protested against the Congress resolutions and launched protests with the US Government as "interference in internal affairs". Following the March 1989 pro-independence demonstrations in Lhasa, both the House and the Senate passed strong resolutions that condemned Chinese policy and human rights abuses. On 29 March the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chinese People's National Congress lodged a strong protest with the US Government. The protest stated that

“the US Senate’s resolution on the Tibet question of March 16 had slandered the Chinese government with its accusations of repression and human rights violations in Tibet”. It appealed to “overall interests of safeguarding Sino–US relations”.<sup>53</sup> In March 1991 the Chinese consul general in New York protested against the Dalai Lama’s visit. It sent letters to several universities where the Lama was to appear. It warned that Sino–American cultural exchanges would be harmed by such engagements. According to a Chinese scholar, the “US legislators’ moves on Tibet have only succeeded in making Beijing even more suspicious of Washington’s intentions”<sup>54</sup> of supporting independence.

Most of the time, Congress pressure on the PRC has not produced the desired effect. Nor has the Clinton Administration’s determination to encourage and facilitate a dialogue between the Communist leaders and the Dalai Lama been successful so far. The major obstacle has been Beijing’s intransigence based on its cold-blooded calculation that time is on its side; the Chinese can wait until the present Dalai Lama passes away. What the last generation of Maoist leaders do not seem to realize is the fact several Western and Asian states have a vested interest in supporting and keeping the Tibet issue alive. The death of the Dalai Lama will definitely cause a decrease in international media coverage but the Tibet issue will not die with his death.

For example, this study has focused on the Tibet factor in USA–PRC relations, and we have discovered that the Americans have found the Tibet issue an important instrument by which they could regulate their relations with China. This is, of course, not to deny the immense American human interest in Tibet that has generated tremendous public pressure on the Congress and the Presidency to act on the Tibetan cause. The history of American involvement with Tibet on the whole indicates that their multifaceted interests in the Tibetan cause have fluctuated over time depending on the global situation and the state of Sino–US relations but has never quite died out, even during the Sino–American honeymoon in the 1970s.<sup>55</sup>

The changing phases of USA–PRC relations and their corresponding effect on American Tibet policy may be roughly summarized as follows. During the Cold War, American policy on Tibet was essentially clandestine as we have seen in the CIA attempts to influence the course of events in Tibet during the periods 1950–52, and again during 1958–59 and the establishment of the Mustang guerrilla base (1960–74). The only visible parts of this top secret engagement were the humanitarian assistance given to Tibetan refugees in the late 1950s and 1960s, working behind the scenes to raise the Tibet Question at the UN in 1950, 1959, 1961 and 1965.<sup>56</sup> During the Sino–American detente (1969–86) the Tibet issue was put in the freezer: the guerilla base in Mustang was disarmed in 1974; the USIA-produced film on Tibet (“Men from the Missing Land”) was banned under

Kissinger's order; the Dalai Lama was denied an American visa in 1975. And according to one Chinese scholar, in 1978 the US Government stated for the first time that Tibet was a part of the PRC.<sup>57</sup> But the interpretation of one of the Dalai Lama's representative in New York, the US Government neither recognizes nor disrecognizes Tibet as part of the PRC.<sup>58</sup> Its opinion was simply frozen.

However, as the Cold War started to draw to a close around 1987 US clandestine policy has given way to relative transparency and openly declared support for the Tibetan cause. We have detailed some of those aspects such as the Congress resolutions and public laws, popular human rights discourse and the US Government's pressure on the PRC to resume talks with the Dalai Lama. Moreover, American material assistance to Tibet and Tibetans reached the actual target for the first time.<sup>59</sup> The Public Law 101-246 (February 1990) allocated 30 scholarships to Tibetan students and professionals; the Public law 101-513 (November 1990) provided \$500,000 to Tibetan refugees and Public Law 102-391 (October 1992) provided \$1,500,000 to Tibetan refugees, the Public Law 101-649 granted 1,000 immigrant visas to displaced but qualified Tibetans in India and Nepal. Above all a Tibetan language broadcast by the *Voice of America* and *Radio Free Asia* not only sustains the hopes and aspirations of the Tibetan people but also beaming across the Tibetan plateau new messages of human rights, freedom and democracy in a post-Communist context.

We have discussed US policy and practice on Tibet as well as the issue's fallout on the USA–PRC relations during the last 40–50 years. We now end this discussion with a schematic summary of USA official positions on Tibet. Like its changing policies and practices over time, the US legal position on the international status of Tibet have changed from time to time. The USA appears to take a stand initially conservative later becoming idealistic but most of the time is pragmatic (Table 15.2).

American political interest in Tibet began in 1942 but cultural infatuation predates that. However, the pertinent point is this: unlike British India, the USA had no historical experience of dealing with Tibet either directly or indirectly, even though its China interest and experience is of much longer duration. This means that, especially in the initial stages, external influence (Britain) and constraint (KMT) were operative in the formulation of the US legal stand on Tibet. This seems to be the case with the US position expressed in the 1940s: that the USA recognizes China's suzerainty over Tibet but with full Tibetan autonomy. This reflects the British view, as the American records show that the British foreign office was consulted on at least two occasions.<sup>60</sup> This view also coincides with that of the KMT whose opinions were taken into account, as they were the US ally in the Far East at the time.

In the 1950s, as CIA involvement with the Khampas intensified and as America came to know more about Tibet, the most considered and

**Table 15.2** Changing US views on Tibet's status 1942–1992

<i>S. No</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Context/Comment</i>
1a	State Department telegram to British Foreign Office	"Tibet must have autonomy under Chinese suzerainty"	15 September 1942	World War II in which KMT China being one of the Allied members. Hence British and KMT views echoed.
1b	Secretary of the State Hull	"US does not question Chinese claims of suzerainty over Tibet"	3 July 1942	World War II in which KMT a US ally.
2	US Ambassador to India	"recognizes the suzerainty of China over Tibet"	5 June 1949	During Tibetan trade delegation visit. Still British and KMT views echoed.
3	US Embassy in India to State Department	If the Communists succeed, US government should treat Tibet as independent . . .	8 January 1949	Civil War in China where Communists were nearing victory.
4	State Department to British Embassy in Washington	Tibetan people have inherent right to self-determination	30 December 1950	Chinese People's Liberation Army takeover Tibet and Tibetan Government appeal to UN for help.
5	State Department	Tibetans should enjoy the rights of self-determination commensurate with their autonomy	11 May 1953	After 1950 takeover and 1951 Sino-Tibetan Agreement, policy debate on Tibet within US Government.
6	Secretary of State Herter	Self-determination principle should apply to Tibetan people	25 November 1959	1959 Lhasa revolt and the Dalai Lama's escape caused world-wide interest.
7	US delegate to UN	Argued that Tibet before 1950 was independent	25 September 1961	One of the first public pronouncements by US Government.
8	Secretary of State Rusk to the Dalai Lama – letter	Principle of self-determination should apply to Tibetan people	17 January 1962	One of the consistent and principled US position.
9	US Government	Tibet is part of China	1978	Probably as prelude to US-facilitated dialogue between Beijing and the Dalai Lama in 1979.
10	House of Representatives, US Congress	"Tibet including those areas incorporated into Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Quinghai, is an occupied country under the established principles of international law"	28 October 1991	As far as the American people at large are concerned, whose representatives are in the House of Representatives, Tibet was practically independent before 1950.
11	Secretary of State James Baker	US accepted Tibet as part of China	5 February 1992	Probably reflects State Department view since 1978.

Sources: Ken Herold, *Tibet and United States of America: An Annotated Chronology of Relations in the 20th Century*, 2nd Edition (San Francisco: International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet, 1994); Guanqui Xu, *The United States and the Tibet Issue*, *Asian Survey* Vol. XXXVII No. II (November 1997), pp. 1062–77.

principled American stand began to articulate itself: that the Tibetan people have “the inherent right to self-determination”. This was repeated four or five times between 1950 and 1962. At the same time especially in 1949, 1961 and 1991, US leaders and officials have argued Tibet’s case for independence and have expressed support for it. Though not seriously taken up by the State Department, this independence card appears to be a radical option open – often as a means of applying more pressure on China. Finally there is the American official, pragmatic, stand as it developed during the Sino–American *entente cordiale* in the 1970s, the one which seems to have been picked up by the Clinton Administration: that Tibet is part of the PRC. However, the difference with President Clinton is that he seems to be determined to support, encourage and facilitate a Sino–Tibetan dialogue in order to find a peaceful solution to the Tibet Question, possibly along lines suggested by the Dalai Lama in 1988.<sup>61</sup>

The future of the American stand on and policy towards the Tibet Question are ultimately bound up with the future of US policy toward the PRC. The China Policy Debate in the USA, begun in 1989, is still continuing as the twenty-first century opens, and is far from resolved. The central, most debated point seems to be whether there is an objective or functional need to reappraise the post-1971 American policy towards Communist China, a triangular policy in which Beijing had been assigned a critical function to counter-balance the former Soviet Union.

But even after Soviet disintegration, the same favourable policy, with some occasional low points caused by human rights abuses, has been pursued towards the PRC. Along with this policy, its *new* assumption – that Communist China could be a responsible, conservative *status quo power*, willing to cooperate with the State Department – has gained increasing salience during the post-Cold War years. Meanwhile, a number of American multinational corporations, which have made heavy investments in China, have naturally acquired vested interests and high stakes in the future of US policy towards Communist China. Thus, the debate is not merely about international relations theory; it has economic and political consequences to the American people and their Western allies, the European Union (EU). The outcome of this debate, if ever resolved, will, therefore, largely determine the future contours of world politics in the twenty-first century. The Tibet Question will be affected by that great power reconfiguration.

As we have seen, President Clinton’s Tibet policy has tried to steer a middle course between these powerful currents and cross-currents in American politics and the China policy debate in the country. But his policy of persuasion and pressure tactics has not produced the desired effect; Beijing still refuses to resume the process of Sino–Tibetan dialogue. This is so, I believe, because the fundamental assumptions in the US policy towards Communist China still retain Kissingerian overtones reminiscent of the late

Cold War phase of the triangular strategy. It appears from the great China policy debate, neither the experts, nor the policy makers nor even the American public have reached any consensus on this critical issue of policy change. America is obviously in a dilemma.

At this uncertain or transitional stage, it would be more fruitful to pose two critical questions that underpin the ten-year old policy debate in the USA for the post-Clinton Administration: would the next Administration *agree to* for an essentially Sino-centric Asia subtly dominated by the PRC with encouragement or support from the super power? This option might endanger the security and economic interests of allies in East Asia and other regional actors in Asia. Or would it prefer a more complex policy of encouraging a balance of power among the Asian powers in which the superpower would be a balancer of power rather than a component of a bipolar power structure in Asia? The latter might have the necessary effect of enhancing structural conditions conducive to peace and stability in Asia but it will entail the reversal of post-1971 China policy assumptions.

These are difficult questions, involving as they do hard policy choices. The answers to such questions include not just the future of Tibet. More importantly they include US policies towards their old allies in East Asia (Japan in particular), South Asia (India in particular) and South East Asia. In short, they entail the necessary restructuring of American strategic and economic interests on Asia in the twenty-first century.

American answers to these difficult future choices might largely determine their stand on Tibet. If, for instance, the first choice is followed, Washington might continue to persuade and pressurize Beijing to resume the Sino-Tibetan dialogue. If, on the other, the second option is chosen, the American people and their leaders might encourage the Tibetan struggle for freedom and self-determination.<sup>62</sup>

## Chapter 16

# The Tibet Factor in Sino–Indian Relations: The Centrality of Marginality

In the informal dynamics of Sino–Indian relations during the post-colonial period, Tibet has appeared to be nearly invisible. However, an understanding of Indo–Tibetan relations helps clarify the context of the politics of Sino–Indian relations and buttresses a broader analysis of the objective impact of changing global and regional power structures. This perspective does not reject the role of human agency in policy formulation; Jawaharlal Nehru and K. M. Panikkar, for example, shaped India’s Tibet policy shortly after independence.

Sino–Indian bilateral relations, according to conventional approaches, can be explained using assumptions of bilateralism and Nehruvian ideology. But, in fact, extra-bilateral issues that had been excluded from the official agenda began to impinge on the neatly schemed bilateral relations in fundamental ways. This suggests that international relations are much more complex than a unilinear bilateral relationship between A and B; there are a number of intervening factors that modify or reshape policy intentions that, in turn, are mediated by domestic politics and transnational political structures.

No sooner had two almost equally nationalistic regimes come to power in Delhi (1947) and Beijing (1949) than Tibet began to impinge on their relations. Stripped of diplomatic dressings, the critical question in 1950 was who should or could occupy the strategic buffer region between the two? Nehru acceded to the indirect but persistent Chinese demands in 1954, hoping that each state would respect the Himalayas as the operational perimeter of the other’s political interest and defence.

From 1946 to 1951, the Tibet policy of Nehru and his associates reflected that of the British: treating Tibet as an autonomous buffer state between India and China; recognizing Chinese suzerainty but not sovereignty over Tibet, and protecting Tibet’s autonomy by recognizing

its treaty making powers, especially in relation to India. Thus, in March 1947 a Tibetan delegation was invited to the Asian Relations Conference in Delhi, despite protests from the Kuomintang delegates. In September 1947, the Indian Government assured Lhasa that all previous treaty commitments, that is Anglo-Tibetan treaties and conventions, would be respected as before, and an Indian army officer was sent, two years later, to Lhasa as advisor to the Tibetan government.<sup>1</sup> When the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) marched into Tibet in 1950 Indians, including Nehru, vociferously protested against the invasion. Such actions indicated India's preference for continuing the British policy towards Tibet.<sup>2</sup>

Both Nehru and Indira Gandhi publicly scoffed at concepts like "buffer zones" and "balance of power" as outmoded imperialist jargon. However, more recent research suggests that, given the chance and in the absence of PLA forces in Tibet, the post-colonial government in Delhi would have treated Tibet as an autonomous buffer state.<sup>3</sup> Such complex policy was not only dictated by geopolitics; it was the most economical way of ensuring security along the 3,200 km Himalayan boundary. Colonial officials knew this, as did Nehru, but the latter erred on the side of over-confidence, as will be shown.

Once the PLA was in full command of Tibet – which Beijing sought to legitimate through a "treaty" with the Dalai Lama's government in May 1951 – Nehru completely changed his policy tactics towards the PRC. There was virtually nothing, he and Panikkar concluded, that India could do militarily to dislodge the PLA from Tibet. Therefore, rather than fruitlessly antagonize Beijing by maintaining the old British policy, New Delhi should befriend New China by all means and at almost any cost. This friendship policy was expected to reduce or neutralize the security threat from the PLA stationed in Tibet, as well as enhance Asian solidarity. The Panchsheel Agreement (1954), which sacrificed Tibet's historical status at the altar of Sino-Indian friendship (*Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai*), should be seen in this perspective.

Nehru did not give up Tibet easily. In 1950 he tried his best, mainly through diplomacy, to prevent a Chinese military occupation of Tibet, and strongly advocated a peaceful resolution of Sino-Tibetan tension.<sup>4</sup> Though he ultimately sacrificed Tibet for the sake of Sino-Indian friendship, Nehru was clearly determined to protect India's vital security interests in the Himalayan region. As the Chinese Communists neared their revolutionary victory, Nehru was rushing through a series of defence treaties with Bhutan (8 August 1949), Nepal (31 July 1950) and Sikkim (15 December 1950). These countries constituted Nehru's definition of a security zone in which India would tolerate no foreign interference.<sup>5</sup> The treaties represented India's strategic response to the Communist takeover of Tibet. Throughout the 1950s, Nehru demonstrated his serious commitment to this doctrine. In February 1951, he established the North and the North-Eastern Defence



committee, visited NEFA (1952) Sikkim and Bhutan (1958) and Nepal (1954 and 1959). In public statements in August and December 1959, Nehru offered open support in defence of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim in case of Chinese invasion.<sup>6</sup>

As far as Nehru was concerned, all the outstanding problems between India and China, particularly the border question and the demarcation of respective spheres of special interest – that is China's Tibet and India's Himalayas – were resolved by 1954. This was accomplished more through a moral agreement with Zhou Enlai rather than what the Panchsheel Agreement explicitly stipulated. Zhou was probably aware that Delhi had made the biggest concession to China in modern Asian history, not only by giving up India's extraterritorial rights in Tibet but, more importantly, by putting India's seal of legitimacy on the Chinese occupation of Tibet at a time when most nations were condemning it.<sup>7</sup> While Nehru was deeply conscious of the extraordinary favour he was giving to China, he expected gentlemanly reciprocity. The Chinese leaders, however, thought it was merely recognition of their "historical rights" in Tibet. In fact, Beijing insisted that resolution of the border problem and China's respect for India's special relationship with the Himalayan states were contingent on Indian dissociation, both public and private, from Tibet and the Tibetan Question. This, however, could not be controlled in an open, democratic society like India.

That Nehru expected a *quid pro quo* on the border issue for his recognition of Tibet as a region of China appears clear. All political maps of India prior to 1954 marked the northern border extending from Kashmir to Nepal as "undefined" and the northeastern frontier as "undemarcated". Also, a few weeks after the signing of the Panchsheel Agreement on 30 July 1954, Nehru issued a memorandum to the External Affairs, Defence and Home Ministries. In it, Nehru described the agreement as "a new starting point of our relation with China and Tibet", and affirmed that

flowing from our policy and as a consequence of our Agreement with China, the northern frontier should be considered a *firm and definite one*, which is not open to discussion with anybody. A system of checkposts should be spread along this entire frontier. More specifically, we should have checkposts in such places as might be considered as disputed areas.<sup>8</sup>

It is clear, then, that the agreement implied or represented more than what was explicitly stated therein, at least to Nehru. It was a gentleman's deal struck between Nehru's India and Zhou's China in which India in fact and law conceded and recognized China's claim over Tibet. In return, Communist China was expected to honour India's claim over the Indo-Tibetan border as well as India's special relationships with the Himalayan states. However, while the concessions China sought were stated explicitly

in the agreement, those India sought were not. This was an error on Nehru's part, and he was outwitted by his neo-Confucian legal counterpart in China.

Neither India's vital security interest in the Himalayas nor its stand on the border problem was recognized in writing or respected in practice by the PRC. Nor was the autonomy of Tibet, in the sense Nehru understood it,<sup>9</sup> respected by China. When the PRC violated this oral agreement in the late 1950s, the Indian elite felt betrayed by its Chinese friends. Strategically, India surrendered Tibet – its outer ring of defence – without gaining anything substantial in return from China, who penetrated India's inner ring of defence starting with Nepal in 1955.

The PRC's policies toward independent India have been characterized as a judicious combination of deep strategy and surface diplomacy. China's deep strategy, observable from the pattern of her action, is to gain a strategic edge over India in inner Asia by courting Indian acquiescence in the Chinese occupation of Tibet. At the same time, China seeks to use its informal strategic alliance with Pakistan to deny India's regional supremacy in South Asia. If India become strong enough to establish regional supremacy in South Asia, China reasons, it might think next of trans-Himalayan ventures. And surface diplomacy, which is characterized by frequent visits of all kinds to New Delhi (such as those during 1954–58 and 1989–93)<sup>10</sup> has been pursued whenever the PRC feels vulnerable in Tibet. This course was taken because the Chinese Communists firmly believed that India would play a crucial role in any probable external intervention in Tibet.

The Chinese leaders attached enormous importance to India and Nehru during the critical period of their takeover of and consolidation in Tibet. The PRC's position in Tibet was very weak both because of the almost world-wide condemnation of the Communist takeover and because China's military infrastructure was undeveloped at that time. As Mao Zedong observed in 1952, there was no social basis or popular support for the Communist "liberation" in Tibet.<sup>11</sup> Externally, though India was not in a military position to intervene by itself, the Maoist strategists calculated that if Nehru were to act in concert with American forces, they would constitute a probable threat to the takeover and occupation.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the essential functions of Nehruvian India in the Communist scheme of things were not only to prevent external intervention in Tibet but also to seek India's legitimation of the Communist takeover. The latter had direct implications for the Sino-Indian boundary dispute of which Chinese leaders, but not Nehru, were fully aware.

The PRC could establish its full legal claims over Tibet only after Nehru recognized Tibet as a part of China in 1954. Once this occurred, China then began officially to claim territory along the Indo-Tibetan border, using the provisions of the 1954 treaty as its rationale. In fact, China's claims are

primarily based on Tibetan – not Chinese – documents, which would be valid only if India recognized Tibet as a part of China. Zhou Enlai himself acknowledged this in a letter dated 5 November 1962, sent to Asian and African leaders concerning the boundary dispute, in which he cited only Tibetan evidence to support PRC claims. In this letter he concedes that the names of rivers, passes, and other places in the eastern sector (NEFA/ Arunachal Pradesh) are in the Tibetan language. Also the inhabitants of the middle sector “are nearly all Tibetans” and Tibetan archival documents indicate that the “local government” had consistently exercised its jurisdiction over the Tibet-Sikkim border area. Zhou bases China’s claims over the Aksai Chin by declaring that it was once a part of Tibet’s Zinjiang and Ngari District.<sup>13</sup> This is confirmed by Jagat S. Mehta, who was one of the chief Indian representatives at the 1960 Indian and Chinese officials’ meeting on the boundary question. He recalls that most of the 245 items of evidence presented by the Chinese side were official Tibetan documents.<sup>14</sup>

With such a weak position on the border question as well as within Tibet, the Chinese pursued cautious policies both in Tibet and towards India during the early 1950s. Mao and Zhou sought to synchronize their external and internal policies regarding Tibet. Internally, they sought to consolidate China’s military power in inner Asia as expeditiously as possible. This was accomplished by 1957, when four highways began to connect Tibet with China proper and Xinjiang (Chapter 14) and after most members of Tibet’s traditional ruling class had been coopted into the transitional Communist set-up in Lhasa – which was deceptively liberal and generous.<sup>15</sup>

Externally, China waited carefully for the Indian leaders to take initiatives and seized those which most suited their purpose. They moved quickly to hem in the initial Indian position legally through derivative logic and extended legal reasoning. The Communists focused on India because it was the power most intimately connected with Tibet through ancient culture, recent history and in geostrategic terms. On 30 December 1949, the Indian Government recognized the PRC; two days later Beijing announced the “liberation” of Tibet. On 30 April 1954, China and India signed the much publicized Panchsheel Agreement; only a few weeks after that, Chinese patrols began a series of intrusions into areas claimed by Beijing to be integral *terra irredenta*. The following year, China began to compete with India for a sphere of influence in Nepal. And when, in 1960, officials presented India’s formal claims on the Indo-Tibetan borders as being based on treaty, custom and usage, their Chinese counterparts reportedly invoked the Nehruvian ideology of anti-imperialism.<sup>16</sup>

The essence of China’s argument, made on different occasions and in different words by both Zhou Enlai and the Chinese media, raised a series of rhetorical questions designed to appeal to the Nehruvian sense of anti-imperialism, and fix the Indian position within the ideological make-believe

world in which both India and China, as anti-imperialist, post-colonial nations, were supposed to cooperate. The questions implicit in the Chinese argument included the following: Do you agree that both India and China were subjected to acts of aggression by British imperialism? Did not Western imperialist powers impose unequal treaties on Asian countries? Was not the McMahon Line a product of an unequal treaty imposed by the British policy of aggression against China's Tibet region?<sup>17</sup> Can such an unequal treaty, perpetuated by imperialists, be the basis for the settlement of the border question between two anti-imperialist powers in post-colonial Asia?

The Chinese Communists had been silently but carefully listening to the Nehruvian rhetoric of anti-imperialism and Asian solidarity for almost a decade. In 1960, the Chinese threw the rhetoric back at the Indian leaders and tripped up the Indians in an ideological position of Nehru's making. Each time New Delhi made a favourable gesture towards the PRC, Beijing made it clear that what India undertook with regard to China also applied to Tibet.

The strategy and tactics of early Communist China's policy toward Nehruvian India were not based on the teachings of Marx or Lenin but rather on the "legalist" or "realist" teaching of Xun Zi (298–238 BC). His three cardinal teachings seem to have profoundly influenced Communist foreign policy, particularly towards an India with which the Maoist realists perceived a conflict of interest right from the beginning. Xun Zi believed that human nature is evil unless controlled; he emphasized a logical method based on realism as a basis of human affairs, and insisted that relations must be properly defined before conventions could be established.

Two broad conclusions follow from my reconstruction of the Chinese strategic thinking. First, a systematic analysis led to concrete actions that trapped Pandit Nehru. Secondly, the whole episode demonstrates the absolute necessity of legitimacy and justification for one's actions, even to those who believe in the maxim "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun". In the final analysis, it is power that determines the outcome in inter-state conflicts. But at the same time most states, like most human beings, like to believe and make it appear that the deployment of force is not a case of might alone but that it is legitimate and justified in the eyes of the world. That is why Beijing took such pains to trap Nehru on grounds of his own making before taking concrete action.

Although the history of direct foreign relations shows the content of Indian and Chinese positions towards the Tibet issue and broader territorial dispute, these positions were themselves responses to domestic developments in Tibet and India that neither Zhou nor Nehru could control. The growing Tibetan resistance movement against the Chinese occupation, begun in 1952–53 in Kham and culminating in the 1959 Lhasa revolt, attracted increasing Indian public support. The opposition parties' bitter criticism of

Nehru's China policy shook the very foundation of Indian foreign policy. The PRC interpreted the free public expression of a democratic rights in democratic society as Indian involvement in the Tibetan unrest and interference in internal affairs. In response, China began to concretize her border claims and compete with India in Himalayan regions that Nehru had assumed as part of 1954 gentleman's agreement to be exclusive spheres of Indian interest and influence.

It is difficult to know who intruded into whose territory first because the official documents from both sides are not yet available to the public. Nor is it easy to establish clear-cut correlations among the Tibetan revolts, Indian public demonstrations in support of the Tibetan pro-independence movement and the Sino-Indian border incidents. However, it appears that Tibetan unrest and perceived Indian involvement in it tended to further encourage the PRC to increase the border incidents. This in turn infuriated the Indian Government, which hardened its position on the boundary dispute and intensified its support for the Tibetan cause. Thus the Khampa revolts in 1956 and 1957 might have compelled the Chinese to try to close their border with India by establishing Chinese checkposts along ill-defined territories such as the Aksai Chin and Shipka La Pass, which in turn produced more border incidents.<sup>18</sup>

Until 1962, China's concrete steps to establish its border claims were directed exclusively toward the western sector. This offers some clues to the then-prevailing Chinese strategic perceptions. Perhaps more than India, the Chinese feared the USA's use of Pakistan as a base for operations against Tibet and Xinjiang in the late 1950s. Pakistan was a SEATO member, and President Ayub Khan called in May and June 1959 for a joint Indo-Pakistan defence against the Chinese Communist threat.<sup>19</sup> This explains the rapid completion of the Aksai Chin Road in October 1957. It is also why most of the 1959 border incidents, such as Pangong Lake (28 July 1959), Longju (26 August 1959) and Kongka Pass (20 October 1959), took place in the western sector, where the Chinese perceived the greatest danger of external intervention from India and Pakistan, backed by the USA. Such perceptions of threat led China to establish military and police posts along the western sector, both to meet external challenges as well as to prevent the Tibetan revolt (1956-59) from infecting Xinjiang.

Whatever veracity there may be in the Chinese allegations of Indian (official or public) involvement in the 1959 Tibetan revolt, that event and the Dalai Lama's subsequent arrival in India certainly placed a strain on Sino-Indian relations from which, some argue, they never recovered.<sup>20</sup> This helps to explain why (a) border incidents increased and became more violent than they had been before the revolt; and (b) in just six months (September 1959 and March 1960), 30 notes, eight letters, and six memoranda were exchanged between New Delhi and Beijing. The temperature of Sino-Indian relations was rising.

From the perspective of this chapter, which emphasizes the objective functions of Tibet (or the Tibetan question) in the course of Sino-Indian relations, the 1959 Tibetan revolt was much more than a contributing factor to the deterioration of relations. It was also a watershed in the bilateral relationship and one of the main causes of the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict. An analysis of the implications of the Tibetan revolt to both parties in the context of the Panchsheel Agreement will make this proposition clear. To the PRC, the revolt and alleged Indian involvement, as well as the Indian public's warm reception for the Dalai Lama, violated a cardinal principle of the 1954 Agreement: non-interference in one another's internal affairs. Equally, the revolt revealed to India that, despite Zhou Enlai's assurances, China did not respect Tibetan autonomy.<sup>21</sup> Much more importantly, China's refusal to respect Indian border claims violated the Panchsheel principle of respect for each other's territorial integrity.

The territorial dispute therefore became one of the most contentious issues to face China and India, and the issue is closely connected to Tibet. The evidence for China's claims on the disputed borders becomes valid only after India's recognition of Tibet as a Chinese region in 1954. And evidence for China's claims on the border, especially the McMahon Line, are based on the treaties that British India signed with the XIII Dalai Lama's government in 1913-14. In this sense, Tibet has been and remains the pivot around which post-colonial Sino-Indian relations have revolved and still do invisibly. Nehru probably sensed the contradictions in and complexities of the boundary question, and informally proposed a deal with Zhou Enlai: India would give up her claims over Tibet if China would in return respect the status quo on the border. But, as has been shown, this neat scheme was upset by domestic developments in Tibet and India beyond Nehru's and Zhou's control. Moreover, such a pragmatic and non-strategic deal was possible only in the mid-1950s because one of the protagonists was a most non-strategic statesman.

Once the disturbing domestic developments acquired their own dynamics after March 1959, China and India began to play the dangerous games in which hostile nations often engage. The Chinese felt that India was using the Dalai Lama as a bargaining chip to establish its border claim and embarrass China. The Indians felt China was using its superior geostrategic presence in Tibet (facilitated by Nehru's passive acquiescence) to put pressure on the borders and undermine India's international stature. It developed into a vicious dialectic that propelled India and China toward their conflict in 1962, and the connecting thread was Tibet.

India, more than China, pretended that Tibet was not a factor in Sino-Indian relations. This studied silence suited the interests and purposes of both parties. To admit that Tibet was impinging on their bilateral relation was to admit a third party to their bilateral transactions, like the 1913-14 Shimla Convention – which the PRC consistently opposed. Yet, it was

China, not India, that hinted during the period March 1959 to September 1962 that the invisible problem impinging on almost every issue in their bilateral relations was the Tibet Question. The territorial dispute as such could easily be settled without reference to the Shimla Convention in which Tibet had participated, and the McMahon Line was drawn.

The PRC signed border agreements with Burma and Nepal in 1960, Mongolia in 1962, and Pakistan in 1963. In fact, China's border deals with Burma and Pakistan run along the lines the British colonial officials had suggested. The boundary, *per se*, was not an unresolvable issue. However, the PRC objected to the Indian Government's demand that the Chinese Government formally recognize the McMahon Line, "a boundary solution foisted upon the Chinese by an imperialist British policy of aggression against China's Tibet region". The Chinese objection was not so much to the physical details of the McMahon Line location as to the legal foundation of the line itself. That treaty (1913-14) implies that Tibet has treaty making powers and, therefore, was somewhat independent before 1950. This shakes the legal and moral foundations of the Communist takeover of Tibet.

A message to this effect was conveyed to Delhi in the early 1960s. In 1960, Beijing declared that the Sino-Indian - not Indo-Tibetan - boundaries had never been delimited and proposed that overall negotiation should be conducted. Zhou Enlai, during his 1960 visit to Delhi, reiterated this position: the territorial dispute was "an issue of a limited and temporary nature" connected to something else, that is Tibet. He called for "an overall settlement".<sup>22</sup> Finally, on 3 December 1961, the PRC reminded India that the 1954 agreement was due to expire in six months, and proposed negotiations to replace it. The Chinese hoped that a "new agreement on Tibet would ease relations with India and open the way to settling other questions."<sup>23</sup> Given the sensitive nature of the issues involved and the refusal of both states to recognize Tibet as a third party, the Chinese could not be more explicit than this.

By 1962 India and China had reached deadlock, more on emotional rather than territorial grounds. India's refusal to negotiate Himalayan boundaries and detach itself completely from Tibet was tantamount to a Hindu declaration that the sacred Himalayas were unnegotiable. For its part, the Chinese refusal to recognize any pre-1949 border treaty or convention that Tibet had signed with British India amounted to a firm declaration that Tibet, and any proposition that challenges even implicitly China's claim to Tibet, was unnegotiable. These conflicting views clashed first psychologically and then physically in 1962.

The emotive aspects of the Sino-Indian dispute have been poorly represented in the numerous studies on the subject. The Himalayas are very much bound up with ancient Hindu mythology and the living faith.<sup>24</sup> Hindus view the Himalayas as the abode of their gods, where true

renunciation (*tapas*) and liberation (*moksha*) can be achieved. Thus, to substantiate their position on the border, the Indian officials drew on the *Upanishads*, the *Mahabharat*, *Ramayana*, and other ancient sacred texts concluding that “the striving of the Indian spirit was directed toward this Himalayan fastness”.<sup>25</sup> This is a social fact, which neither Mao nor Maxwell could understand, and the latter in fact ridiculed the Indian presentation of Hindu views on the Himalayas. This was where liberal empiricism and Marxist materialism converged. Whether or not the Hindu’s views on the Himalayas as the sacred abode of their gods could legally substantiate Indian claims on the border is a different matter. My point is that such popular and sacred images of the Himalayas are the main sources of Indian passion regarding the Sino–Indian boundary dispute. They should not be dismissed lightly or discounted as immaterial.

The Indian unwillingness to give up Tibet completely may largely be explained on similar grounds. There are numerous reverential references to Tibet in medieval Indian literary documents and Hindu Tantric texts, and many Hindus consider Tibet as part of their “religious geography”.<sup>26</sup> During the Indian nationalist movement, the popular image of Tibet as “the repository of lost Indian treasures and culture” was revived and survives to this day. This is not to suggest that Tibet had been part of India. Rather, the Hindus view the Himalayas as sacred, hence the emotional public support for the Tibetan cause in the late 1950s, which Nehru could not control and which practically derailed his scheme for a Sino–Indian friendship as the basis of Pan-Asianism.

Even a secularized intellectual like Nehru was not free from his subconscious emotional attachment to the Himalayas. He recognized their security function as an impregnable barrier to the north but also repeatedly expressed his view that the mountains are a part of Hindu culture. Perhaps it was for these complex reasons that Nehru showed resolute determination – right from 1949, when he began to forge a common defence system with the Himalayan states, until the war in 1962 – to save the Himalayas from Chinese aggression.<sup>27</sup> In September 1959, Nehru summed up the emotional aspects of the Sino–Indian dispute:

So it is not a question of a mile or two or ten or even a hundred miles. It is *something more precious* than a hundred or thousand miles and it is that which brings up people’s passions to a high level, it is that which, to some extent, is happening in India today.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast, neither Tibet nor the Himalayas is considered by Confucians as sacred; their sacred territories, as reflected in their ancestor worship, have always been the Han areas of China itself.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the Chinese takeover of Tibet and consequent claims on Indo–Tibetan borders may be considered primarily to be strategic considerations, and only secondarily ideological. That is why the Chinese side showed less emotion.



## *The Tibet Factor in Sino-Indian Relations*

Post-1962 developments in Sino-Indian relations may be essentialized by raising three questions: Under what conditions do visionary statesmen change their visionary ideas about international politics and make them congruent with the given structure of the international system? What is the value of credible deterrence, which India sought to build after 1962, to the normalization of Sino-Indian relations? And in what ways do Tibet and the Tibetan Question continue to figure in the politics of Sino-Indian relations?

It took the shock therapy of the 1962 war for the Nehruvian elite to revise their idealistic policy in the light of realities. The reasons for India's security lapse are rooted in colonial history and anti-imperialist ideology. As anti-colonial nationalists, the Congress Party intellectuals considered "imperial defense" to be an unnecessary burden on the Indian economy, and they failed to visualize any external threat to an independent India. Nehru, for example, declared in 1936 that "a free India would enjoy relative security against external aggression" simply because the Himalayas "offer an effective barrier, and not even air fleets can come that way".<sup>30</sup> Finally, both Nehru and Panikkar shared a non-antagonistic perception of, and even faith in, the PRC's peaceful intentions which, they believed, would be buttressed further by the supposedly shared goals of anti-colonialism and Asian solidarity. So, India concentrated on development and neglected defence. How else can we understand Panikkar's underestimation of the well-trained PLA forces in Tibet and his emphasis on the good intentions of Communist China, or Nehru's habitual downplaying of events in Tibet and his concealment of border incidents until the late 1950s? While the border situation was tense and war appeared imminent in 1960-61, Nehru was engrossed in the Congo crisis, where India provided more troops than any other state. Only the outbreak of war in the Himalayas compelled Nehru and his associates to change their views on China and on India's Himalayan defence system.

There had been warm-hearted and widespread Indian public support for the Tibetan cause throughout the 1950s. However, the government remained aloof. In fact, Nehru's government sought to suppress pro-Tibetan political activities in India and silence critics of his China policy.<sup>31</sup> But with the deterioration of Sino-Indian relations after the war, the Indian Government radically revised its stance on Tibet. It supported the Tibetan cause in the 1960s both openly and clandestinely; in 1963 the special frontier force code named 22, was established to train able-bodied young Tibetan refugees;<sup>32</sup> in 1965, the Indian delegate openly supported the UN Resolution on Tibet for the first time since 1950; and in the same year Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was expected to recognize the Tibetan Government in exile, but he died suddenly and Indian politics took another twist of their own.<sup>33</sup>

This pro-Tibetan stance continued until the Bangladesh war of liberation in 1970-71. This turn of events compelled New Delhi to forestall any

possibility of Chinese intervention either along the Himalayan border or in the Bangladesh war itself by sending reassuring messages to China. India had no more handy instrument to sacrifice before Beijing than the Tibetan card. In the early 1970s, the then Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh, and his officials sang almost daily the soothing mantra: "Tibet is part of China", designed to convey the message to the PRC that India had no intention to move beyond the Himalayas. This became even more necessary when, after Bangladesh's liberation in 1971, Indira Gandhi decided to absorb Sikkim in 1974.

During the 1980s, New Delhi can be said to have achieved a balance in its stand on Tibet, a major international Tibet crisis in that decade fundamentally affected Sino-Indian relations. The essence of India's dual-track policy is that while the Government of India officially continues to declare that Tibet is a part of China and has been an autonomous region of China since 1989, India facilitates the Dalai Lama's international movements and continues to assist the Tibetan exiled Government. The latter action is usually justified as providing humanitarian assistance to Tibetan refugees, as promised by Nehru at the time the Dalai Lama arrived seeking asylum on 29 March 1959. This dualism is dictated largely by persisting Sino-Indian rivalry, a complex and competitive situation in which the PRC has several cards such as Kashmir, Pakistan and Northeast insurgency in its hand *vis-à-vis* India, while New Delhi has nothing but the Tibetan card. The fact is that, since 1962, Sino-Indian relations have been characterized by mutual interference in one another's domestic problems. Under such circumstances, India finds the Tibetan Question a useful instrument by which to regulate its relations with the PRC. Depending on the perceived state of Sino-Indian relations (and other global factors), the Indian government supports or sacrifices the Tibetan demand for autonomy.

The changing pattern of relations between the Soviet superpower and the PRC have also had a considerable impact on the Tibet Question, and therefore on the course of Sino-Indian relations. Since the Sino-Soviet border clashes along the Ussri River in 1969 and the consequent rapid deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations, Moscow began to show a keen interest in and verbal support for the Tibetan cause from the early 1970s onwards. This culminated in May 1980 in an open declaration that the Soviet Union would support the Tibetan cause, if and when the Dalai Lama requested.<sup>34</sup> The Soviet Union used the Tibetan card partly as a stick with which to beat their adversary and partly out of its strategic interests in Central Asia. This period of Soviet interest in Tibet coincided with one of excellent Indo-Soviet relations, and enhanced India's deterrence posture against China, thereby compelling Beijing to engage in a serious dialogue with the Dalai Lama.<sup>35</sup>

The implosive crisis in the Soviet Union that began in 1986 and ended in the Soviet regime's collapse in 1991 changed the whole course of Indo-Soviet

relations. New Delhi responded to this crisis by “diversifying” its relations with China and the USA. Since the rationale for the warming US-PRC relations lost its practical validity with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the USA began to show a renewed interest in India, especially in the early 1990s, for both economic and strategic reasons. This may have had direct consequences for the course of Sino-Indian relations. It reinforced Beijing’s decision to make more friendly gestures toward New Delhi, largely out of fear that India might “gang up with the US and Western powers on Tibet”. This is when renewed Western interest helped the Dalai Lama to internationalize the Tibetan issue. As China becomes a superpower early in the twenty-first century, the contradictions between it and the Western powers are likely to increase. In such a scenario, especially if the PRC has fewer domestic problems than other developing countries, Western countries would find the Tibetan card a handy instrument with which to regulate their relations with the Asian giant.

While not denying India’s deterrent power, which has placed Sino-Indian relations on a new footing since the 1974 nuclear test, the Tibet issue is still a motivating factor in both the global policies and bilateral relations of both China and India. New Delhi’s edge over the other countries in playing the Tibetan card against China resides in the importance that the PRC had attached to India as a crucial key in preventing external intervention in Tibet. However, India’s thread becomes credible only when Beijing perceives it to be acting in close cooperation with great powers. This perception was most evident during the early 1970’s period of Indo-Soviet friendship and since the early 1990s, as improved Indo-American relations have been coupled with renewed American interest in the Tibetan Question. The Tibetan card fails as a credible thread to China when India and its outside ally do not share similar levels of interest in Tibet. This was the case at the time of heightened American interest in Tibet in 1950 and again in 1959.

India’s objective was (and still is) to resolve the territorial dispute with China. Narasimha Rao’s 1981 meeting with Huang Hua and Rajiv Gandhi’s 1988 visit to China represented special initiatives to resolve the boundary problem, though Gandhi’s visit also sought to reduce a possible threat to India’s northern security in the context of the former Soviet Union’s internal crisis. But China, true to its past diplomatic practices, did not respond favourably to India’s initiatives until it felt compelled to do so. During the 1989-94 period, the PRC faced a multifaceted crisis. The Tiananmen Square incident virtually isolated the Deng Xiaoping regime, and the Noble Peace Prize for the Dalai Lama internationalized the Tibetan aspect of perceived Chinese repression. Thus, partly to de-isolate itself from the international community and partly to prevent India from allying the Western powers on Tibet, Beijing increased the volume and intensity of its diplomatic gestures towards India during the period. It was reminiscent of

the post-Panchsheel period in the number and frequency of diplomatic exchanges. There was also a short-lived convergence of views on certain international issues such as human rights, economic development, and Islamic fundamentalism in the Third World.

During the 1982–94 period, India had been most anxious to resolve the boundary dispute using the improved atmosphere of Sino–Indian relations, but the PRC seemed to be in no hurry to resolve the problem. Ten rounds of talks were held on the boundary question but no concrete solution has emerged. The only agreement reached was that in 1993 to mutually maintain peace and tranquility on the Himalayan borders, pending a final resolution of the dispute – perhaps after 15 or 20 years, when the present Dalai Lama has passed away. In other words, Beijing wants to deny India's use of the Dalai Lama both as an added bargaining chip and as a living testament to Indian claims on its borders. While China continues to hint that Tibet is the basic problem, as they did during Rajiv Gandhi's visit<sup>36</sup> to China and Le Peng's to India, New Delhi continues to pretend that it has little to do with the territorial dispute. India appears prepared once again to sacrifice Tibet and the Tibetan Question if the PRC concedes the Indian position on the border in more explicit terms than was done in the 1954 agreement. But the situation in Asia now is more complicated than it was in the 1950s. For instance the Chinese strategy to arm Pakistan, both in the nuclear and conventional fields, to counterbalance India might compel New Delhi to think twice before sacrificing the Tibetan card to Beijing. That would leave practically no other bargaining chip in the Indian hand. Moreover, India's claim to a special relationship with the Himalayan states as well as the India–China equation in Asia will have to be considered carefully before any major Indian concession to China.

In the past, both imperial historians and post-colonial area specialists have failed to observe the interconnected web of politics of Sino–Indian relations within which the Tibet Question is interwoven. The task of this chapter has been to disentangle that web and demonstrate the particular areas and ways in which Tibet has shaped the informal and invisible dynamics of Sino–Indian relations and politics from 1950 to the present.

Such a perspective stems from the observation that Tibet has had an integral role in the modern history of Sino–Indian relations. Tibet is the legal foundation on which both India's and China's border claims rest: the 1954 Panchsheel Agreement deals more with Tibet than either China or India, while India's alleged involvement in the 1959 Tibetan revolt and the Dalai Lama's asylum status in India played no insignificant role in the 1962 Sino–Indian conflict. New Delhi has been using the Tibetan card in its policies toward the PRC since the early 1970s, while the Chinese side raised the Tibetan Question both during Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China and Le Peng's to India. Such examples suggest that Tibet continues to be a major bone of contention between the two countries.

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Tibet looms large in Sino-Indian relations and politics, even after 45 years of Chinese occupation, because of its intimate connection with the strategic interest of both parties. It is a manifestation of continuing Sino-Indian strategic rivalry in inner Asia and the Himalayas. Mao's strategists considered Tibet as China's back door, and some of India's elite still consider it as a buffer zone between India and China. The crux of the Sino-Indian strategic rivalry is this: if the Chinese power elite consider Tibet to be strategically important to China, the Indian counterparts think it is equally vital to Indian national security. Tibet thus presents itself, even today, as a strategic dilemma for both parties. If India dominates Tibet (as the British raj had done until 1947), the Chinese feel insecure and threatened. Conversely, if China occupies Tibet (as it has since 1950), India feels that its whole northern security system, stretching over 3,200 km, is open to external dangers. Such a strategic zero-sum game over Tibet may be resolved through the neutralization and demilitarization of the contested territory, as Britain and Russia did in their treaty of 1907, ensuring peace for 43 years.<sup>37</sup>

## Chapter 17

# Beijing, Taiwan and the Tibet Question: The Politics of Internal Differentiation

The latest dispute (9 July 1999) between Taipei and Beijing is similar to the 1995–96 crisis when Communist China fired missiles over the Taiwan Strait and when the USA sent nuclear warships off the Taiwan coast.<sup>1</sup> It began with the Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui's interview on 9 July 1999 that relations between Taiwan and China should be of a state-to-state nature. Lee declared himself to be the leader of a sovereign state and that his government deserved equal diplomatic standing with its rival in Beijing. Lee implied that while there is one China, there are two rival states which must be recognized.

This incident, like 1995–96, reveals some of the fundamental problematics that continue to persist in Taipei–Beijing relations. First and foremost it marks the emergence of native Taiwanese nationalism and a Taiwanese national identity which is rapidly replacing the post-1949 KMT elite who had ran away from the mainland, captured and established state power in Taipei. President Lee is the symbol of this new generation, rooted in Taiwan and conscious of its separate identity and destiny. His election manifesto, renewed attempts at breaking Taiwan's diplomatic isolation and, above all, his toughening stand on Taipei–Beijing dialogue for reunification indicate the new realities in Taiwanese politics. The post-war KMT power elite whose domination in Taipei was based on the hope of recovery of the mainland and a one-China policy have given way to a new generation of articulate native Taiwanese politicians and public who are increasingly asserting Taiwanese interests, identity and entity separate from China.<sup>2</sup>

This national development in Taiwan spells danger for Communist China. Therefore, the Communist leadership in Beijing has forcefully demonstrated their determination to use force if Taiwan declares independence. This was demonstrated in 1995–96 and again in July 1999.<sup>3</sup> The Communist declaration on the use of force was first made on

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31 January 1979 to an American audience, and it has remained more or less unchanged up to the present. But at the same time this Communist determination to use force if Taiwan seeks independence has been and still is strongly resisted by the USA. In 1996 Washington sent warships to protect Taiwan; and in July 1999, it dispatched two high-ranking American diplomats to Beijing and Taipei to persuade both the parties to cool their war of words. This policy has wide Congressional support. Just before he left for his 1998 China visit, the US House of Representatives called on the President Clinton to persuade the Communist leaders “to renounce any use of force against Taiwan”.<sup>4</sup> This resolution was voted by the House of Representatives overwhelmingly – 411 to zero.

American policy on Taiwan seems to have remained basically unchanged since 1979. It has a dual character. While officially discouraging Taiwan’s declaration of independence and visibly encouraging peaceful dialogue with Beijing, Washington continues to help Taipei in various discreet ways (such as trade and commerce and occasional sales of crucial weapons). In other words, the USA encourages and protects, when necessary, Taiwan’s informal yet operational, internal independence. Thus, President Lee Teng-hui feels relatively confident that as long as the USA supports Taiwan, no Communist takeover is likely.<sup>5</sup> And the People’s Liberation Army has indicated that it wants Communist China to continue good USA–China relations<sup>6</sup> which are vital to the PLA’s (People’s Liberation Army) future strategy in Asia.

While a Communist takeover of Taiwan by peaceful means or by force seems likely in the near future for a number of reasons explained in this chapter, I still feel it is a useful academic exercise to discuss Taiwan’s future possibilities in the light of Tibet’s past experience. Such a comparative analysis raises fundamental issues common to both the Tibetan Question and Taiwan’s relations with China. In so doing, it gives us an insight into the emerging Lee–Dalai “united front” to extract maximum concessions from Beijing for Taiwan and Tibet or simply to increase the pressure jointly on the ageing and decaying Communist leaders in Beijing.

Despite its reconciliatory attitude towards Taiwan since 1 January 1979, China has remained quite firm on at least two issues. First, the normalization of Sino–American relations “made settlement of the Taiwan problem less complicated”, and the question of unification is “now solely a matter between Beijing and Taipei”.<sup>7</sup> It is an entirely internal affair. Secondly, while emphasizing peaceful unification rather than liberation, the Communists have been determined not to rule out the use of force in Taiwan, “because that would limit Beijing’s leverage in talks with Taipei”.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it does not seem likely that the semi-permanent limbo status that the US strategy seems to envisage and in which Taipei hopes to wait for a “favourable change in the mainland”<sup>9</sup> will last indefinitely, no matter how patient the Chinese Communists may be. To the second generation revolutionaries, most of whom are still in power, it is the recalcitrant

Taipei that left their cherished revolution incomplete. They might indeed like to see the long-awaited reunification before their deaths.

It is also apparent that Beijing is aware of some of the potential dangers inherent in an evolutionary approach to the Taiwan Question. It has to make sure that the currently suppressed Taiwan independence movement does not gain momentum to a degree that threatens Chinese sovereignty over the island; that no external powers fish in the troubled waters; that Taipei does not develop nuclear capabilities that might ensure its informal independence; or even make sure that the USA does not change its mind. None of these, with the possible exception of the nuclear question, seems likely at the moment.

What, then, are the probable courses of action Beijing might take and what are the various options available to Taipei? Is there any historical precedent that might influence the Communist strategy and future policy? This chapter will discuss these and other questions in the light of the precedence of Tibet.

Three forms of “liberation” are discernible from Beijing’s past and present pronouncements on Taiwan: peaceful unification, peaceful liberation and armed liberation. A military takeover seems unlikely under the present circumstances.<sup>10</sup> However, when these dangers ease, such an eventuality should not be ruled out, especially if Taiwan declares independence, allies with powers hostile to China or if a radical leadership more impatient with the Taiwan Question comes to power in Beijing. In these cases the only possible restraining factors are the USA and Japan, who, though each would naturally disapprove of any protracted conflict in the Taiwan Straits that would destabilize the situation in East Asia, might not actually do much when the time comes.

The other two forms of liberation, both described as “peaceful” seem more probable ways of unification, provided the international situation in Asia does not change too radically to warrant more drastic action. Peaceful liberation will necessarily lead to national unification, but unification as emphasized by Beijing now does not mean liberation, peaceful or otherwise. One course notes not only a socialistic solution in which military means are not ruled out; the other, an *ad hoc* political arrangement whereby minimally Taipei acknowledges Beijing’s sovereignty. The fact that China has been emphasizing unification rather than peaceful liberation since the resumption of Sino-American relations in 1979 indicates the liberal intentions of the current pragmatic leadership and its deference to the USA. It means that while the Dengist regime is determined to unify Taiwan with China, it is not adamant about superimposing a socialist superstructure on the capitalist base in the island as long as the “local” (*difang*) government in Taipei acknowledges the “central” (*zhongyang*) government in Beijing.

Unification presupposes some sort of bilateral negotiations. So far Taipei has not shown any interest in any sort of negotiations, including Ye’s recent



nine-point proposal, although it seems to have toned down its anti-Communist propaganda slightly.<sup>11</sup> Kuomintang then hopes to “wait for a favourable change in the mainland” in a semi-permanent limbo state that US policy assumes, is protected by “at least, ‘near nuclear’ status, paralleling Isreal”.<sup>12</sup>

Peaceful liberation, on the other hand, does not preclude initial or limited use of force. Tibet’s liberation in 1950 was called “peaceful”, although the PLA units marched into the country and swiftly defeated the Tibetan troops defending the Sino-Tibetan borders. Having defeated the Tibetans under their heels, the Communists then called on Lhasa to negotiate and dictated terms for the so-called peaceful liberation of Tibet, as summed up in the Seventeen Point Agreement signed between the “central” Government of China and the “local” Government of Tibet in May 1951.

There is little comparison between the ill-equipped, pre-industrial Tibet in 1950 and the well-armed, modernized Taiwan of the 1990s. However, there are two elements in the situation that might be noteworthy: an initial, limited use of force followed by a “peaceful liberation”. It is true that Taiwan can fight back much more effectively than Tibet ever did, although it can not possibly expect to win such a war without US aid.<sup>13</sup> But Maoist strategists are unlikely to engage in a full frontal attack unless Taipei decides to take any of the drastic actions mentioned earlier. What seems more likely is that Beijing might wait for an ensuing domestic crisis in Taiwan and then step in to exploit the situation. It is said that Beijing has agents “already active on the island”.<sup>14</sup>

There are some potential sources of conflict arising largely from the new international situation in which Taiwan finds itself. The Communist strategy, while calling for unification, aims to isolate Taiwan economically and politically. This has already been set in motion by American de-recognition. The increasing isolation of an economy dependent largely on foreign capital and trade is likely to brew an economic crisis. Such a crisis may bring to the surface the underlying political debate about the future of Taiwan as the Taiwanese people see it, not as the KMT elite from the mainland wishes. Lee Teng-hui is just such a new phenomenon arising out of this new situation in Taiwan.

Beijing has certain basic objectives which are likely to weigh heavily when the future of Taiwan is discussed and eventually decided. These objectives indicate how Beijing perceives the problem of Taiwan as essentially different from those of Macao and Hong Kong. As a first and minimal condition, Beijing insists that Taipei acknowledge that Taiwan is not only an integral part of China upon which both contending parties used to agree, but that Beijing has sovereignty over the island. That is to say the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), not the KMT, represents the sole and legitimate government of China. Beijing might, however, concede, as it has

already hinted, the status of a “local” government to the Taiwan authorities as it did to Tibet in the 1950s, but will deny them any claim to be “central” government of China.

Secondly, in the final three decades of the twentieth century Taiwan has not only developed a political system quite different from that of Communist China; it has symbolized an alternative political system to those Chinese who do not favour the Marxist-Leninist regime. This is one of the main reasons why many non-Communist Chinese who, though not approving of KMT rule in Taiwan, support the “Republic of China” idea. But Marxist-Leninists, radical or revolutionist, will not permit any alternative political system or party to flourish permanently in any part of China. The Tibetan experience indicates that the Communists might “protect” such a “non-Communist system” on one hand, while undermining its socio-political basis on the other. Such status as Beijing might be willing to confer on Taiwan will be necessarily temporary and tactical in nature; it cannot be expected to be a permanent legal structure.<sup>15</sup>

Third, Taiwan, like Tibet 20 years ago, has posed a security problem for China. Now that US forces have withdrawn from the island, Beijing would be anxious to prevent any other powers from filling the military vacuum. It is this fear or suspicion that might prompt the Communists to unify Taiwan sooner than expected. In view of the long history of foreign involvement in Taiwan (Dutch, Spanish, Japanese and American), Beijing might take adequate steps to ensure Chinese national security. This could mean careful control over Taipei’s foreign contacts and arms purchases. In Tibet, the Communists handled Tibetan external relations right from the beginning but allowed Lhasa to maintain its troops for the time being to be “reorganized step by step into the People’s Liberation Army”.<sup>16</sup> Deng Xiaoping stated that Taipei could keep its “troops” too. The Communists know from their own experience that, if the KMT is deprived of its army straightaway, it would not negotiate any settlement.

Like Tibet, but unlike Hong Kong or Macao, Taiwan now poses a multifaceted problem to the Communists. Neither Hong Kong nor Macao has ever challenged Beijing’s sovereign right like Tibet did, nor claimed to be the legitimate government of China as Taiwan does, nor expressed any aspiration for national independence as the Taiwanese and Tibetans do. Nor does either territory constitute security problem for China. It is, therefore, not difficult to see why Beijing feels that it can draw more lessons from the Tibetan precedence in dealing with Taiwan. The Communists see a number of similarities between the two regions in terms of past history and current problems. As far as they are concerned, the historical status of Taiwan and Tibet are essentially the same: both are integral parts of China. On this point both Beijing and Taipei concur, but the Tibetans would disagree. Again, just as Tibet was said to have drifted away from the arms of the motherland during the last 100 or so years, owing to “imperialist

deceptions and provocations”,<sup>17</sup> Taiwan, too, can be said to have been led astray in a similar way. Whereas Tibet’s special characteristics’ resided in its unique culture and religion, Taiwan’s distinctiveness is probably in its industrial economy and its social system, both of which Beijing has assured would be “protected”. Like Xhou Enlai assured Nehru in the 1950s that Tibet would not be treated as a province of China and that the Communists would not force socialism upon a “backward” people, Deng Xiaoping made similar assurances to his American friends regarding Taiwan.

If the “special characteristics” of Taiwan call for special treatment, the need for a lenient policy is dictated by the problems that China faces in the region. In this respect, too, Taiwan bears certain similarities with Tibet. Although Taipei, unlike Tibet, does not question Chinese sovereignty over the island, it does question the legitimacy of the Communist regime and claims to offer an alternative political system for China’s one billion people. Just as it feared some external powers might fill the power vacuum or intervene in Tibet, Beijing seems still to have lingering doubts that some external power might replace the USA in the Taiwan Straits.

Finally, just as Tibet rendered the biggest propaganda defeat for Communist China since its founding in 1949, now Taiwan has denied the Communists a chance to complete the Chinese Revolution. On account of these problems and for the sake of their eventual resolution, Beijing made more concessions than it has in other national minority areas, but its political solution for the Taiwan Question is *basically* the Tibetan model, as the nine-point proposal testifies. I do not think that the Communist leaders, given their well-known capacity for tactical flexibility, would mechanically apply the Tibetan model to Taiwan. What it suggests is that the Seventeen Point Agreement that defined Tibet’s political status and its relations with Beijing, provides a rough structural framework within which details may be worked out and negotiated between the “local” government of Taiwan and the “central” government of China. The special treatment and “autonomous” status that Tibet enjoyed between May 1951 and March 1959 as a result of its special characteristics and other political considerations, may give us some idea of the kind of concessions Beijing might be willing to make as an initial bargaining point. Indeed, as we shall see, the political terms of the nine-point proposal do not go beyond the Seventeen Point Agreement.

In January 1979, when the normalization of USA–China relations became effective, Wang Bingnan, who for nine years was China’s ambassador to Warsaw in the 1950s, “suggested” that Tibet “could be the model for Taiwan’s future status if it decides to join” the mainland. Taiwan, he explained, being separated from the mainland for nearly 30 years, is different from the 29 provinces. It has its own “characteristics which make a Tibet-like solution possible”. Specifically, he recalled the Seventeen Point Agreement signed between Lhasa and Beijing to maintain

the Tibetan religion, its social system and to “move it gradually toward socialism”.<sup>18</sup>

On the same day, a special message of the Standing Committee of the Fifth National People’s Congress addressed to “compatriots in Taiwan” was widely publicized. The message, completely stripped of any Communist jargon or content, unabashedly appeals to the Chinese sense of patriotism. On the political side, the message reiterated official policy:

Our state leaders have firmly declared that they will take present realities into account in accomplishing the great cause of reunifying the motherland and respect the *status quo* on Taiwan and the opinions of people in all walks of life there and adopt reasonable policies and measures in settling the question of reunification so as not to cause the people of Taiwan any losses.<sup>19</sup>

Deng Xiaoping has been making more specific offers to Taiwan. It is interesting to note that all of his disclosures were made to the Americans indicating that Beijing was anxious to convince the Americans of its peaceful intentions towards Taiwan. In an exclusive interview with an American journalist in late 1978, Deng declared that the USA “can keep its economic interests” and “can continue its investments” in Taiwan. China, he assured, had no intention of lowering Taiwan’s living standards; instead, it would seek a solution that took into account the island’s different political system.<sup>20</sup> About a month later, he told a group of US senators visiting China that Taiwan could retain its government and armed forces and remain “fully autonomous”.<sup>21</sup> He summed up the Communist offers to Taiwan in his speech to the US Congress in January 1979:

We will permit the present system on Taiwan and way of life to remain unchanged. We will allow the local government of Taiwan to maintain people-to-people relations with other people like Japan and the United States. With this policy, we believe we can achieve reunification. Like you, we want to resolve the issue by peaceful means. . . . However, China cannot commit herself not to resort to other means because, if we did it would not be beneficial to peaceful reunification.<sup>22</sup>

On the last point, Deng was less diplomatic. “Under no conditions”, he exclaimed “will China enter into any pledge to refrain from the use of force, because such a pledge would make the Nationalists more intransigent”.<sup>23</sup> To the four visiting US senators, he spelled out the circumstances under which Beijing might use force: “an indefinite refusal by Taiwan to enter into negotiations”, and “an attempt by the Soviet Union to interfere in Taiwanese affairs”.<sup>24</sup>

Most of Deng’s offers to Taiwan are from the 1951 Sino-Tibetan Agreement. He is firm on the issue of sovereignty, and as a corollary, firmly

reserves the right to use force in Taiwan, if and when necessary. On most other issues he sounded reconciliatory and even generous. Similarly, Beijing made generous concessions short of sovereignty to the Tibetans, but on the question of sovereignty it remained firm. Despite Indian protests and efforts at persuasion, the Communists firmly maintained that the “problem of Tibet is entirely the domestic problem of China”<sup>25</sup> and went ahead with its liberation. The lengthy preamble to the Seventeen Point Agreement which otherwise did considerable backbending established categorically the Chinese sovereignty claims over Tibet.<sup>26</sup>

The other comparable promises made in the Agreement include the following: that the Tibetan people have the right to exercise national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People’s Government (Point 3); that the Central Authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet (Point 4); that the Tibetan army will be reorganized step-by-step into the People’s Liberation Army – a similar term now being offered to Taipei (“There would be no requirement that Taiwan disarm to achieve reunification”);<sup>27</sup> that the Central People’s Government will handle the external affairs of Tibet – which Deng politely translated before the US Congress as “We will allow the local government of Taiwan to maintain people-to-people relations with other people like Japan and the United States.”<sup>28</sup> The Sino-Indian treaty of 1954 facilitated such people-to-people relations between Tibetans and Indians in the form of trade and pilgrimage. In the case of Tibet, great emphasis was laid on freedom of religion and associated matters (Points 4, 5, 6 and 7); and in the case of Taiwan business interests and people’s living standards have received similar attention (Ye’s Points 4, 6 and 8).

But Ye’s nine-point proposal (1981) or Deng’s “one country, two systems” model (1986), applied to Taiwan, does not go beyond the political boundaries of the Tibetan model. It promises Taiwan nothing more than “a high degree of autonomy as a special administrative region” (Point 3), which is exactly the third point in the Seventeen Point Agreement. In fact, the fourth point of the proposal is a retrogression: while the Seventeen Point Agreement guarantees that “the existing political system in Tibet” will not be altered (Point 4), the nine-point proposal promises only that “Taiwan’s current socio-economic system will remain unchanged” (Point 4). The only political departure from the Seventeen Point Agreement is the fourth point of the proposal: “People in authority and representative personages of various circles in Taiwan” may share power with the Communists in running the state. But here, too, we note that it is not the KMT as a party that will share power with the CCP, although the KMT has been asked to form a third united front.<sup>29</sup>

The most intriguing part of the Seventeen Point Agreement was the extent to which the Communists were able to conceal their long-term revolutionary goals. It hesitated to use even the word “democratic” to

qualify what it called “various reforms”. However, with the long-term goals in view, the Agreement left, with careful ambiguity, sufficient scope for the future course of revolutionary action. Hence, no time limit was set to the state’s protection of religious freedom, traditional political system, the Dalai and Panchen Lamas’ statuses, etc. Moreover, while Point 11 promised that Beijing would not impose “various reforms” unless the people “raise demands”, Point 15 envisaged a “military and administrative committee” whose function, as later events proved, was precisely to create conditions for change and undermine the existing system which the Agreement ostensibly promised to protect.

It seems hardly fortuitous that the man who was held responsible during the Cultural Revolution for the most unrevolutionary policy in pre-1959 Tibet, shaped Beijing’s Taiwan policy. A group of Red Guards calling themselves the “Special Group for Investigation of Teng Hsiao-ping”, who detailed Deng’s role in the Party’s Tibet policy, accused him of practising “a hundred per cent revisionism” in Tibet.<sup>30</sup> Although we cannot take the Red Guard revelations and charges without some reservation, China’s Tibet policy in the 1950s indeed had the stamp of a man whose pragmatism is summed up in his well-known adage: “It does not matter whether the cat is black or white as long as it catches mice.”

It is generally true that the national minorities’ policy in general and that of Tibet in particular were declared out of bounds for questioning. Hence, the name of Liu Shaoqi<sup>31</sup> rather than that of Mao Zedong is usually associated with such thorny issues. This, however, does not mean that Mao Zedong did not have a say in such matters. The fifth volume of his Selected Works indicates that he sanctioned a rather gradualist policy and counselled great caution at least for the first two or three years.<sup>32</sup> But a significant difference is discernible. For example, in early 1957, when a great debate arose within the inner circles of the Party about the “democratic reforms” in Tibet, in which Deng’s group triumphed, that is, to postpone reforms for six more years, Mao gave “most timely and most forceful support”<sup>33</sup> to the radical views. In other words, the difference between radical and moderate thinking on such national issues was tactical rather than strategic or conceptual. From 1976 onwards, the political basis of the radical faction in China is being systematically uprooted. We may therefore expect moderate policies to prevail both in Taiwan and Beijing.

As he was shaping China’s Taiwan policy, Deng Xiaoping as General Secretary of the Party Central Committee in the 1950s came to exercise great influence on the Tibet policy. Perhaps his influence would not have carried so much weight in practice, had it not been for his personal connections with the Army generals who virtually ruled Tibet from 1951 to 1967.<sup>34</sup> Deng was the political Commissar of the Second Field Army whose divisions “liberated” Tibet, and, from 1951 onwards, Tibetan politics were dominated by generals known to him personally. The Red Guards therefore

charged that Deng, who was born in Sichuan and worked during the war in the southwest region, “particularly in the southwestern areas, where his influence was extended, he worked vigorously to set up an independent kingdom, stubbornly, openly and frantically resisting and opposing Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line”.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps it would be instructive for those concerned with the Taiwan question to recall here some specific incidents where Deng intervened in Tibetan politics which might shed some light on the intriguing nature of China’s Tibet policy in the 1950s. In 1956, when an assistant secretary of the party’s Tibet Work Committee argued for a more radical policy, Deng dismissed him as a “leftist in form but rightist in substance”.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, in 1957, during a discussion on the educational policy of the Tibetan National Academy, Deng’s view prevailed: “Only patriotic education and not class education should be permitted”.<sup>37</sup> In the same year Deng and Beng Chen authored “Decision Concerning Democratic Reforms in Tibet”, which was as the Red Guards put it, “extremely rightist in essence and ... entirely capitulationist in character”.<sup>38</sup> It seems fair to infer from all this that Deng must have had a big hand in Beijing’s decision to postpone the “democratic reforms” in Tibet in 1956 for six more years.

In 1957, when the PLA official defected to the Dalai Lama’s palace, and when the matter was reported to the Central Committee, Deng “refused to take any action” because this “might affect the united front relationship with the Dalai”.<sup>39</sup> For the same reason he dealt with the Tibetan resistance movement in the mid-1950s rather cautiously and diplomatically. In 1952, Beijing put pressure on the Dalai Lama to dismiss his Prime Minister Lukhangwa, who was opposing the Seventeen Point Agreement. When Lukhangwa expressed his desire to go on a “pilgrimage” to India, Deng “and his like” rather than prevent him, dispatched a high-ranking cadre to escort “this big traitorous bandit and counter-revolutionary leader to Yatung and thence to India, and presented him with a large quantity of silver and gifts”.<sup>40</sup> In 1954, Deng and his followers sought to carry the policy of cooperation in Tibet to its extreme:

Everybody knows that the Communists are atheists, while the Dalai Lama is a religious professional. Communists are vanguards of the proletariat, while the Dalai Lama is a feudal serf-owner. However, Teng Hsiao-ping and his like at the Preparatory Conference for Organizational Work in Tibet held in the spring of 1954 prepared to recruit Lamas of the upper strata as “Party members”. What was it if not a hundred per cent revisionism?<sup>41</sup>

We have so far noted the extreme flexibility of China’s Tibet policy (1951–58), which might be anticipated in Taiwan, too, if and when reunification is achieved. In what follows, we shall delineate the salient aspects of China’s pre-1959 Tibet policy that seem pertinent to the future of

Taiwan as Beijing sees it. The policy was based on two ideas that need no introduction or definition: a united front and *divide et impera*. The former was declared official policy and was practised ostentatiously;<sup>42</sup> the latter was an underlying political strategy used adroitly from under the table. But why pursue such contradictory policies? Tibet had been in existence as a distinct cultural and political entity for well over a thousand years, and Beijing's plan for national integration conflicted with this entity. One of the main functions of the united front policy, therefore, was to unite with all those who were "patriotic" and who could be united "irrespective of nationality, social class or religious belief".<sup>43</sup> In so doing, it minimized the possibilities of a revolt. While the intended purpose of such a policy was to create unity between China and Tibet, it was always possible that it could backfire. Hence, the underlying tactical aspect of the policy of *divide et impera*, which tried to ensure that the unity China was trying to create was not used against her.

The basis of Taiwan's entity differs somewhat from that of Tibet. Unlike Tibet, Taiwan shares China's culture and language. Unlike any other Chinese province, Taiwan has been occupied by various foreign powers since the sixteenth century. In particular, since the KMT's arrival in 1949, it has been in existence as a separate political, ideological and economic entity in conscious opposition to the Communist system. This has objectively created an entity quite distinct from Communist China. These factors suggest a similar structural approach to that of Tibet, but I am sure that the Taiwanese response would be by no means similar. The Tibetans were, therefore, too naïve politically.

The United Front in China, especially during the Sino-Japanese war was broad enough; it included members from all strata of Chinese society except well-known anti-Communists and Japanese collaborators. In Tibet it was an exclusively elitist front; it specifically meant a studious co-optation of the traditional ruling class, both lords and Lamas. They were not only allowed to continue to enjoy their old privileges which the Seventeen Point Agreement guaranteed but also were pampered with new material benefits and positions.<sup>44</sup> The masses were subject to a benign neglect by their "liberators" until after the 1959 Revolt. Throughout the decade the only occasions on which the Communists came into contact with ordinary Tibetans were at road construction sites. It was perhaps more sensible for the Communists to route their revolution through the elite whose example the people might follow.

However, in the case of Taiwan it is unlikely that any united front would exclude the masses because their Chinese identity and lower status, both economic and political, could easily be exploited. Hence Beijing might attempt to unite all those who could be united rather than target any particular section of Taiwanese society especially pro-Communists and Han nationalists as represented by the New Party.



In order to implement their policy of *divide et impera*, the Communists used the existing cleavages in Tibetan society. The traditional rivalry between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama was exploited to the hilt. The status of the latter was elevated to an unprecedented degree in the Seventeen Point Agreement, much against the wishes of the Lhasa authorities.<sup>45</sup> As events later proved, he was cast in the double rôle of countervailing the Dalai Lama, as well as acting as the most outstanding pro-Communist spokesman in the Lamaist hierarchy.

In its “peace offensive” towards Taiwan since 1979, the Communists have already given us sufficient evidence that they are operating a united front strategy in operation. Deng Xiaoping, who has been making the most authoritative statements regarding Taiwan, was also the Chairman of the National Committee of the People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) “which is a united front organization” largely responsible for such national questions as Taiwan. Deng delivered his important New Year’s Day (1979) speech before the CPPCC National Committee meeting convened specifically to discuss the question of Taiwan. He declared that “the great cause of the return of Taiwan to the motherland and of reuniting the country is now on the agenda”.<sup>46</sup>

Since then Beijing has orchestrated the “various democratic parties and other patriotic personages” who attended the CPPCC meeting to sing in unison the theme of national unification. A leading member of the Beijing-based Taiwan League tells tales of how “our forefathers” from Fujian and Gaungdong provinces settled and developed Taiwan; an overseas Taiwanese expresses his hope for “an early reunion of the people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits”; a KMT envoy who was sent to negotiate peace with the victorious Communist forces in 1949, now expresses his “readiness to fly to Taipei to discuss the reunification of the motherland if the Taipei authorities would allow him to do so”; former KMT generals assure their counterparts in Taiwan that national unification is in national as well as in personal interests; nationalist civil aviation companies that defected to Beijing in 1949 now pledge to “do their part to help start an airline between Taiwan and the mainland”; intellectuals, who “always love our motherland”, express their willingness to “work together with our counterparts in Taiwan to help realise the reunification of our country”; industrial and commercial circles affirm that their counterparts in Taiwan “are patriotic like their fellow-countrymen” and hope that they “would play their part in bringing about at any early date, trade and commercial exchanges between the mainland and Taiwan”.<sup>47</sup>

In short, China has floated various baits for unification across the Taiwan Straits. It has offered trade prospects and called for an early establishment of communications between the island and the mainland, without preconditions. It has unabashedly appealed to Chinese nationalism and has called upon what it now politely calls the “Taipei authorities” to

negotiate a peaceful unification. At the same time, it has less noisily issued warnings like “With American abandonment, the future is clear. Taiwan will be united with the motherland. If you join the movement now, your personal future as well as that of the province will be assured. Otherwise, you will be justly labeled a traitor and reactionary.”<sup>48</sup>

In the press there is a tendency to confuse the resolution of the Taiwan problem, which might indeed take 10, or even 100 years, as Mao was reported to have said, with national unification, which could be achieved within “our generation”, as Deng hoped. While the latter involves, at the very least, Taipei’s acknowledgement of sovereignty, the former means a long process of social and economic integration of a capitalistic Taiwan with Communist China. What I have tried to argue is that Beijing might be anxious to bring about national unification as soon as possible; and if Taipei accepts the objective, Beijing might be more patient as far as social integration is concerned, which might be projected as a long-term goal.

In conclusion, we may compare the different positions of, and weigh the various options confronting, the three major parties in the Taiwan question. The KMT agrees with the CCP on the indivisibility of one China and on that ground it opposes the Taiwanese demand for independence, which the Communists consider as “the basis for cooperation”.<sup>49</sup> The bone of contention between the two parties, therefore, is the question of who rules over China. The KMT’s current hope of “waiting for a favourable change in the mainland” may not be so unrealistic as it appeared in the late 1970s and 1980s. But meanwhile a practical and perhaps critical question confronting Taiwan today may be how it can save itself from a sudden or unforeseen takeover.

Up to 1979, Taiwan’s security depended on American protection, which has now been withdrawn. After the initial anger, Taiwan has reaffirmed its relations with the USA, which, as we shall see, might act as an informal mediator in Beijing–Taipei negotiations for a political settlement. For the other means of maintaining Taiwan’s informal independence, such as “going nuclear”, declaring independence all of which (especially the last two) have been officially ruled out by Taipei are as much against the explicit wishes of the KMT elite as they are against the national interests of China, and the USA has a particularly high stake in the regional stability of East Asia as a whole; it does not want any sort of conflict in the region. Nor does it want any more nuclear proliferation in Asia, all of which makes Taiwan more dependent on the USA than ever before.

But this does not mean that the Americans have completely abandoned Taiwan. The second level of the official policy assumes that “China is not able to conquer Taiwan at this time anyway”.<sup>50</sup> Based on this assumption, Washington hopes that Taiwan can somehow manage to survive in a semi-permanent limbo and with that hope it leaves a faint option open for “the people on Taiwan” (a term officially used in all the US dealings with Taiwan

since the de-recognition) to be either Chinese or Taiwanese. The American assumption may be rational enough judged upon the situation in which China currently finds itself.

At the same time, the USA seeks to persuade the Taipei authorities to negotiate with Beijing for the best possible terms.<sup>51</sup> But Taiwan's options are rather limited, being circumscribed by the close relationship between its former protector to whom it still faithfully clings and its ideological enemy who now seeks to place it in a situation in which it will have practically no option but to accept a peaceful unification or live in semi-permanent limbo.

A logical outcome of such mutual intransigence may be confrontation, but that is against the US interests in East Asia, where its concerns in Japan and South Korea dictate peace and regional stability.<sup>52</sup> Such a confrontation may be avoided. This is suggested by the unique situation in which the USA finds itself in relation to both Taipei, which continue to cooperate with the USA, and Beijing, which is likely to heed American "suggestions", with its increasing reliance upon American technology and power.

It will not, therefore, be surprising if the USA plays a rôle similar to India's in the Tibetan sense. India was then, like the USA is now, torn between emotional sympathy for the helpless Tibetan people and the political necessity to befriend China. New Delhi counselled peaceful resolution of the Tibetan question and tried to persuade Beijing to grant Tibet maximum domestic autonomy. While firmly objecting to any external interference, including Indian, in what is considered a purely domestic matter, China demonstrably took Indian sentiments into account in its Tibet policy in the 1950s.

Just as Nehru's India in the 1950s was an important "friendly" power to the nascent Communist regime in China, the USA seemed to be similarly situated in the 1980s. China will object to any formal American mediating rôle in any Beijing-Taipei negotiation, but the USA could still be an informal mediating factor wielding considerable influence. It, of course, goes without saying that the USA can exert far more influence upon China than India could.

As we have shown, the Communists have used their Tibetan experience and the "Tibetan model" for appropriate policy guidelines towards Taiwan. Thus, Taipei perceives even the current "new economic policy" in Tibet and the Beijing-Dalai Lama negotiations as yet another "peace offensive against the Republic of China".<sup>53</sup> There is no doubt that Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues saw a definite policy linkage between Taiwan and the Tibetan Question, but here they face a credibility problem. The nine-point proposal was rejected, because President Chiang Ching-kuo pointed to "the fate of Tibet as an example of what would befall Taiwan if it accepted reunification now"<sup>54</sup> Beijing's recent refusal to concede some of the basic Tibetan demands (such as re-incorporation of Kham and Amdo into Tibet proper, and a separate status for Tibet within a Chinese federation<sup>55</sup>) is

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unlikely to help convince the KMT elite of the Communist sincerity and reasonableness. If Beijing wants to hold Tibet as a “model” for Taiwan, it has to improve its record with the Tibetan people, for its dealings with Tibet, both past and present, serve not as a model but as a warning for Taiwan.

While Beijing clearly sees Taiwan and Tibet as closely related issues, Taipei and the Dalai Lama did not act together to extract the maximum concessions for both from their Communist masters until late March 1997 when the Dalai Lama paid a six-day visit to Taiwan and opened a Tibetan liaison office there. A Taipei–Dharamsala united front would enormously enhance their collective bargaining power against Beijing in their negotiation for peaceful, political settlements. In the early 1980s a Chinese writer suggested the idea of a Chinese federation along Soviet lines,<sup>56</sup> and this is precisely what the Dalai Lama has also demanded. Such a goal may not be impossible if Taipei and the Dalai Lama make a joint demand for a great Chinese federal system (*dadung*) in which Taiwan and Tibet would become UN members, like the Ukraine and Belorussia.

It is difficult to find a solution that satisfies all the parties concerned; the federal idea, however, might (see Chapter 19). Even President Lee Teng-hui’s *Taiwan Viewpoint* (June 1999) suggests a similar structural solution for China: federal advancement. A satisfactory solution to the question of Taiwan and Tibet is imperative for the reduction, if not elimination, of dangers to Communist China. It would also complete the life work of the Chinese revolutionaries – it would complete national unification. However, the kind of absolutist and totalistic unification that the neo-nationalist leaders in Beijing seem to have in mind is neither feasible nor conducive to peace and stability in East Asia. After all, one of the main purposes of what Japanese historians call the “China Incident” was to discourage the formation of a huge, unified and powerful “new empire” in the East Asian continent<sup>57</sup> that objectively threatens all its small neighbours. Chinese Marxists might subjectively renounce any hegemonistic ambitions anywhere, but power has its own dialectics, almost independent of the heart of its holders.<sup>58</sup>

## Part V

# Tibet's Future

*“Since the forming of groups is inherent in human nature and the establishment of a ruler is for the purpose of protecting the group, it is logical and necessary for the group to govern itself. Each race should be controlled by its own ruler and should never allow any encroachment by an alien race.”*

Wang Fu-chih (1619–92)<sup>1</sup>

*“One who is not politically motivated can easily understand that Tibet is a separate country different from China. This thought comes quite naturally because Tibet was and is in fact different from China – racially, culturally, linguistically, geographically and historically. No knowledgeable person would for a moment think that Tibetans are Chinese.”*

The Dalai Lama<sup>2</sup>

*“Since Tibet is not the same as China, it should ultimately be the wishes of the people of Tibet that should prevail and not any legal or constitutional arguments. That, I think, is a valid point. Whether the people of Tibet are strong enough to assert their rights or not is another matter. Whether we are strong enough or any other country is strong enough to see that this is done is also another matter. But it is a right and proper thing to say and I see no difficulty in saying to the Chinese Government that whether they have suzerainty or sovereignty over Tibet, surely, according to any principles, the principles they proclaim and the principles I uphold, the last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the people of Tibet and of nobody else.”*

Jawaharlal Nehru<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Teng Ssu-yu and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> The Dalai Lama, *The Wall Street Journal* 8 November, 1979

<sup>3</sup> Address to the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament), 7 December, 1950.



## Chapter 18

# China's Dialogue with the Dalai Lama 1979–1998

Perhaps the most significant political development in post-1959 Sino-Tibetan politics is the dialogue that Deng Xiaoping initiated with the Dalai Lama in December 1978. The primary Chinese motive was – and still is – to persuade the self-exiled Tibetan leader to “return to the motherland”. For in exile, the Dalai Lama not only creates frequent embarrassment to the PRC through his excellent rapport with the Western mass media but, more seriously, it is feared by the PRC that he could be used for anti-Chinese purposes by hostile powers such as pre-1986 Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> If, however, the Dalai Lama could be persuaded to end his exile, he would automatically cease to be a source of embarrassment and potential danger to China. Instead, it is hoped by the PRC that he could fruitfully be used at home to legitimate Chinese rule in Tibet where the politicized segments of the Tibetan population are still resisting the Chinese Communist takeover as indicated by pro-independence outbursts in Lhasa since 1987.

The Dalai Lama, like his people, has come to the conclusion that he does not have any alternative but to negotiate for a greater degree of autonomy from the PRC. This realization by the Dalai Lama came about more acutely with the US abandonment of the Tibetan cause in the early 1970s when the Sino-American rapprochement began.<sup>2</sup> But since the mid-1980s, Western moral support for the Dalai Lama's peace initiatives has considerably increased, culminating in the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama in 1989. Nor is there much chance of raising the Tibetan issue at the United Nations with PRC's permanent membership in the Security Council, unlike earlier occasions when the UN passed three resolutions on Tibet.

Given the preceding political changes affecting their mutual perceptions, it took two equally pragmatic leaders to break the ice by December 1978: Deng Xiaoping and the Dalai Lama. The credit, however, must go to Deng. It was part of his reform, introduced after 1978, which included not only

the four modernizations but also bold initiatives to resolve some of the outstanding “national” problems such as Taiwan and Tibet. Hence, it seems hardly fortuitous that Deng Xiaoping, who was held responsible during the Cultural Revolution for the most unrevolutionary policy in pre-1959 Tibet,<sup>3</sup> once again took a bold initiative to contact the Dalai Lama.

On the other hand, the Dalai Lama too had scaled down his stand on the Tibetan question by the late 1970s in shifting the essence of his struggle from claims for independence to concerns about economic welfare. On 10 March 1978 he declared: “If the six million Tibetans in Tibet are really happy and prosperous as never before, there is no reason for us to argue otherwise.”<sup>4</sup> A year later he explained that “the main reason why we are in exile is the welfare of the six million Tibetans”.<sup>5</sup> In 1980 he was more explicit: “the core of the Tibetan issue is the welfare and ultimate happiness of the six million Tibetans in Tibet”.<sup>6</sup> In so doing the Dalai Lama met the basic Chinese precondition for negotiation: no question of Tibetan independence could be raised.

This was precisely the first of the three points that Deng Xiaoping conveyed to the Dalai Lama’s elder brother, Gyalo Thondup, on 3 December 1978. He stated: “The basic question is whether Tibet is part of China or not. This should be kept as the criteria for testing the truth. . . . So long as it is not accepted that Tibet is an integral part of China, there is nothing else to talk about.”<sup>7</sup> The Tibetan side interpreted this as the agenda for all negotiations except those aiming for total independence.<sup>8</sup> Deng’s second point was that the Dalai Lama may send delegations to Tibet to investigate the actual conditions there. Third, he accepted the Tibetan suggestion that 50 Tibetan teachers from India would be permitted to teach in various parts of Tibet.

While the Dalai Lama started sending a series of “fact-finding delegations” to both Inner and Outer Tibet, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) which took charge of Tibetan affairs at that time, indicated the nature of Chinese concessions to the Dalai Lama. The Chinese preemptive measures suggested that the Tibetan findings in Tibet would not be the basis for negotiation, that Beijing would decide on its own, defining the boundary and identifying the issue for Sino–Tibetan dialogue.

Between 22 May and 1 June 1980, Hu Yaobang led China’s own fact-finding delegation to central Tibet, and issued a six-point policy directive. First, autonomy is defined as “having the right to decide for oneself”, but this definition is not extended to the political plane and refers mainly to economic decentralization. Secondly, the policy directive indicated that Tibetans should be exempt from taxes and should not work without pay. They would also be free from meeting compulsory state purchase quotas and their products could be purchased at negotiated prices. These economic concessions would last three to five years. Thirdly, the report suggested a



flexible economic policy suited to the specific and actual conditions in Tibet which should be carried out with a view to diversifying the whole Tibetan economy. Fourthly, Beijing would further increase central funds to the Tibet Autonomous Region in order to develop the local economy and improve living standards. Fifthly, within the socialist framework, it would be necessary to make “vigorous efforts to revive and develop Tibetan culture, education and science. . . . All ideas that ignore and weaken Tibetan culture are wrong.” Lastly, Tibetan participation in the local administration should be enlarged: full-time Tibetan cadres should account for more than two-thirds of all government functionaries in Tibet within two to three years.<sup>9</sup>

After having made the necessary economic concessions which might have met the Dalai Lama's basic demand made in 1978 and 1979, Hu Yaobang next specified the Party line on the Dalai Lama's personal status upon his return to China. On 28 July 1981 Hu conveyed to Gyalo Thondup China's “five-point proposal to the Dalai Lama”, which is, he emphasized, “our sincere and serious decision”. First, China has now entered a new era of political stability, economic prosperity and friendly relations among all the nationalities. These trends will not change for a long time to come. Since the Dalai Lama and his entourage “are intelligent” they should believe in what the new era promises. If they don't, they can wait and see. Secondly, the Dalai Lama and those appointed by him to represent him at talks must be “sincere”; they must not “bargain like businessmen”. On China's part, there will be no punishment of those Tibetans who took part in the 1959 Rebellion. Thirdly, “we sincerely welcome back the Dalai Lama and his entourage” to permanently settle down in China; for once returned, the Dalai Lama can promote national unity, improve relations among nationalities and accelerate the progress of the four modernizations. If and when he returns to China – and this is the fourth point – his political and economic privileges will be as those of pre-1959. He will be appointed as vice-president of the National People's Congress as well as vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee. Hu emphasized that neither the Dalai Lama nor his entourage need worry about their living conditions or employment as China would guarantee their privileges. Fifthly, the Dalai Lama could decide when he wanted to return, and say whatever he wanted to at the time. China would organize a grand reception and hold a press conference.<sup>10</sup>

The Dalai Lama's reaction to the Chinese five-point proposal was brief: “Instead of addressing the real issues facing the six million Tibetan people, China has attempted to reduce the question of Tibet to a discussion of my own personal status.”<sup>11</sup> He put forward, before the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus on 21 September 1987, his own five-point counter-proposal: (a) transformation of the whole of Tibet (Inner and Outer) into a zone of peace; (b) abandonment of China's population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people; (c) respect for the

Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms; (d) restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and the abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste; (e) commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and relations between Tibetan and Chinese peoples.<sup>12</sup>

The Dalai Lama's first demand calls for some explanation because it touches Chinese security concerns. He argues that his concept of a peace zone is "in keeping with Tibet's historical role as a peaceful and neutral Buddhist nation and buffer state separating the continent's great powers". It would also be in keeping with King Birendra's proposal to proclaim Nepal a peace zone and with China's declared support for such a plan. However, the establishment of a peace zone in Inner Asia would require the withdrawal of Chinese troops and military installations from Tibet, which would enable India also to withdraw its troops and military installations from the Himalayan regions bordering Tibet. "This would be achieved under an international agreement which would satisfy China's legitimate security needs and build trust among the Tibetan, Indian, Chinese and other peoples of the region."<sup>13</sup>

A year later the Dalai Lama, speaking at Strasbourg (France), outlined the "framework for Sino-Tibetan negotiations" in which he made major political concessions to China. The PRC, he said, could remain responsible for Tibet's foreign policy and defence. But Tibet should have its own Foreign Affairs Bureau dealing with commerce, education, culture, religion, tourism, science, sports and other non-political activities. With regard to defence, China could have the right to maintain a restricted number of military installations in Tibet until such time as demilitarization and neutralization could be achieved through a regional peace conference and international agreement.<sup>14</sup>

As far as the Dalai Lama is concerned, his Strasbourg Statement represents a compromise solution to the controversial Tibetan question. While eschewing persistent Tibetan claims to independence,<sup>15</sup> it calls for a greater degree of domestic autonomy, which does not conflict with Chinese sovereignty or security concerns. However, he is quite explicit about the kind of political system he wishes to establish in Tibet, implying complete domestic autonomy. The Dalai Lama demands that "the whole of Tibet, known as Cholka-sum (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo) should become a self-governing democratic political entity founded on law by agreement of the people ... in association with the People's Republic of China".<sup>16</sup> He specifies "a self-governing democratic political entity" as one comprised of a popularly elected chief executive, a bicameral legislative branch, and an independent judicial system. Finally the Chinese leaders are urged to realize that "colonial rule over occupied territories is today anachronistic. A genuine union or association can only come about voluntarily, when there is satisfactory benefit to all parties concerned."<sup>17</sup>

China did not issue a written reply to, or rebuttal of, the Tibetan leader's plan until February 1990, although the Chinese Embassy at New Delhi earlier informed the Dalai Lama's representative, Tashi Wangdi, that neither the "Five Point Peace Plan nor the Strasbourg Statement" could be the basis for negotiation. The main Chinese objection was the underlying assumption by the Dalai Lama that Tibet had historically been an independent state prior to the Communist takeover in 1950. This assertion is repeated three times in the "Five Point Peace Plan" and again three times in the Strasbourg Statement. The Dalai Lama's position as reflected in both the statements is that, though Tibet was an independent nation prior to 1950, he now recognizes the reality of the Communist takeover which has made Tibet an integral part of China, and on that basis he would be willing to negotiate the future status of Tibet in association with the PRC.

But that is not enough for Beijing whose leaders want not only the implicit recognition by Tibetans of the contemporary reality – that Tibet is a part of China which has compelled the Dalai Lama to seek dialogue with China. It also wants the Dalai Lama's public acknowledgement that what the PRC did in 1950 was an historically valid and ideologically justified action and that Tibet has always been part of China. The PRC thus faces a dilemma in Tibet. For although it is widely recognized across the world that Tibet has been a part of China since 1950, many contend that Tibet was *de facto* independent prior to the Communist takeover<sup>18</sup> which makes the Communists feel guilty of an act of imperialism. This ideological accusation is unacceptable to Communists whose revolution was based more on anti-imperialism than anything else. That is why the Chinese leaders are paranoid about the slightest implication that Tibet was independent in the past. The Dalai Lama's references to Tibet's past independence are seen as "a necessary part of his continuing plan of separation".<sup>19</sup> Therefore, from the PRC's point of view if the Dalai Lama wishes to continue dialogue with China, he must completely give up the very idea of independence as something either present in past history or as a future goal. "On the question of such major importance to the future of the Chinese nation, there is no room for bargaining."<sup>20</sup>

In this regard we need to take very seriously Sha Zhou's article in the *Beijing Review* (February 1990), wherein this PRC position is made clear, because the article, according to Tibetan intelligence sources, was circulated among party and state functionaries in Tibet as an official document. All the major points of the Dalai Lama's Washington and Strasbourg statements are critiqued in that article. Contrary to the Dalai Lama's assumption of Tibet's historical independence prior to 1950, Sha Zhou asserts that Tibet was incorporated into China in the thirteenth century when the Mongolians established the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). The Dalai Lama's plea for an "associate status" for Tibet – in which the Tibetans would enjoy high degrees of domestic autonomy with China

remaining in charge of foreign affairs and defence – is also rejected, because it attempts to turn “the question of regional autonomy for minority nationalities within the territory of China into one of relations between a suzerain state and a dependency”. Such a concept, argues the PRC, “has long been cherished by imperialists because if it were left to stand, it would pose a direct challenge to Tibet’s legal status as an inalienable part of China.” Nor is the Dalai Lama’s proposal to turn Tibet into a peace zone or a buffer state accepted. “No country has ever set apart one of its own regions as a peace or neutral zone in order to separate itself from its neighbouring countries. No sovereign country can accept such a situation.” Finally the Tibetan leader’s conception of a democratic government in Tibet is simply ridiculed. “Such sentiment would be expected from a Western political figure but is an absurdity coming as it does from a representative of feudal serfdom. By such sentiments, the Dalai Lama is attempting to sing the praises of the Western capitalist system and negate socialism”.<sup>21</sup>

We have described the exchange that took place mostly in writing between the highest echelon of the Chinese leadership and the Dalai Lama. We now turn to the two exploratory talks held in Beijing between the CCP Central Committee functionaries and the Dalai Lama’s delegates in 1982 and 1984. These talks covered more concrete and specific issues which could become the agenda for future Sino–Tibetan negotiations if both parties would show serious interest in a compromised solution to the Tibetan Question.

The three-member Tibetan delegation in 1982 made three demands. Juchen Thubten Namgyal stated that the PRC had given a nine-point proposal to Taiwan<sup>22</sup> and that China should grant even more to Tibet because of Tibet’s unique historical status and special characteristics which warranted special treatment. The Chinese replied that Tibet had already been “liberated” in 1950 and was now well on its way to socialism, whereas Taiwan is yet to be liberated: “Tibetans should not turn back the wheel of history”. Having received a reply couched in Marxist-Leninist terms, the Tibetan side decided to argue in the Communists’ own terms. They referred to the Resolution of the First All-China Congress of Soviets on the Question of National Minorities (November 1931) to the effect that the Chinese Communist Party “categorically and unconditionally recognizes the right of national minorities to self-determination. This means that in districts like Mongolia, Tibet, Sinkiang, Yunan, Kweichow, and others, where the majority of the population belongs to non-Chinese nationalities, the toiling masses of these nationalities shall have [the] right to determine for themselves whether they wish to leave the Chinese Soviet Republic and create their own independent state, or whether they wish to join the Union of Soviet Republics, or form an autonomous area inside the Chinese Soviet Republic.”<sup>23</sup> Juchen Thubten Namgyal urged that the PRC should respect the Tibetan people’s right to national self-determination. The Chinese reply

was brief and frank: "We (CCP) were a child at that time but now we are grown up."

The Tibetan delegates rounded off the discussion with a realistic proposition that Beijing should consider the reincorporation of Kham and Amdo (Inner Tibet) into Tibet Autonomous Region (Outer Tibet) – that is to say the reunification of the entire Tibetan-speaking people on the Tibetan plateau into one administrative unit, whose status would subsequently be negotiated between Beijing and the Dalai Lama. The Chinese reply was that this is administratively impossible since the territory covered by Inner and Outer Tibet is so vast. However, there appeared to be no consensus among the Chinese leaders. Hu Yaobang told Gyalo Thondup in 1981 that "this is a new idea which needs to be considered". Ulan Fu also supported the Tibetan demand when he recalled that the late Zhou Enlai had assured the Tibetan delegates to the Seventeen Point Agreement in 1951 that the question of the reunification of Inner and Outer Tibet "would be separately looked into".<sup>24</sup>

On 24 October 1984 the same Tibetan delegation conveyed their views on various subjects to Jiang Ping, deputy director of the CCP Central Committee United Front Work Department in Beijing. The Tibetan delegates complained that the recently arrested Tibetan dissidents must be released so as to create the proper atmosphere for earnest negotiations. They suggested that more fact-finding Tibetan delegations should be allowed to visit Tibet in order to continue Sino-Tibetan contact. They declared that the Dalai Lama does not accept the Chinese five-point proposal and reiterated some of the basic Tibetan demands, such as the reunification of Inner and Outer Tibet, high degrees of autonomy in association with the PRC, and withdrawal of Chinese troops, thereby paving the way to making Tibet a zone of peace, etc.

On 28 October 1984 Jiang Ping conveyed to the Tibetan delegates the Chinese official views on what they considered legitimate issues: the Central Committee welcomes the Dalai Lama's return either to settle permanently or as a visit to China. It acknowledged that Sino-Tibetan dialogue over the years has promoted mutual understanding. Although there are differences of opinion on certain issues, such differences will not be an obstacle to further visits and exchange of opinion. With regard to the Dalai Lama's status upon his return, Jiang reiterated Hu Yaobang's five-point proposal made to Gyalo Thondup in 1981 and in a subsequent interview with a Japanese reporter in which Hu stated that the Dalai Lama's status as a religious figure, as a member of the nobility and as a popular historical character of Tibet will be guaranteed; and if he proves himself to be a Chinese patriot, the Dalai Lama will enjoy equal or similar status as the Panchen Lama.

Next Jiang Ping went to great lengths to elaborate and "prove" that Tibet has been an inseparable part of China since the seventh century AD and that the Tibetan exiles must accept that premise as the unalterable

condition for Sino-Tibetan dialogue. Although the Dalai Lama expresses his intention to improve relations with the central government, Tibetan refugee publications and organizations in India continue to carry out activities aimed towards Tibetan independence – activities which violate the basic Chinese precondition for dialogue. Surveying the history of Sino-Tibetan relations from the seventh century AD to 1950, Jiang concluded Chinese historical claims by quoting British India's Viceroy Hamilton and Nehru who stated that China had "sovereignty" over Tibet. China also rejected the Tibetan demand for greater degrees of autonomy and the extension of that status to Inner Tibet. No "Greater Tibetan Autonomous Region" can be established for the following reasons: (a) though the areas inhabited by the Tibetans are contiguous, they have not been unified for a long time. Thus, the local economy and culture of Inner Tibet has developed differently from Outer Tibet; (b) due to the vastness of the area, there would be no benefits for joint economic and cultural developments if Kham and Amdo were united with the Tibet Autonomous Region. Unless this demand for a Greater Tibetan Autonomous Region is dropped, "we cannot have negotiations". This stand has been conveyed by various Chinese officials to the Dalai Lama's representatives in 1981, 1982 and in 1984. Jiang Ping emphasized that, since "liberation", the Tibetans had been already granted one autonomous region, ten autonomous areas and two autonomous districts, and there would be no change to these administrative statuses in any of the Tibetan-speaking areas.<sup>25</sup>

Finally Jiang Ping indirectly reminded the Tibetan delegates that the latter should concentrate on the question of "Tibetan happiness" as the Dalai Lama indicated in 1978 and 1979. Jiang was convinced that China had poured enough money and material into Tibet to improve Tibetan living standards and bring about all-round development in the region. Between 1952 and 1983, the Central Committee gave a total financial assistance of RMB 72,300 million to Tibet, and Jiang gave a detailed breakdown of this total grant which included money given to industrial projects, transport and communication development, education and the renovation of monasteries. "Like the other nationality areas, Tibet Autonomous Region too must move under the leadership of the Party Central Committee, on the socialist path of unity and mutual help." In other words, the Tibetans must also accept an ideological condition: Tibet's present socio-political system cannot be changed. Jiang concluded with these remarks: "Since the door is wide open, you are welcome to return. But as the solution lies with you, you must change your stand and attitude; otherwise, there won't be any agreement."<sup>26</sup> The Chinese message is consistent, though expressed in different words by various spokesmen: the Dalai Lama is always welcome to negotiate with Beijing but the terms and conditions must be set by the Chinese authorities and the Tibetan representatives must accept them if they wish to continue dialogue.

Therefore, Beijing's seemingly open door policy towards the Dalai Lama while resolutely refusing to accept any Tibetan demand may be motivated by two factors: to soften or neutralize international pressure on China with regard to Sino-Tibetan dialogue and to buy time until such time as the present Dalai Lama's death.

It is in this spirit that the Chinese authorities responded to the Dalai Lama's Strasbourg Statement, as they did in the exploratory talks of 1982 and 1984. At a regular weekly news briefing on 23 June 1988 a Chinese Foreign Office spokesman was the first official to comment on the Dalai Lama's demand for an "associate" status for Tibet. The official rejected "independence, semi-independence or even independence in a disguised form" for Tibet but stopped short of a total rejection of the Dalai Lama's proposal.<sup>27</sup> However, since the Dalai Lama's plan envisages a semi-independent status for Tibet, we can say that the Chinese Foreign Office virtually rejected the Strasbourg proposal as a basis for Sino-Tibetan negotiations. This statement was repeated by Chinese ambassadors abroad including those in Washington, DC and New Delhi.

On 23 September 1988 the Chinese Embassy in India delivered a formal message to the Dalai Lama's Representative in New Delhi:

We welcome the Dalai Lama to have talks with the Central Government at any time. The talks may be held in Beijing, Hong Kong or any of our embassies or consulates abroad. If the Dalai Lama finds it inconvenient to conduct talks at these places, he may choose any place he wishes. But there is one condition, that is, no foreigners should be involved. We are ready to designate one official with certain rank to have direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama.

There are two points which need to be clarified: 1. We have never recognized "the Kashag [Tibetan cabinet] Government" which has all along indulged in the activities of the independence of Tibet. We will not receive any delegation or fact-finding group designated by the "Kashag Government." 2. The "new proposal" put forward by the Dalai Lama in Strasbourg cannot be considered as the basis for talks with the Central Government because it has not at all relinquished the concept of the "independence of Tibet." If the Dalai Lama is sincere in improving relations with the Central Government and really concerned for the happiness of the Tibetan people, for the economic development and prosperity of the Tibetan nationality, he should truly give up the "idea of independence". The Dalai Lama should place himself in the great family of the unified motherland and join the Central Government, the People's Government of Tibet and the Tibetan people in discussing the major policies concerning Tibet.<sup>28</sup>

The message succinctly defines the parameters of and identifies the agenda for discussion. It politely rejects the Strasbourg plan of a semi-independent

status for Tibet as the necessary framework of Sino-Tibetan negotiations, and indirectly specifies the issues for discussion as mostly economic policies concerning Tibet. And even this limited discussion would be held only on the condition that the Dalai Lama relinquishes once and for all the very concept of independence as something inherent in the pre-1950 Tibetan history. Finally, not only the appointed members of the Tibetan government in exile but the Dalai Lama himself preferably and, if not, his personal representative<sup>29</sup> may participate in the talks. The implication is that China recognizes the ongoing dialogue as one between the central government and the person of the Dalai Lama in exile, and not with the Dalai Lama acting in any other capacity such as head of the “Tibetan government in exile” or even as the “leader” which Deng Xiaoping’s initiative in 1978 assumed.

To imply rather strongly that the Tibetans meant official bilateral talks, “a deputy minister of the Tibetan government”, Ala Jigme Lhundup, delivered on 25 October 1988, the Tibetan reply to the Chinese message of 23 September. The “Tibetan Government in exile” suggested that they were willing to hold the first round of talks with the Chinese Government on the future status of Tibet in Geneva in January 1989. “Deputy Minister” Ala could not see the Chinese ambassador at New Delhi and so delivered the message to Councillor Zhao Xingsung. Zhao asked Ala whether the Dalai Lama would participate in the talks to which Ala replied negatively. However, the “Tibetan government had earlier announced the formation of a six-member negotiating team” of which Ala is a member. The Chinese councillor also inquired if a Dutch international lawyer was a member of the team. The Tibetan minister replied that he was “one of the three aides assisting the team and not one of the negotiators”.<sup>30</sup>

Zhao’s questions are pertinent because the Tibetan refusal to conform to them violated the procedural conditions laid down by China in its message of 23 September 1988. This was precisely what Vice-Minister of State Nationalities Affairs Commission Chen Xin stated in November 1988. He said the Dalai Lama was “insincere” towards the proposed talks in Geneva because the Lama was not going to attend the talks personally. “We have never recognized the government-in-exile headed by the Dalai Lama. That is why we will only hold talks with the Dalai Lama himself and will not hold talks with a so-called ‘government’ delegation sent by the Dalai Lama.” Chen also pointed out the inclusion of a foreigner in the Tibetan delegation “contravenes the principle adhered to by the central people’s government”.<sup>31</sup>

Four months later at the Second Session of the Seventh National People’s Congress, Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme, a former leading Tibetan aristocrat and official and now vice-chairman of the National People’s Congress Standing Committee, repeated Chen Xin’s statement. After raising the three objections, Ngapoi said “We welcome the Dalai Lama to return to China so long as he renounces advocating the independence of Tibet and



*China's Dialogue with the Dalai Lama*

**Table 18.1** Sino-Tibetan contacts, 1978–1990

<i>Date</i>	<i>Events</i>
3 December 1978	The Dalai Lama's elder brother Mr Gyalo Thondup meets Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang in Beijing.
5 August–21 December 1979	The Dalai Lama sends his first fact-finding five-member delegation to Inner and Outer Tibet headed by Mr Juchen Thubten Namgyal.
22 May–1 June 1980	Hu Yaobang visits Central Tibet.
1 May–15 August 1980	The Dalai Lama sends his second fact-finding five-member delegation to Inner and Outer Tibet headed by Mr Tenzin N. Tethong.
28 July 1981	Hu Yaobang meets Gyalo Thondup in Beijing, outlining China's five-point plan for the Dalai Lama's return.
1 June–3 October 1982	The Dalai Lama sends his third fact-finding seven-member delegation to Inner and Outer Tibet headed by his sister, Mrs Jetsun Pema.
24 April–8 June 1982	The Dalai Lama sends his three-member delegation (Mr P. T. Takla, Mr Juchen Thubten Namgyal and Mr Lodi G. Gyari) to hold the first exploratory talks with their Chinese counterparts in Beijing.
19 October–10 December 1984	The Dalai Lama sends the same team to hold the second exploratory talks with Chinese leaders in Beijing.
16 June–11 September 1985	The Dalai Lama sends his fourth fact-finding seven-member delegation to Inner Tibet headed by Mr W. G. Kundeling.
21 September 1987	The Dalai Lama outlines his "Five-Point Peace Plan for Tibet" before the Human Rights Caucus of the US Congress at Washington, DC.
15 June 1988	The Dalai Lama sets the "Framework for Sino-Tibetan Negotiations" at Strasbourg, France, giving up Tibet's independence.
23 September 1988	Chinese Embassy at New Delhi issues invitation to the Dalai Lama for "direct dialogue" anywhere.
31 March 1989	Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme specifies three obstacles to China's negotiations with the Dalai Lama.
19 February 1990	<i>Beijing Review's</i> general critique and rejection of the Dalai Lama's "Five-Point Peace Plan" and Strasbourg Statement.

contributes to the unity of the nation and the country and to the building of the motherland and new Tibet." This stand, he concluded, had been repeated time and again by Deng Xiaoping and the central government time and again, and it remains unchanged today.<sup>32</sup>

On 12 April 1989 the Bureau of His Holiness The Dalai Lama (New Delhi) issued public clarifications on the three objections raised by China. The statement said “the delay in the commencement of the negotiation has been on account of the Chinese intransigence on three points, viz.: (1) independence cannot be the basis for the negotiation; (2) the negotiating team must represent His Holiness the Dalai Lama; (3) there should be no foreign participation in the negotiation”, and it explained the Dalai Lama’s position as follows:

We have conveyed to the Chinese government on numerous occasions through their embassy in New Delhi that (1) the framework for negotiations proposed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama refer[s] specifically to the positive notion of association with the People’s Republic of China; (2) the Tibetan negotiating team has been appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and it is within His right to appoint whosoever He considers competent to represent Him; and (3) there is no foreign participation in the negotiating team. There are both Tibetan and non-Tibetan advisors to the team. It is quite natural for the team to seek advice from qualified persons regardless of their nationalities.<sup>33</sup>

It is not very clear whether the Chinese authorities have accepted the Tibetan clarifications, because the Dalai Lama cut off all contacts with China since the imposition of martial law in Lhasa on 7 March 1989; the contacts have not yet resumed. However, just before the Chinese students’ pro-democracy demonstration was crushed, Beijing sent a message to the Dalai Lama through its embassy in New Delhi. The message said although the Chinese Government disagreed with the Dalai Lama’s Strasbourg proposal as a basis for negotiation “at the same time they still insist they want dialogue”.<sup>34</sup> Being a seasoned politician, the Dalai Lama preferred to join the global waves of condemnation rather than profit from the opportunity offered by Beijing. As late as May 1990 a Chinese government official was quoted as stating: “The Central government has upheld an open attitude towards the talks with the Dalai Lama and we have never changed our eagerness to hold negotiations.” He blamed the Tibetan leader who “has closed the door on negotiations himself by cutting all these healthy contacts after the imposition of martial law in Lhasa last March”.<sup>35</sup>

It would be misleading to portray some sort of consensus among the Chinese leaders with regard to the Tibetan question; a considerable divergence of opinion is discernible on the issue reflecting perhaps a hardliner-pragmatic divide. For example, according to the former CCP general secretary Zhao Ziyang and Sha Zhou, there is no question of dialogue with the Dalai Lama; the Dalai should return to China and the condition for his return is that he should stop working for the independence of Tibet.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, for Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang the

Tibetan question must be resolved through negotiation with the Tibetan leader. Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme also hinted that the Dalai Lama's Strasbourg Statement was a more acceptable proposition than the previous one at Washington because at Strasbourg the Dalai Lama said that he was "willing to talk to the Central Government of China and allow the Central Government to take care of Tibet's diplomatic and defence issues".<sup>37</sup> It should be noted that most Chinese leaders have made no such differentiation; they have rejected both statements.

In this context we may observe the pattern of shifts in the Han decision-making process with regard to the Tibetan question over a ten-year period. Having taken the personal initiative in 1978–79, Deng Xiaoping handed over the Tibetan affairs to Hu Yaobang who remained in charge till July 1981. On 28 July, he outlined China's Dalai policy; for to the Chinese Marxist understanding the Tibetan question boils down to the role which is to be played by the Dalai Lama. This policy was then handed over to two departments in the Chinese bureaucracy – the CCP Central Committee's United Front Work Department and the Foreign Office – for implementation. The Central Committee deals with Tibetan affairs when the Dalai Lama's delegates visit Beijing, and the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi transacts business with the Dalai Lama's representative.

We then observe an increasing bureaucratization of the Tibetan question from the days when it was personally handled by the top Chinese leaders. This increasing bureaucratization coincides with the hardening of the Chinese position on the Tibetan issue, because bureaucracy operates according to rules, regulations and precedence, and is allergic to initiative. The implications of these changing patterns of the Han decision-making process is that certain periods are more favourable to the Tibetans than others because certain leaders in power are oriented towards a more pragmatic rather than an historically and ideologically rigid approach to the Tibetan question. Thus, Deng Xiaoping declared in 1979 that the Dalai Lama could discuss with the Chinese leaders "anything except the total independence of Tibet". Similarly, Hu Yaobang was receptive to the idea of reunification of Inner Tibet with Outer Tibet. Moreover, between 1979 and 1985 the pragmatic Chinese leadership permitted four fact-finding delegations from Dharamsala to visit various parts of both Inner and Outer Tibet, and all the delegates were members of the Tibetan Administration at Dharamsala. In 1982 and 1984 two exploratory talks between Chinese and Tibetan delegates were held in Beijing.

However, by June 1986, the Chinese Government began to harden their position in the Sino-Tibetan dialogue. They refused to receive the fifth fact-finding Tibetan delegation on the grounds that the delegates must travel on overseas Chinese passports.<sup>38</sup> This was not the case with six previous delegations who travelled on "Identity Certificates" issued by the Government of India. These travel documents describe the Tibetan refugee

identity as “Tibetan nationality” and their birthplace as Tibet. Such descriptions contravene the oft-repeated Chinese view that Tibet is an integral part of China and therefore Tibetan refugees are in fact Chinese citizens. But the fact that such apparent contraventions were overlooked right up to 1986 indicates that the pragmatic leaders such as Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang had the upper hand up to the middle of 1986. The Chinese Government message of 23 September 1988 to the Dalai Lama’s representative in New Delhi indicated their hardline position on the so-called delegation diplomacy: “We will not receive any delegation or fact-finding group designated by the Kashag Government.”<sup>39</sup> The Chinese bureaucracy had evidently gained control over the Tibetan issue.

Apart from the increasing bureaucratization of the Tibetan issue, which entails historical and ideological rigidity, there are three other factors which encouraged the hardline position. First, the Dalai Lama’s failure to keep his promise to visit Tibet in 1985 made even the pragmatic Chinese leaders doubt how sincere the Lama was in reconciliation. Secondly, with the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations in 1986, the Chinese state and party functionaries felt that the greatest external threat behind the Dalai Lama in exile was dropped,<sup>40</sup> and that now China faced no major external compulsion to make concessions to the Dalai Lama. Thirdly, Hu Yaobang’s fall in early 1987 accelerated the process by which the hardliners from the government, party and army gained a greater say in the Tibetan matters.

Finally, the pro-independence demonstrations in Lhasa on 27 September and 1 October 1987 might have proved to be the biggest blow to the pragmatic line in so far as they provided live ammunition, as it were, for the hardliners. Hardliners included not only some top Han officials in the party and army but also some young Tibetan cadres who had successfully made it to the top of the new hierarchy in Lhasa, and who therefore felt insecure should the Dalai Lama return to Tibet. It was mostly such native cadres who used the Lhasa demonstrations as “an iron-clad proof” that the pragmatic policy towards the Dalai Lama was wrong. As Dorje Tsering, chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Regional Government and deputy secretary of the Regional CCP Committee, argued in October 1987: “After the holding of the third plenary session of the 11th CCP Central Committee (December, 1978), I heard that on several occasions the Dalai Lama indicated that he was willing to abandon his stand on the independence of Tibet, if the Tibetans lived a better life. Now, we have come to see that this is a dishonest statement. In fact, he has become more vigorous and reckless in advocating independence for Tibet.”<sup>41</sup> Tenzin, deputy chief editor of Tibet Daily and deputy secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Regional CCP Committee, charged that in 1985 the Dalai clique dispatched agents to carry out sabotage in Tibet and the recent Lhasa incidents were “entirely instigated and engineered by the Dalai clique”.<sup>42</sup> This, Dorje Tsering argued, is “further proof that his [the Dalai Lama’s] stance of splitting the

motherland and undermining the country's national unity remains unchanged".<sup>43</sup>

However, in view of the ongoing dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama, the top Tibetan cadres had to wait for the Centre's "line" on the alleged Dalai involvement in the Lhasa disturbances. Thus, when Renmin Ribao (3 October 1987) charged that the Lhasa incidents were "instigated and plotted by the Dalai clique" and that the Lama "has openly advocated the independence of Tibet in the USA and in other nations",<sup>44</sup> the Tibetan cadres in positions of power at Lhasa immediately convened public meetings to condemn the Dalai Lama and demonstrators.<sup>45</sup> Raidi, deputy secretary of the regional party committee and chairman of the CPPCC regional committee, was the first Lhasa official to make a public statement on 6 October 1987: "Not long ago, the Dalai went to the USA to carry out splitting of the motherland activities. He instigated a small number of splittists in Tibet to stage riots in Lhasa so as to respond to his actions in foreign countries. This once again exposed his sinister intention of splitting the motherland."<sup>46</sup>

We may, therefore, infer from such statements that the top local cadres in Lhasa, both Tibetan and Han, evidently used the alleged Dalai involvement in the pro-independence demonstrations to argue against the centre's pragmatic policy of reconciliation with the Dalai Lama, obviously to defend their class interest. This further strengthened the position of hardliners (operative since mid-1986) within the central leadership in Beijing and complicated the two-line policy debate which probably continued during the period 1988-89. This largely explains the long delay in China's response to the Strasbourg Statement and the eventual emergence of a hardline policy by February 1990. This policy indicates that the hardliners both in Lhasa and Beijing had successfully used the alleged Dalai Lama's hand in the pro-independence demonstrations to prove their point that the Lama had violated Deng Xiaoping's cardinal condition for dialogue: no discussion of Tibetan independence. If the Dalai Lama was in any way behind the pro-independence demonstrations in Lhasa at all, his intention might have been not independence *per se* but to increase the pressure on China so as to make it concede to some of his political demands. But this intention might have been deliberately misinterpreted by the hardliners as a demand for independence on the part of the Dalai Lama which indirectly compelled Beijing to adopt a hardline policy on China's dialogue with the Lama.

Although I have indicated 1989 as the watershed year when the hardliners triumphed over the pragmatists, all factions of the Chinese leadership are unanimous in their view that Tibet is an inseparable part of China and that any question of Tibetan independence must be rejected outright as the basic pre-condition for dialogue. However, there is some difference among them on the same issue. The hardliners object to the very concept of independence that might have existed in pre-1950 Tibetan

history and therefore sown seeds for future Tibetan independence. The pragmatists, however, particularly Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang, might have been contented with the Dalai Lama's acceptance of the fact that since 1950 China had gained sovereignty over Tibet and that it is on that basis that he wishes to negotiate an "associate" status for Tibet. The pragmatists would realistically reason that the possibility of future Tibetan independence – as a result of the Dalai Lama's claim that Tibet, prior to the Communist takeover in 1950, was independent – is rather slim because China would continue to be the second military power in the world for a long time to come, and the possibility of external armed intervention on behalf of the Tibetans is most unlikely, given China's improving relations with India and Russia. Such realists would also realize that it is impossible to kill ideas but the realization of such ideas requires the necessary power and favourable circumstances which they simply do not see on the horizon. Hardliners operating in the state, party and the army appear to be hardcore Han nationalists who are always conscious of the fact that China had in the past often coveted Tibet, but that it took the PRC to realize that dream. Consequently it would seem to such hardliners that it is the sacred duty of the Communists to kill the very idea of Tibetan independence once and for all.

This hardline–softline debate on pre-1950 Tibetan history might continue to be problematic in Sino–Tibetan dialogue because the Dalai Lama has indicated that he refuses to rewrite Tibetan history in the way the Chinese wish him to do.<sup>47</sup> At the same time he has stated:

The Chinese have interpreted my statement wrongly. I am not demanding independence for Tibet. The Chinese say they want to develop Tibet. That is a good thing. We Tibetans will gain more if we retain our relationship with China. But the present system of autonomy is meaningless. If the present structure satisfied the majority of Tibetans, there would not have been such a widespread unrest.<sup>48</sup>

The Dalai Lama's solution as proposed in his Strasbourg Statement is to have a local democratic system in association with China which controls Tibet's foreign relations and defence needs. But this "new" arrangement entails not only granting Tibet a semi-independent status such as existed in Sino–Tibetan history between 1720 and 1911; it also calls for a change in the ideological colouring of the Tibet Autonomous Region. And this is what ideological conservatives, whose views on the subject seem to have prevailed, object to. They argue that the Dalai Lama's concept of domestic autonomy envisages a "Western capitalist political system" which negates "the superior socialist system established in Tibet".<sup>49</sup> And for these ideological conservatives the recent systemic changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have had an adverse impact on China with regard to Tibet

for such changes have made the Chinese leaders fear the worst in Tibet unless they are firm on the issue.

In its essential features, the Dalai Lama's concept of "associate" status resembles Beijing's "one country two systems" formula designed for Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. Both concepts surrender sovereignty to the PRC but retain a large measure of domestic autonomy including the right to establish or continue Western capitalist democracy. In fact the Tibetan delegates to the 1982 exploratory talk demanded "the one country two systems" formula as promised to Taiwan, but the Chinese side rejected this on the grounds that the case of Tibet was different – that China's relations with Tibet were determined by the Seventeen Point Agreement signed between Beijing and Lhasa in 1951.<sup>50</sup> But the Tibetans asserted that they were compelled to repudiate the agreement because it was signed "under duress" and because the Chinese authorities in Tibet betrayed "every clause of the 'agreement'".<sup>51</sup>

As we have seen, the Dalai Lama's representatives to China have been quite flexible on a number of issues and perhaps understandably so because they lack bargaining power; but they have been most persistent on the question of the reunification of Inner and Outer Tibet. First raised by Gyalo Thondup to Hu Yaobang in 1981, it was repeated by the Tibetan delegates both in the 1982 and 1984 talks in Beijing. The Dalai Lama made the same demand in his Strasbourg and Washington Statements and the Tibetans are likely to continue to press the issue, because common language, religion, culture and race bind the people in Inner and Outer Tibet as one identifiable ethnic group. Moreover, the Dharamsala power elites, including the Dalai Lama, are from Kham and Amdo who would try their best to ensure that whatever benefits they can get from China also extend to their homeland.

The Chinese authorities have considered certain issues – such as the Tibetan demands for more domestic autonomy and reunification – as being within the scope of further discussion, even though initially they have rejected such demands. Nevertheless, they have refused to even touch certain other issues such as independence, national self-determination, buffer state, peace zone, etc., viewing the raising of such issues as clear violations of Deng Xiaoping's cardinal precondition for dialogue. They have also refused to reply to the Dalai Lama's five-point demands such as the cessation of the Han population transfer to Tibet and nuclear activities on the Tibetan plateau, respect for human rights and democratic freedom, etc.

While never deviating from the policy guidelines laid down by Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang, various Chinese departments in Beijing and their embassies in New Delhi and Hong Kong pursued a vigorous personalized diplomacy directed towards those politically close to the Dalai Lama, namely his brothers and his representative in New Delhi, Tashi Wangdi. All of the Dalai's four brothers had been specially invited to visit

China, and when their mother was ill in 1979–80, Beijing sent a Tibetan doctor to Dharamsala. Similarly after the Dalai Lama appointed Tashi Wangdi as head of the Tibetan negotiating team to the Geneva talks which never took place, the Chinese embassy in New Delhi entertained Mr Wangdi with lavish parties. Such diplomatic tactics were designed to win over those occupying strategic positions within the Tibetan political structure in exile so that they might influence the Dalai Lama to accept the Chinese terms and conditions for his return. The Tibetan participants confirmed that the Chinese diplomats and officials made no new promises through these personal contacts in Hong Kong or New Delhi but mainly tried to explain and clarify the officially stated policy points and to persuade the Tibetan contacts to accept the Chinese terms and conditions.<sup>52</sup>

China has been paying particular attention to the Tibetan “strong man” Gyalo Thondup who, some say, makes political decisions without even consulting the Dalai Lama. As advised by the CIA after the Sino–American detente which caused the American disengagement from the Tibetan insurgency, Thondup has been residing in Hong Kong since the early 1970s, waiting for a chance to talk with Chinese leaders. It is interesting to note that the first contact between Thondup and the Chinese Communist agents in Hong Kong was facilitated by an American, John Dolffin, in 1978. Since then, Thondup has been invited to China seven or eight times, the last visit being in 1989 to represent the Dalai Lama at a memorial service for the departed Panchen Lama.

With American blessings, Thondup has got along well with the Chinese leaders who find him an ideal go-between. In fact Beijing had hinted that the Dalai Lama should appoint Thondup as his “personal” representative to negotiate with the Chinese. Dharamsala rejected this as yet further evidence of the Chinese attempt to “localize” and “personalize” Sino–Tibetan dialogue. Another reason for the Chinese preference may be this: Gyalo Thondup has shown more flexibility than the Dalai Lama. Thondup’s only major demand is the reunification of Outer and Inner Tibet; otherwise he agrees to and accepts the basic Chinese terms and conditions for the Dalai Lama’s return.

The difference created a quiet tension, if not between the Dalai Lama and his own brother, who seemed to be getting out of control, but certainly between Thondup and the Kashag who felt that the “strongman” was usurping even the Dalai Lama’s prerogatives. This tension reached crisis point when Gyalo Thondup was quoted by the Chinese during the September 1987 pro-independence demonstrations to the effect that he disagreed with the Tibetan idea of independence, opposed Tibetan secessionism and disapproved of the Lhasa riots.<sup>53</sup> Thondup was then in Beijing on his way to a two-week personal visit to Tibet when the Lhasa demonstrations erupted. In March 1988 the Kashag took Thondup to task in a white book: Thondup must clarify to the Chinese authorities that what



he stated in Beijing in September 1987 was his personal view and that henceforth he may carry messages between Beijing and the Dalai Lama but would have neither the right nor the power to represent Dharamsala and make any political decision.<sup>54</sup> China continues to route its messages through Gyalo Thondup because Beijing's strategy is to deny any official or legal character to their dialogue with the Dalai Lama and so reduce it to the personal affairs of the pontiff and his family, whereas Dharamsala has attempted to internationalize and legalize the talks.

There is another informal dimension to the Sino-Tibetan dialogue. Between 1979 and 1988 the Dalai and Panchen Lamas exchanged four letters through the Tibetan fact-finding delegations, and held two telephone conversations. The Panchen Lama's main points were that he would continue to struggle for the Tibetan people's rights within obvious "limitations",<sup>55</sup> that the Dalai Lama should endeavour to preserve Tibetan unity and culture in exile; and that public demonstrations and anti-Chinese criticisms tend to strengthen the hardliners' position inside the Chinese leadership and therefore were indirectly harmful to the Tibetan cause. The Panchen Lama's last contact with the Tibetan exiles was at Tokyo Airport in late 1988 while en route to Latin America. There he confided in the Dalai Lama's representative in Japan, Perma Gyalpo, that he (the Panchen Lama) supported the Dalai Lama's Strasbourg Statement and the latter should not make any more concessions to China.

Thus, Sino-Tibetan dialogue still appears to be a continuing process but after more than ten years of contact and dialogue, it has definitely reached the "prenegotiation stage"<sup>56</sup> – which is negotiation about negotiation. Through discussion, both verbal and written, both sides have indicated their respective parameters of negotiation, identified major issues for the agenda as well as having revealed their differences over issues which have to be minimized if a mutually acceptable final settlement is to be reached in due course. In so doing the prenegotiation stage might have affected the outcome of Sino-Tibetan negotiations. By common consensus,<sup>57</sup> the Dalai Lama has shown a willingness to compromise and make concessions to China vital to China's security interest and sovereignty but Beijing has not responded in a similar manner. It is true that China has always demonstrated her eagerness to hold talks with the Dalai Lama and her main motive is to persuade the Lama to return to the "great motherland", but at the same time Beijing is most insistent that the basic terms and conditions for such talks must be Chinese-dictated ones, not compromised solutions. What, therefore, Sino-Tibetan dialogue suggests is that negotiation requires not only a bilateral willingness to compromise on conflicting interests but it assumes a near symmetry of two negotiating powers to enforce compromised solutions to conflicting interests. Otherwise the stronger party would dictate the terms and conditions which the weaker party must accept if it is desperate for the continuation of dialogue. In such

cases, including the Tibetan one, unequal negotiations from the point of view of the weaker party is more of an exercise in creating media events in order to keep the issue alive.

It may be argued that the Dalai Lama's lack of, if not the absence of, power to negotiate on equal terms with the Chinese is compensated by popular Western pressure on China. This is doubtful, however, because the increase in Western moral pressure on China since the mid-1980s coincided with the hardening Chinese position on the Tibetan question as an emotional reaction.<sup>58</sup> This is not to suggest that popular Western moral pressure must cease but the level of support has to be elevated to political and diplomatic actions in order to produce adequate impact on the Chinese policy towards the Tibetan question.

We have covered only the prenegotiation stage of the Sino-Tibetan dialogue aimed at the resumption of fair, if not equal, negotiations. At least one of the three conditions must be present: first, not only the USA but also Russia, which has historically shown a strategic interest in Inner Asia, has to apply diplomatic pressure on China, because in the ultimate analysis it is the great powers that can compel Beijing to compromise with the Dalai Lama. Secondly, so far Tibetan resistance to Han domination has been largely confined to Lhasa; if this factor is to augment the Dalai Lama's bargaining power *vis-à-vis* China, there has to be widespread popular resistance inside Tibet. Thirdly, Chinese leadership might grant higher degrees of autonomy to Tibet if the pro-democracy movement in China succeeds. The assumption is that a genuinely democratic Han population would value not only their own freedom and democratic rights but might also be more sensitive to Tibet's unique identity and history of self-rule, even if not recognizing the Tibetan people's right to self-determination.

Since 1994 the Dalai Lama has changed his style of negotiation with Beijing. For the past five years he has been working through back channels such as unarmed Chinese businessmen and Western politicians friendly to both sides for a "genuine autonomy" in Tibet.<sup>59</sup> What gave momentum to this quiet negotiating process was President Clinton's China visit in the summer of 1998 during which he publically raised the Tibet issue before a China-wide television audience. President Jiang Zemin was compelled to respond in public. He said he would consider resuming formal talks if the Dalai Lama first proclaimed that Tibet is an inalienable part of China, that Taiwan is a province of China and that he will end all his pro-independence activities, both in word and deed.<sup>60</sup>

In early November 1998 the Dalai Lama travelled to the United States and was scheduled on 10 November to make a major statement in response to President Jiang's preconditions. But an angry Chinese media preempted the Dalai Lama's initiative in no uncertain terms. The editorial declared that China has always opposed foreign interference in China's internal affairs. China declared that the Dalai Lama "has presented nothing new

this time” and that his remarks were designed to whip up international public opinion, and that this proves that the Dalai Lama was insincere about his wanting to hold talks with China.<sup>61</sup> On the part of the Dalai Lama, it appears that he sought Chinese prior approval of or agreement on the substance of his statement that he wanted to read in public on 10 November 1998. He told the press that he was willing to make commitments sought by China as a precondition of renewing official negotiations over Tibet, but had postponed doing so because Beijing had refused, through informal channels, to coordinate a mutually acceptable statement.<sup>62</sup>

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has accepted the fact that Tibet is not only part of China but also Chinese sovereignty over Tibet since 1988 and for the last fourteen years he has been chanting the political mantra of “I do not seek independence” more often than *om mani padme-hum*, prelude to any statement on Tibet or China. Yet each time the Chinese Communists reject his offer and assurance, accusing him and his associates of “splittist tactics” and of conspiring “Tibetan independence”. This puzzling behaviour is understood neither by the Dalai Lama nor by his Western supporters. The Chinese Communist behaviour, I suggest, is rooted in the ruthless logic of Han nationalism, whose mode of reasoning as reflected in their long distance dialogue is as follows:

Chinese Communists: Do you accept that Tibet is an integral part of China?

The Dalai Lama: Yes, I do.

Chinese Communists: Then, it is an entirely internal or domestic Chinese affair which brooks no external interference.

The Dalai Lama: Since the Americans are friendly to the Chinese and are sympathetic to the Tibetans, I have requested President Clinton to facilitate the Sino-Tibetan dialogue.

Chinese Communists: This shows your lack of trust and faith in us the Chinese. It also constitutes a gross foreign interference in China's domestic affairs.

The Dalai Lama: Then what do I do? I am helpless.

Chinese Communists: (quietly) You must submit yourself to us completely and totally without any kind of non-Chinese mediation. Then we can begin the negotiation.

This ruthless and relentless logic of Han nationalism, devoid of any Marxist ideals or Confucian moderation, clashes with the Dalai Lama's reasonable compromise politics, which necessitates, since he has eschewed violence,

the peaceful mobilization of international opinion and building Western public pressure on China. But the paranoid Communists interpret this as “splittist activity”. I feel the Dalai Lama sincerely believes that, while accepting Deng Xiaoping’s precondition, that Tibet is part of China, the Tibetans still have a strong and reasonable case to negotiate for a sufficient domestic space within which they can preserve their cultural identity and protect their economic interests, all this within the territorial integrity of China. The founding fathers of the PRC such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping recognized and accepted this separate Tibetan identity within the boundaries of the PRC, and signed the Seventeen Point Agreement in 1951 with the “Local Government of Tibet”. They have signed no such agreements with any other nationalities in China.

Now the hard core Han nationalist elite who monopolize the Han state power structure today in the name of Marxism-Leninism but are unaffected by either Marxist ideals or Confucian values, dogmatically and nationalistically reason that to concede and yield to the Dalai Lama’s limited demand is to sow the seeds of “Tibetan independence” in future. They feel it is their historic duty to kill the very idea of Tibetan separateness from China once and for all. Being hard core Han nationalists and pure realists, they do not see this obvious and well-known fact: China is going to be the second largest military and economic power in the world in the twenty-first century. In such a scenario, what chances are there for the poor and minuscule Tibetan population in comparison with the 93 per cent Han population? Neither the USA nor India would risk their good relations with China by getting involved in any Tibetan venture, as their present and past histories demonstrate. But both, because of their sympathy for the helpless Tibetan people, think the Dalai Lama should negotiate with Beijing for self-rule within the Chinese territorial framework. Toleration for the functioning of such non-Communist systems of self-administration within Communist China is already evident in Hong Kong and Macao, and Taiwan might feel more confident to accept it if Tibet, too, is guaranteed such “one country, two systems models” in an appropriate technical sense.

After meeting with President Clinton on 11 November 1998, the Dalai Lama told reporters that he was “willing to make commitments sought by China as a condition of renewing official negotiations over his Himalayan homeland”.<sup>63</sup> This meeting was fiercely condemned by Beijing as gross American interference in China’s internal affairs, overshadowing the Dalai Lama’s willingness to make further concessions as demanded by Jiang Zemin in June 1998. In other words, the Dalai Lama was willing to declare in international public almost all the political preconditions demanded by the PRC. His offer was rejected because he went through the “wrong” procedure which “seriously hurts the (nationalistic) feelings of the (Han) Chinese people”.<sup>64</sup>

This puts the Dalai Lama in a catch-22 situation. He accepts Tibet as being part of China but within this accepted framework, he wants to negotiate for “genuine autonomy”<sup>65</sup> for the Tibetan people. To negotiate with Communist China, he obviously lacks any bargaining power and in order to augment it, he seeks American moral support and uses the USA's good offices to facilitate a Sino-Tibetan dialogue. But all this American mediation with fair intentions is misconstrued as meddling in Chinese “internal affairs” and therefore questioning Chinese sovereignty over Tibet.

The Dalai Lama is in a dilemma. His personal experience of living under local Communist warlords in Tibet had shattered his young beliefs in Marxist ideals such as reinforced by his meetings with Mao Zedong.<sup>66</sup> He cannot trust the current pure Han nationalist elite devoid of either Marxist ideals or Confucian values. Moreover, since the two negotiating parties are so unequal in terms of power, the Dalai Lama automatically feels weak and insecure – he instinctively feels the need for a powerful middleman to lend him moral support and to ensure what Han nationalists promise him and his people are carried out by China. But Han nationalists do not understand the Tibetan position. They think the Dalai Lama's mobilization of Western public opinion and using American good offices as external interference in China's internal affairs. All these compromise politics, Beijing feels, shows a lack of trust and faith in Communist China on the part of the Dalai Lama. Thus, the Communist-turned-Han nationalist elite's stand on the Dalai Lama's quest for fair negotiation as it was in late November 1998 is fundamentalist to the core – complete and total submission before the terrifying logic, if not truth, of Han nationalism. Under such conditions, a prudent Dalai Lama cannot return to China until the Chinese people regain their Confucian sanity and moderation. Nor can he resume his negotiation with Beijing until a democratic leadership, not a neo-fascist one, emerges there. However, there still remain some long-standing problems in or obstacles to future negotiation. One of these would be the size or area of Tibet, ethnic Tibet or political Tibet.

In 1994, the Dalai Lama's exiled government published a white paper called “Dharamsala and Beijing: Initiatives and Correspondence, 1981–1993.” This white paper reveals, among other things, a persisting problem in the Sino-Tibetan negotiations: conflicting definitions of Tibet. The Dalai Lama, in his “Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet” addressed to the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus (21 September 1987) proposes (and this is the first of the five points) that “the whole of Tibet, including the eastern provinces of Kham and Amdo, be transformed into a zone of ‘ahimsa’, a Hindi term used to mean a state of peace and non-violence”.<sup>67</sup> The Kashag in their reply to the Memorandum from Yang Minfu, Head of United Front Work Department of the CCP Central Committee (17 October 1987), writes “We asked you to consider the idea of confederation, with all the three provinces of Tibet united in a self-governing entity.”<sup>68</sup> A year later

in his Strasbourg proposal address to the members of the European Parliament (France: 15 June 1988) the Dalai Lama proposed "The whole of Tibet known as Cholka-Sum (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo) should become a self-governing domestic political entity founded on law by agreement of the people for the common good and the protection of themselves and their environment, in association with the People's Republic of China."<sup>69</sup> His Holiness in his last public statement (New Delhi: 4 September 1993) included in this white paper concluded with this statement: "I have always emphasized that any negotiations must include the whole of Tibet, not just the area which China call the "Tibet Autonomous Region".<sup>70</sup>

This division of Tibet into Inner and Outer Tibet has some colonial<sup>71</sup> history behind it. It is controversial not only between China and Tibet but also among the Tibetans themselves. To summarize, Amdo was incorporated into Chinghai in the nineteenth century, and the greater part of Kham into Sikang before the Communists came to power. The Communists, of course, accepted the *fait accompli* of previous Chinese regimes' erosion of Eastern Tibet territory, and the 1951 Agreement covered only U-Tsang and what remained of Kham, Chamdo. In the early 1950s the Communists carried out further reorganization of Kham and Amdo, fragmenting and then incorporating them into neighbouring four Chinese provinces: Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan and Sichuan.

Because the terms and conditions of the Seventeen Point Agreement did not apply to Kham and Amdo, the Khampas revolted against the Communists in 1956 and 1959. (Though different in dialect and dress, the Khampas and Amdowas shared with the rest of the Tibetans basic commonalities such as ethnicity, religion, history and social costumes.) This revolt, generated Tibetan national consciousness based on the above-mentioned commonalities centred around a pan-Tibetan identity symbolized by the Dalai Lama. This nationalistic conception of Tibet includes Kham and Amdo, besides U-Tsang, which the Tibetans call "Cholka-Sum". The exiled Tibetan government at Dharamsala (India) is premised and so structured upon the conception of "Cholka-Sum" centred around the person and institution of the Dalai Lama, who has brought about, in exile, considerable cultural and political unification of Tibetans from various parts of the Tibetan Plateau. In fact, Amdowas and Khampas constitute the core refugee political elite who, out of their tribal attachment, do everything they can to promote the notion of "Cholka-Sum" including Kham and Amdo as well. However, the sad fact is that most of the Chinese nuclear facilities are located in Amdo and Kham<sup>72</sup> which, no matter what Chinese regime comes to power in Beijing, are most unlikely to be relocated. The Communist leadership seems divided on this issue. Zhou Enlai and Hu Yaobang had neither accepted the idea nor rejected it outright. They merely postponed it for further discussion in future as we might recall. But the Chinese bureaucrats, who are pure Han nationalists, seem to be against this

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idea of unification of Tibetan-speaking people into one administrative unit. The pragmatic hints that I could sense from Chinese academics up to now include two options: (a) make Kham, Amdo and U-Tsang into one Chinese province or (b) give up Amdo and Kham – negotiate on U-Tsang (including Chamdo) for autonomous status. Much, however, would depend on future democratic changes in China, especially on the possible emergence of a responsive democratic leadership in Beijing.<sup>73</sup>

## Chapter 19

# Tibet's Possible Future Structures: The Dalai's and the Dissidents' Visions of Federation

Ever since its takeover of Tibet in 1950, the PRC has faced persistent opposition to its rule there, from both the Tibetan people and the international community. Tibetan resistance erupts into open rebellions whenever the PRC relaxes its complex system of domination – as it did, for example, in the late 1950s and in the late 1980s. Otherwise, the tight, multi-layered Chinese security system, structural violence, and the denial of social space rule out any protracted large-scale ethnic conflict in Tibet.

The absence of any large-scale ethnic conflict since 1959 might not signify the Tibetan people's acceptance of Chinese rule or lack of will on the part of the Tibetans to resist it. The pattern of Tibetan revolts indicates that each revolt was preceded by a lenient policy, thereby demonstrating that the Tibetan people<sup>1</sup> are not quite reconciled to Chinese rule and that they revolt whenever they find the necessary social space. During the period 1987–92 there were as many as 140 pro-independence demonstrations.<sup>2</sup>

The Chinese response to such opposition has so far been a combination of state coercion and economic reform. In the light of the long and complicated history of Sino–Tibetan relations, it is clear that such a response cannot be a long-term solution for the persistent conflict in Tibet. Besides economic reform, there is the need for a political restructuring that would redefine centre–periphery power relations in China.

Our attempt here, then, is to analyse the causes and characteristics of ethnic conflict in Tibet as it has precipitated a serious crisis of legitimacy for Chinese rule. We shall also discuss some possible structures and strategies for conflict transformation in Inner Asia in the light of the historical pattern of the Sino–Tibetan relationship, the Tibetan people's aspiration for sovereignty over their civil society and cultural identity, and the legitimate security concerns of the regional powers in Northeast and South Asia.



The Sino-Tibetan conflict and tensions are an ongoing socio-political conflict between the Han State, which has been imposed upon the Tibetan civil society since 1959, and the expanding, sometimes, exploding, Tibetan ethnicity, which is an inevitable reaction to Han hegemony. One of the fundamental causes of the conflict is the mono-ethnic character of the Han State and its serious lack of legitimacy in Tibet. This lack of legitimacy cannot easily be met without restructuring the current myth about the PRC being a unitary state. Our discourse, therefore, ultimately involves the “state either as a party to conflict or as the object of people’s demands and perceptions”.<sup>3</sup>

The Tibetans as a socio-cultural group constitute a complex phenomenon. It is difficult to find a term that is value-neutral and hence appropriate to designate their status within a social scientific discourse. Numerically they are a minority in a sea of one billion Chinese. According to the Chinese census of 1982 the total Tibetan population in the PRC was 3,885,500.<sup>4</sup> The Dalai Lama claims that it was six million.<sup>5</sup> The truth may lie somewhere between the two extremes; it may be about 4.5 million.<sup>6</sup>

However, Tibetan demographic marginality is compensated for by high literacy levels and the quality of the culture and civilization of the people, which has attracted world-wide attention both from scholars and from the general public. Professor R. A. Stein of the College de France holds that Tibetan civilization is comparable to other “great civilizations of Europe and the East”.<sup>7</sup> Professor Hajime Nakamura of the University of Tokyo finds “an element of universality” in Tibetan religious culture, which, he says, has spread to Bhutan, China, Ladakh, Manchuria, Mongolia, Nepal, Russia and Sikkim since late medieval times.<sup>8</sup> The late Professor Giuseppe Tucci of the University of Rome, the doyen of Tibetology and Buddhology in his time, who spent all his life in the pursuit of Tibetan studies, concluded that Tibet represented a unique case of a full blown Mahayana Tantric Buddhist cultural category that was hard to find in other parts of Asia.<sup>9</sup>

The characterization of Tibet by Tibetologists not merely as an ethnic group but essentially as a distinct cultural and civilizational category might imply that Tibet had been an ancient nation in the pre-modern world like other civilizational units. However, we shall use current terms such as “ethnic group” as defined by Fredrik Barth (1969)<sup>10</sup> and “people” as defined by UNESCO (1990),<sup>11</sup> both of which seem to fit the facts.

The Tibetan-speaking people who inhabit the Tibetan plateau basically constitute a common social system: they share the same myths about racial origins. They have common historical memories, a common religion, similar social structures and political institutions, a common language unified by a single writing system, and a common economic life and they occupy a geographically and culturally well-defined, compact territory. Differences among the four regions (Amdo, Kham, U and Tsang) are relatively superficial (i.e. in dialect and dress) in comparison with the fundamental commonalities that obtain.

Such a socio-cultural portrait of the Tibetan population suggests that they are a distinct ethnos, which is coterminous with a nation or at least a nationality. As Connor Walker writes: “self-differentiating ethnic groups are in fact nations”, and it “should not be confused with its current usage on the domestic American scene. Ethnic group is derived from ‘ethnos’, the Greek word for nation in the sense of a distinctive ethnic group.”<sup>12</sup>

Till the explosion of ethnic literature from the mid-1960s onwards the terms “nationality”, “national grouping”, and “minority” had been used, roughly, with reference to the same phenomenon that the term “ethnicity” described.<sup>13</sup> It is essentially in this sense that we use the term “ethnic group” in our context. An ethnic group may have historically and sociologically attained the status of a nationality, but usually not that of a nation. The distinction between the two is simple. A nationality may have all the cultural, social, and historical prerequisites of a nation but not usually a state which the latter controls. This is clearly illustrated by the current Tibetan status within the PRC.

The Tibetans are, therefore, a minority demographically, though a large and significant one culturally – a minority which has now gained in political significance as well. This is not to de-emphasize the vigorous activity and role of the Dalai Lama in transnational relations, advocating the Tibetan cause and seeking support for it. Our aim is only to underline the culture and the civilization that the Dalai Lama symbolizes and which evokes so much interest in and support for the Tibetan cause, especially in the West. The support that the Tibetan cause receives in the West compels the PRC to take the Tibetan question seriously. Moreover, owing to its historical legacy and its geo-strategic location, Tibet<sup>14</sup> continues to loom large in the geopolitics of Central, Northeast and South Asia; so much so that it raises the uncomfortable but pertinent question of ensuring a buffer state in Inner Asia to reduce interstate tensions and keep regional peace. What is true of Tibet is not true, at least not in the same degree, of the other minorities in the PRC.

Beijing lists as many as 55 minority nationalities.<sup>15</sup> Apparently it does so more to reduce the relative significance of the more organized and troublesome among the minorities than to do justice to every minority nationality in the PRC. Through its policy of transfer of population it has offered the “final solution” to most of the historically significant minorities which radically differed from the Han people. Today only two or three million Manchurians are left in Manchuria; and these are completely overwhelmed by the 75 million Han settlers there. Even at the turn of the twentieth century, Han settlers numbered 8.5 million. The number of Mongols was just 2.5 million in Inner Mongolia. In Xinjiang the Han population has grown from 200,000 in 1949 to 7 million today, which is more than half of the total Turkic population of 13 million.<sup>16</sup>

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It is now primarily the Tibetans and the Uighurs who constitute the most significant minority nationalities in the PRC in terms of conflict potential. Of the two, the Tibetans have more persistently resorted to mobilization and offered organized opposition. It is perhaps in this sense that the *World Dictionary of Minorities* (1990)<sup>17</sup> lists the Tibetans as the only minority in the PRC.

The aetiology of the Han–Tibetan ethnic conflict (sometimes active, sometimes dormant, but never extinguished during the last 50 years) is complex and vicious. Whatever the validity of China’s historical or legal claims over Tibet, the fact is that any Chinese presence in Tibet before 1950 was confined to Lhasa and the border areas in Kham and Amdo. Not many ever saw people of Han extraction in Tibet. Ordinary Tibetans, therefore, perceive the Han influx into Tibet since 1950, especially since 1959, as an outright invasion and occupation of their territory. The folk-level Tibetan sense of territoriality (characterized by the attachment of the peasant to his field and that of the nomad to his pasture land) was outraged by the coming in of the Han occupation army and by the settlers sent in – ostensibly to carry out the task of “liberation” and to promote “progress”. The Maoist project on Tibet would have been far less problematic if Tibetan culture had been Confucian or if there had been Han settlements in Tibet dating from much earlier times or if there had been a “revolutionary situation” in Tibet. None of these conditions obtained in Tibet until 1950 (or even 1959). The fact is that the Chinese claims were in the minds of the mandarins but never in the minds of the Tibetan masses before 1950.

The response of the traditional ruling class (such as lamas, aristocrats, merchants, etc.) was more complex and even confusing. At first the Lhasa Government tried to resist the Communist takeover in 1950. This is evident from the attempt made by Tibetan troops to block the march of 40,000 men of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) at the Sino–Tibetan border in Eastern Tibet (Kham). When, however, these troops found that it was impossible for them to halt the Chinese in the absence of any helpful external intervention, the political elite were compelled to work out a compromise with the representatives of the PLA. Hence what is known as the Seventeen Point Agreement.

However, the high Lamas and the political elite found it difficult to accept the fact of the Communist takeover in the face of growing popular resistance; especially in Kham. Several of them, therefore, openly associated themselves with inspired, or even organized resistance movements such as the People’s Conference in 1952, the Khampa revolts in the mid-1950s, and the Lhasa uprising in 1959. Frequent eruptions of popular resistance generated a serious legitimacy crisis for a regime that had claimed a popular mandate as the basis of its occupation of Tibet. This is a socio-political fact; the Chinese have not been able to undo it even after 50 years of systematic, forcible social engineering.

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To be sure a few early Amdo and Khampa “modernists” took Maoist ideological pretensions about the “liberation of Tibetan serfs” more seriously than any other segment of the Tibetan population. However, after a few years of “liberation” even the most pro-Communist elements in Tibetan society were disillusioned with those pretensions;<sup>18</sup> for they discovered that the Maoist ideology as practised even during the 1950s was a camouflage meant to serve as a political justification for Han expansionism and Han hegemony in minority areas.

Outspoken critics among them were imprisoned in the late 1950s for their courageous stand against Han hegemony and for self-rule in minority areas although they had accepted some basic Marxist premises. They can now be looked upon as the progenitors of an acute ideological dilemma that the Maoist regime in Tibet has faced and from which it cannot escape unless it grants the Tibetan people genuine autonomy as guaranteed by their Constitution.

What about the post-1959 “new generation of Tibetan cadres” in whom the Chinese leaders repose so much hope? Most of them were born and brought up under the Communist system and are expected to serve as an intermediate class between the Han State and the Tibetan masses. Such a class is useful and even necessary in any colonial administration. Many of them have been co-opted into the lower echelons of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the State bureaucracy as minor functionaries and, as such, serve a dual function. They are projected as representatives of the Tibetan nationality in the Chinese Government. Far more importantly, they act as the vital transmission belt conveying political orders and ideological messages from the Han overlords to the Tibetan masses. And if there is any class of Tibetans who are more or less reconciled to the brute fact of Chinese rule in Tibet, it may well be this “new generation of Tibetan cadres”. Of course, they are a privileged minority in comparison with the large number of semi-educated youth alienated from Chinese rule. It was the alienated generation of youth along with the revived monastic communities who were largely responsible for the pro-independence demonstrations held in Lhasa and other towns recently (1987–92).

Whether they are the “new generation of Tibetan cadres” co-opted into the Chinese administration system or semi-educated youth alienated from Chinese rule, on the whole, the post-1959 generation cannot help but observe at first hand and from close quarters the undeniable fact of Han hegemony in Tibet. Their experience of political marginality as a direct consequence of progressive “Hanization” of the State power structure both in Beijing and in Lhasa enables them to move beyond the carefully designed facades of “People’s Democracy”, “National People’s Congress”, “Regional Autonomy”, etc. Even to the early Tibetan Communist sympathizers, what initially appeared as a Marxist mission in Tibet has clearly degenerated into Han hegemony in every sphere of Tibetan public life. We shall presently

demonstrate how almost all the top posts with crucial decision-making power in the Army and the Party and the bureaucracy in Tibet are monopolized by Han personnel. The Tibetans are almost completely marginalized from the State power structure, except in certain subordinate and cosmetic positions.

The locus of power in Communist China resides in the Party and the State as it did in the now-defunct Leninist systems. Of course the critical components of the Maoist State power structure consist of the Party, the State, and the Army. It is in these that the Maoist Han elite have concentrated political power, marginalizing the non-Han social groups in the PRC, as Malcolm Lamb's *Directory* (1968–78) reveals.<sup>19</sup> There is no Tibetan representative in the following high offices: the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee, the Military Affairs Commission of the Central Committee, the United Front Work Department, the State Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defence, the Foreign Affairs Bureau, the Ministry of Public Security, the State Planning Commission, the PLA General Staff, General Logistics, the General Political Department, the Air Force, the Army, and the Navy. However, one or two Tibetans are to be found in the following less powerful offices: Rigzin Wangyal and Tien Pao (Sangye Yeshe) in the CCP Central Committee; Ngapo Ngawang Jigme and Pasang M. in the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress; and Ngapo Ngawang Jigme in the National Defence Council. There is no Tibetan on the editorial staff of the *People's Daily* or of the *Red Flag*.<sup>20</sup>

The appendix in the Barnett and Akiner volume furnishes details of the Han power structure in Tibet from 1950 to 1992. During this period a Yi national who was sacked for "Right deviationism" in 1988 and seven Han leaders yielded supreme political power in Tibet. Most of them held top political posts both in the Party and in the Army. It is in this sense that we can characterize the Chinese domination of Tibet as a quasi-military dictatorship exclusively exercised by the Han elite. While the Han leaders monopolize the top decision-making power through the Han-dominated Tibet Work Committee of the CCP and the Tibet Military Region/District as the invisible levers of power in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), there is a TAR local Government as an administrative agency that implements the decisions of the Party and the Army. The TAR local Government has also other functions – for instance, as a legitimation mechanism to inculcate propagandistic values inside and outside Tibet. It is for these reasons that the Chinese usually appointed a high ranking or eminent Tibetan as the head of the TAR local Government such as the Dalai Lama (1951–59), the Panchen Lama (1959–64), and Ngapo Ngawang Jigme (1965–67). Since the 1980s, however, Beijing has tended to appoint people belonging to their "new generation of Tibetan cadres" such as Dorje Tseten (1983–85), Dorje Tsering (1985–90) and Gyaltzen Norbu (1990–).<sup>21</sup>

While the TAR has a local government, though it operates only as a puppet government, Amdo (Qinghai) and Kham (Xikang), which did not fall within the purview of what is called the Seventeen Point Agreement, are without even a local government. They are under complete Han domination. During the period 1949–85 only Han governors ruled Amdo; most of them held the concurrent posts of Party Secretary as well. All the top posts in the Party, the Army and the government are monopolized by the Han elite. There is not a single Tibetan representative in the Han power structure which dominates Tibetan areas. In terms of the Han monopoly of power Amdo and Kham are worse than the TAR.<sup>22</sup>

The author had written elsewhere that the ethnicization of the state power structure by the dominant or majority ethnic group in multi-ethnic societies is fairly widespread.<sup>23</sup> However, further research and reflection indicates that this is neither uniformly nor universally so. The ethnicization of the state tends to be more in totalitarian or monolithic systems; it is less so in democratic governments.<sup>24</sup> The reasons therefore are clear, as the Chinese case illustrates.

In the PRC the monopolization of state power by the dominant, majority Han group is facilitated and reinforced by a number of objective processes. The Chinese Revolution is essentially a Han affair, so the CCP, which dominates both the State and society indirectly, tends to derive its legitimacy, both of which were primarily Han phenomena. Non-Han minority groups such as the Tibetans are treated as the epitome of backwardness and reaction in need of Han help. It was this Han-man's burden which impels and justifies (in the eyes of Han-men) the Han domination of non-Han social groups in China.

An equally important factor in accelerating and accentuating the process of Hanization of the regional power structures in minority areas is a lack or absence of democratic institutions. Upon the whole and in a structural sense, the Maoists have replaced imperial despotism and autocracy by Leninist and Stalinist structures of domination which could be staffed with cadres from the dominant or majority ethnic group (Han) for both expedient and affective reasons. Apparently the Han power elite feel that non-Han cadres, even after years of Sinification and indoctrination, cannot be trusted with top political posts in minority areas, most of which are strategically located. They recognize, implicitly, that their State does not enjoy the mandate of minority ethnic groups, particularly the Tibetans.

We have focused on what we feel is the crux of the problem in Tibet – Han domination in the name of “revolution” and “progress”. But do the Tibetans, who are simple people, realize the nature and mechanism of the Han power monopoly in Tibet? It appears that they do – in two senses. They feel the consequences of the Han monopolization of power directly, immediately and concretely in rural areas in general and in urban areas in particular; for they have learnt through their 40 years of experience that it is

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the Han power elite, who, being positioned in the inner recesses of the Party, the State and the Army, make all the important policies, including political, economic, cultural and social policies. Such policies tend to enhance the Han state power, and privilege the Han settlers, marginalizing the native inhabitants both politically and economically. The Han monopolize state power structures behind the scenes; they have greater access to education and job opportunities within Tibet and control the country's natural resources and foreign trade.

In other words, the systematic discriminatory practices in Tibet are the result, direct or indirect, of the Han monopolization of political power; for it is the Han power holders in the Party, the state and the Army who make all the important policy decisions and pass on such decisions to local governments for orderly implementation, and it is the common people in Tibet who have to suffer the discriminatory policy consequences. This monopoly of State power and the consequent systematic discriminatory practices inevitably make the ordinary Tibetans feel that they are under alien rule and illegitimate domination. As such the politicized sections of the Tibetan people revolt whenever the Chinese relax their rule ever so slightly. The concrete basis and the intricate mechanism of Han domination in Tibet consists of two totalitarian organizations: (a) the CCP, which has networks deeply and widely penetrating and dominating Tibetan society through structural violence; and (b) the PLA-police-intelligence complex that looms large over Tibetan society and which acts as the ultimate military support for Han domination and makes it possible for the Han state to maintain an atmosphere of fear and suspicion – and sometimes sheer terror.

The Maoists have known right from the start that, without a modern communication and transport system, the enormous physical barriers would make any attempt at the “liberation” of Tibet meaningless. Almost immediately after the PLA conquest of Tibet in 1950, therefore, they began constructing highways and airfields linking Tibet with China for the first time in history. By 1975 they had constructed 91 highways totalling 15,800 kilometres and 300 permanent bridges in the TAR alone.<sup>25</sup> A fundamental feature of the Han-imposed “revolution” in Tibet is thus neither “liberation” nor “progress” but strategic development. This was particularly so during the period 1951–76. Most of the economic assistance that Beijing claims to have provided to Tibet has actually gone into road building and other related strategic infrastructure.<sup>26</sup> As is well-known, the transport and communication systems are the lifeline of the PLA, and it is the PLA which makes the CCP grip over Tibet possible.

A conservative estimate of the PLA strength in the TAR is 150,000; other estimates go up to 300,000.<sup>27</sup> The functions of the PLA cadres are to suppress any sign of Tibetan nationalistic resistance and to defend “China's Tibet” from any possible external intervention. The PLA was used

extensively and ruthlessly to suppress the Tibetan revolts of the 1950s and the late 1980s. If the PLA functions at the regional level as the ultimate coercive means of Han domination, the local people's militia serves local "defence" needs and uses Tibetan "progressives" to suppress the Tibetans. The third layer of coercive means of domination is the so-called public security system, consisting of intelligence and surveillance networks spread all over Tibet that spy on every village and monastery, on every town and city.

The security machinery usually has ready access to a hierarchy of organizations created by Party activists. The Party is all-pervasive in Tibetan life. Civil society has been replaced by Party organizations: mutual aid teams, cooperatives and communes; neighbourhood, village and town committees; branches of the Communist Youth League and the Women's Association; democratic management committees in monasteries; etc. Indoctrination and surveillance are enforced through the organizations created and led by the Party. At least this was the case until 1980.

The basic goal of the Maoists is to destroy the traditional Tibetan civil society, which according to them, had for centuries been bound up with the traditional authority structures, the old social order and the Tibetan cultural identity. They have done their best to destroy it by fragmenting Tibetan society into manageable units for the purpose of enforcing labour and carrying out indoctrination and surveillance. The Party has installed itself in the place of civil society, where freedom, individuality and privacy once prevailed. It is Almighty God, as it were, at least at the social level. The Maoist version of totalitarianism is antithetical to the very spirit and structure of Tibetan civil society. The Tibetans have tended to revolt even though economic conditions may now be better under Chinese rule than they were before. It should be noted that the multi-layered security system has hardly been lifted even under lenient or relaxed regimes.

The pattern of Tibetan revolts and the lenient policy preceding each revolt reveals that the Tibetan people on the whole are not reconciled to Chinese rule, which they regard as illegitimate and oppressive. Consider the "honeymoon" period preceding the revolt of 1958–59 in Lhasa. Knowing that they did not have any popular support for the armed "liberation", the Chinese generals pursued a most cautious and liberal policy in the 1950s. They co-opted most members of the ruling class by luring them with money and attractive posts in the new set up and granted considerable economic and medical assistance to the masses, who were otherwise left untouched.<sup>28</sup> And yet the Tibetans revolted in 1959. The pro-independence demonstrations in 1987–88 were a similar case.

In line with Deng Xiaoping's policies of economic reform and liberalization, Beijing pursued a particularly lenient policy in Tibet. The Tibetans were exempted from the payment of taxes. They were also exempted from meeting compulsory state purchase quotas so that their produce could be



sold at negotiated prices. Beijing further increased central funds to the TAR to improve living standards and develop the local economy. It lifted restrictions on religious practices. It enlarged Tibetan participation in the local administration. And yet people in Lhasa and other towns revolted.<sup>29</sup>

The chaotic conditions created in the whole of China during the Cultural Revolution (1966–69) provided opportunities for the Tibetans to strike at Han positions of power in Tibet. The Chinese in Tibet, like everywhere else in the country, split into two warring factions: the Red Guards and the Revolutionary Rebels. Since the latter were anti-authoritarian and, therefore, indirectly against Han power holders, most Tibetans tended to join the Revolutionary Rebels and revolted against the Han regime. There were incidents in Yangpachen, Lhatse and Lhasa.<sup>30</sup> What all this suggests is that whenever they find an opportune moment, the Tibetans are ready to strike at the root of Han domination.

We may now make some tentative generalizations on the pattern of the revolts. It is quite clear that neither limited religious freedom nor economic benefits are enough for conflict transformation. Whenever civil society regains its social space, a revolt or a protest emerges. This means that there are still some unresolved basic issues in the conflict between Tibetan ethnicity and the Han State. Some of these issues may include the question of legitimacy of Han domination, the sovereignty of Tibetan civil society and the Tibetan cultural identity. It is difficult for the Han chauvinists and Maoist fundamentalists to comprehend these issues as they arise from Han supremacy and Marxist economic determinism.

Why do the Tibetans rebel? It seems to have more to do with ethnicity than with economics. Ethnicity, ethnic identity and ethnic nationalism – these are the aetiology and dynamics of the conflict between the Han state and Tibetan ethnicity during the past 50 years.

The common people of Tibet may not know the latest political vocabulary to describe Han domination such as Han hegemony, neocolonialism or neo-imperialism, but they realize that they are under non-Tibetan rule. They also know that the alien rulers have no mandate to rule over them and that they, therefore, lack the necessary legitimacy. No doubt any rule entails some degree of domination, but, according to the logic of ethnicity, a regime is legitimate if the ruling class and the ruled share the same culture, language, tradition, historical memories, etc. This logic makes Han domination in Tibet illegitimate.

The Tibetan sense of legitimacy of rule seems to be heavily bound up with the Buddhist culture of Tibet, which has shaped Tibetan identity, society and history for the last 1,000 years; for, in the absence of a plebiscite, a referendum or some other means of exercising self-determination, a common culture reflects a high degree of social consensus on the fundamental values and issues of a society and polity. Because it engenders a social consensus, culture in its political expression can roughly represent the general will.

In the conflicts between the Han State and Tibetan ethnicity since 1950 the Dalai Lama has increasingly figured as a pan-Tibetan symbol, representing Tibetan cultural values and popular aspirations. He is the rallying point for ethnic-nationalistic mobilization and opposition. When the PLA “liberated” Tibet in 1950, the first concern of the Lhasa Government was the defence, not so much of the territorial integrity of Tibet or the natural resources of the country, as of the sacred person of the Dalai Lama, who symbolized Tibetan culture. Similarly the first and foremost goal of the Revolt of 1959 was how to “protect” the Dalai Lama and convey him safely to India. During the 1980s, again, the Dalai Lama was the symbol of Tibetan resistance.<sup>31</sup> At several public meetings in Lhasa during the early 1980s, the people shouted “Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama” and “Tibet is Independent”.<sup>32</sup>

The symbolic role of religion and the religion-based culture in the pro-independence demonstrations of the late 1980s cannot be overemphasized. Most of the protests were initiated, led, and largely organized by Tibetan monks and nuns. They chose religious sites and auspicious dates corresponding to religious festivals to hold their major demonstrations in Lhasa.<sup>33</sup> We can see how intricately interconnected are what appear to the uninitiated as disparate things in the Tibetan political cosmos. Because the Tibetans are deeply religious, they perceive the Dalai Lama as the symbol of their religion; and because he represents their culture and civilization, they see him as the symbol of their cultural, if not political, sovereignty. It is, psychologically, this Tibetan sense of cultural sovereignty that resists and opposes Han hegemony in Tibet.

Undoubtedly, thus, Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet perceive the Dalai Lama as their legitimate ruler. This does not, however, mean that if the Dalai Lama should return to Tibet it would mean a restoration of the ancient regime. This is evident from both the Dalai Lama’s constitutional pronouncements and the Tibetan people’s political aspirations and vague visions. The Dalai Lama’s constitution-making projects in exile might reflect the direction in which the politicized sections of the Tibetan people seem to be moving.<sup>34</sup> Ronald Schwartz, after much fieldwork in Tibet, observes that the Tibetans “now associate their struggle for independence with demands for democracy and human rights”.<sup>35</sup>

Such democratic sentiment among the Tibetans may be understood in the post-1959 context of relatively modern conditions in Tibet. Inside Tibet the Communists have widely propagated certain elements of an egalitarian ideology such as equality and freedom as the new canon, but they have hardly ever practised equality and freedom themselves especially in the minority areas. Maoism in practice is a perverse justification for Han hegemony and supremacy. This contradiction between profession of freedom and equality on the one hand and practice of unfreedom and inequality on the other constitutes the political and ideological basis of the

Tibetan intelligentsia's contention against Han domination in Tibet. It is in this sense that democracy (in the broad sense of the term) could be one of the determining forces behind the popular struggle against Han hegemony in Tibet. And in exile, owing primarily to the positive demonstration effects of the functioning Indian democracy, democratic sentiment among the Tibetan refugees is widespread in spite of the personality cult built round the Dalai Lama and his family.

Finally, there has been, since 1951, a wide gulf separating elite realism from the popular aspiration for independence. Early in 1952, for instance, there was a popular movement called *mi-man tsogs-du*, which called for Tibet's independence.<sup>36</sup> At several Lhasa public meetings in 1980, the people assembled shouted "Tibet is Independent".<sup>37</sup> At pro-independence demonstrations in 1987 the Tibetan national flag was prominently displayed.<sup>38</sup>

We know that this "dangerous" aspiration is being systematically suppressed through the CCP's structural violence and the PLA's coercion. However, in the long run neither structural violence nor military coercion can solve the Tibetan problem. In particular, in the wake of the globalization of the Chinese economy and in view of the democratic upsurge, the PRC is unlikely to remain an isolated Maoist monolith. Perhaps the Dalai Lama alone can persuade the nationalistic Tibetan masses to accept a realistic solution for the ethnic conflict in Tibet. It is with such a vision in mind that we now turn to an analysis of possible future structures of conflict transformation in Tibet.

We consider three durable and possible structures for conflict transformation in Inner Asia. They include (a) Chinese liberal visions of a federation in China, in which Tibet would enjoy "autonomous statehood"; (b) the Dalai Lama's demand for "self-governing democratic Tibet in association with China" and (c) finally a possible future structure as suggested by Sino-Tibetan history, Tibetan cultural sovereignty and regional geopolitics.

On 31 January 1994, a group of Chinese scholars and intellectuals from the PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong released a "proposed draft" of a "Constitution of Federal Republic of China".<sup>39</sup> They described it as "a federal system with confederal characteristics".<sup>40</sup> The confederal characteristics refer to the special Autonomous Statehood given to Inner Mongolia, Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Ningxia and Guangxi (Article 28). The Autonomous Provinces and Cities, which fall within China proper are "more closely tied to the federal Republic, in a relationship similar to that found in a normal federal republic".<sup>41</sup> It is this ethnic specificity that characterizes this draft Constitution.

Article 30 declares that each Autonomous state makes its own constitution. Each Autonomous Province, Autonomous Municipality or Special Region makes its own Basic Law. And any power that is not constitutionally vested in the federal government is exercised by the

individual Autonomous States, Autonomous Provinces, Autonomous Municipalities and Special Regions and the entire citizenry (Article 29).

Beside the power to make its own Constitution, each Autonomous State has the right to sign non-military agreements with foreign countries, and the right to make its own decisions about joining international organizations and setting up representative offices in foreign countries (Article 33). Article 39 is exclusively devoted to Tibet:

The Autonomous State of Tibet is a national nature conservation area, where the testing of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the storage of nuclear wastes are prohibited.

The Autonomous State of Tibet is financially independent and not required to pay federal tax. The Autonomous State of Tibet has the right to set up its state court of final appeal.

The position of Autonomous State of Tibet will be reviewed 25 years after this Constitution is promulgated. The review will be in the form of a referendum by the citizens of the state and not subject to Article 36 of this Constitution.

The draft “Constitution for a Federal China” marks a serious new thinking among the emancipated Chinese intellectuals on the larger question of centre–periphery power relations in China, which is likely to gain increasing acceptance among the Han public in the near future, and which the non-Han social groups would welcome. The Chinese dissidents, situated as they are in free societies, are courageous to question the Maoist conception of an unitary state, which as we have demonstrated, has degenerated into Han hegemony. They are also far-sighted enough to recognize the hidden forces of history and society, namely ethnicity that sharply divides the Tibetans, Turks, Mongols, etc. from the Hans, who through the tyranny of their majority, have sinicized the minority ethnic groups since 1949, and reduced the latter to minorities in their own homelands.

The proposed Chinese federation envisages a finely tuned hierarchy of political statuses for different regional/ethnic entities, taking into account politico-economic factors, or ethnic identities and their historical statuses in pre-modern Asian history. In this sense the authors of the federal constitution may be right in their declaration in the Preamble: “Therefore, the basic principle used in dividing the federal Republic into its component elements is: ‘Respect for the status quo and respect for history.’”<sup>42</sup> In other words, Chinese dissidents perceive an urgent need not only to deconstruct the post-1949 Communist history in the PRC but also to decentralize the centre–periphery power relations. For what the Communists have done in the name of “liberation” and “revolution”, “ideology” and “progress” has resulted in Han expansionism and Han hegemony in non-Han territories, where non-Han ethnic groups used to enjoy complete autonomy or even internal independence for centuries.

In particular the draft federal constitution makes special provisions for Tibet, as indeed warranted by her history and identity radically different from the Han population. In so doing, the constitution meets most of the Dalai Lama's basic demands made in 1988, including the right for Tibet to make its own Constitution (Article 30), to sign non-military agreements with foreign states as well as the right to join international organizations and set up representative offices in foreign countries (Article 33). Besides Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong are given the right to restrict external population movements into their respective states/regions (Article 10). And Article 39 makes Tibet a virtually nuclear-free zone. But by far the most significant concession given to the Tibetan people is that they can, in the form of a referendum, decide, after staying in the proposed federation for 25 years, whether to secede from or remain within the Chinese federation (Article 39).

The draft constitution raises a few questions which must be discussed in order to find a lasting solution to the conflict in Tibet that is satisfactory to all parties concerned. The pioneering authors do not specify which areas are covered in their usage of the term "Tibet". Do they mean only "Tibet Autonomous Region" as created by the Communists since 1951? Or do they include Kham and Amdo as well as the TAR, as claimed by the Dalai Lama? If they accept only the Communist definition of "Tibet", they exclude nearly two-thirds of the Tibetan population from what they envisage as the Autonomous State of Tibet. Even according to the 1982 census, out of the total Tibetan population of 3,885,500 in the PRC, 945,000 Tibetans are in Sichuan; 750,500 in Qinghai; 305,000 in Gansu; and 95,000 in Yunnan.

If this is so, then would it be fair and just to exclude the majority of the Tibetans from the Autonomous State of Tibet? Though such Tibetans are called Khampas and Amdowas for the purpose of internal differentiation within Tibetan society, they share with the rest of Tibetans a number of fundamental commonalities, especially on the ethnical, cultural and linguistic level. We know there are Tibetan culture areas in the cis-Himalayas and elsewhere, but the point of departure is that the Khampas and Amdowas have, since 1949, increasingly identified with Lhasa as the epicentre of their culture and loyalty. They were the first to revolt against the Chinese takeover. Therefore, from the perspective of conflict transformation in Inner Asia, the Khampas' and Amdowas' problems have to be faced and addressed, and they may be tackled within the framework of the Autonomous State of Tibet.

Another set of questions raised by the draft constitution are the terms and conditions under which a referendum in Tibet would be held 25 years after the proposed constitution comes into effect. On the surface the idea of a referendum appears to be a courageous step to determine the consent and consensus of the governed. However, a closer scrutiny reveals a couple of

lacunae, Article 39 gives the right to vote in the referendum to the "citizens" in the state and not primarily to the Tibetan population who, by virtue of their different cultural identity and historical status, need the referendum most. The unstated calculation is that after 25 years the present Dalai Lama would pass away and the continuing Han population transfer to Tibetan areas would create an unprecedented demographic transformation in Tibet that will maintain the status quo even in the eventuality of a referendum. If the Dalai Lama's figures are correct, at present there are 6 million Tibetans and 7 million Chinese in Tibet. With the increasing rate of population transfer, the Chinese majority in Tibet is more or less ensured, thereby making the proposed referendum a meaningless exercise: not a case of self-determination but self-determinism. The latter case reduces the democratic determination into a constitutional formalism, which indirectly empowers the majority ethnic group (Chinese) to vote for the status quo and denies the sons of the soil their right to self-determination.

The simple anthropological fact is that in most of the traditional societies, modern democratic concepts like election, self-determination or even referendum tends to run along the lines of a shared culture and common ethnicity, not along ideological lines. General will, in such culture-saturated cases, resides in shared culture which represents the collective conscience of a particular ethnic group and social contract is made possible by high degrees of social consensus engendered by collectively shared culture and ethnicity.

Finally, Clause (1) of Article 31 which empowers the federal government with the political monopoly to declare war, presumably in any part of the federation, may be debatable. This is particularly so in the case of Tibet which, according to Article 39, is "a national nature conservation area, where the testing of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the storage of nuclear wastes are prohibited". This is exactly what the Dalai Lama, in his 1987 address to the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus, called for the transformation of "the whole of Tibet, including the eastern provinces of Kham and Amdo" into "a zone of 'Ahinsa', a Hindi term used to mean a state of peace and non-violence".<sup>43</sup> This sentiment was again echoed in his 1988 address to the European Parliament when he "called for the conversion of Tibet into a zone of peace, a sanctuary in which humanity and nature can live together in harmony".<sup>44</sup>

If there is such a consensus between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese intellectuals who framed the draft constitution of a "federal China", the monopolistic power to make war and peace should not entirely rest with the federal government, which most probably would be dominated by Hans. The proposed Autonomous State of Tibet must have a say in this vital issue which perhaps concerns the Tibetans more than other ethnic groups, Tibet being one of the most strategic regions in Asia. The answer may well be, as I shall argue below, the complete neutralization of Tibet by concerned

regional powers including China, and possibly endorsed by the UN and the USA.

The Dalai Lama's ideas on the future status of Tibet and related matters were formulated in the course of his attempt to negotiate with the Han leadership in the PRC that expanded over a decade.<sup>45</sup> After the Sino-Tibetan negotiations reached a deadlock in the mid-1980s, the Dalai Lama made his basic political demands public. On 21 September 1987 before the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus, he called for: (a) transformation of Tibet (both Inner and Outer) into a zone of peace; (b) abandonment of the PRC's population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a distinct people; (c) respect for the Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms; (d) restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste; (e) commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between Tibetan and Chinese peoples.<sup>46</sup>

The Dalai Lama's first demand calls for some explanation because it touches Chinese security concerns. The Lama argues that his concept of a peace zone is "in keeping with Tibet's historical role as a peaceful and neutral Buddhist nation and buffer state separating the continent's great powers".<sup>47</sup> It would also be in keeping with King Birendra's proposal to proclaim Nepal a peace zone and with the PRC's declared support for such a plan. But, the Dalai Lama argues that the establishment of a peace zone in Inner Asia would require the withdrawal of Chinese troops and military installations from Tibet, which would enable India also to withdraw its troops and military installations from the Himalayan regions bordering Tibet. "This", he says, "would be achieved under an international agreement which would satisfy China's legitimate security needs and build trust among the Tibetan, Indian, Chinese and other peoples of the region."<sup>48</sup>

Later the Dalai Lama at Strasbourg (France) outlined the future political structure of Tibet "in association with China". The PR is to remain responsible for Tibet's foreign policy and defence. However, Tibet should have its own Foreign Affairs Bureau dealing with commerce, education, culture, religion, tourism, science, sports and other non-military activities. With regard to the final shape of defence, China could have the right to maintain a restricted number of military installations in Tibet until such time as demilitarization and neutralization could be achieved through a regional peace conference and international agreement.<sup>49</sup>

As far as the Dalai Lama is concerned, his Strasbourg Statement represents a fair middle way compromise solution to the controversial Tibetan Question. While eschewing persistent Tibetan claims to independence, it calls for genuine and complete autonomy, which does not conflict with Chinese sovereignty or security concerns in Inner Asia. However, the Dalai

Lama is quite explicit about the kind of political system he wishes to establish in Tibet, implying complete and genuine domestic autonomy. He demands that “the whole of Tibet, known as Cholka-sum (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo) should become a self-governing democratic political entity founded on law by agreement of the people for the common good and the protection of themselves and their environment, in association with the People’s Republic of China”.<sup>50</sup>

The Strasbourg Statement stipulates that the future government of Tibet should be founded on a constitution of basic law. Such a law should provide for a democratic system of government that will ensure “economic equality, social justice and protection of the environment. This means that the government of Tibet will have the right to decide on all affairs relating to Tibet and the Tibetans.”<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the government should be comprised of a popularly elected Chief Executive, a bicameral legislature and an independent judiciary. Its seat, the Dalai Lama declares, should be in Lhasa.

The Dalai Lama’s proposals were well received by the international community. The Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 may be taken as an indication of Western if not world public opinion. The Norwegian Nobel Committee chairman stated, while awarding the prize, “It would be difficult to cite any historical example of a minority’s struggle to secure its rights, in which a more conciliatory attitude to the adversary has been adopted than in the case of Dalai Lama.”<sup>52</sup> Between 1987 and 1991 the US Congress passed six resolutions on Tibet; the European Parliament passed two resolutions in 1987 and 1989; the Council of Europe one in 1988; the West German Bundestag one in 1987; and the Italian Parliament one in 1989. International conventions or hearings on Tibet were held in Bonn in April 1989; in New Delhi in August 1989; in Tokyo in May 1990; and in London in July 1990.

The Dalai Lama’s proposals received wide support because they represent the most realistic means by which to establish Tibet’s separate identity and restore the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people while accommodating China’s vital interests. The solution he sought was close to what Chinese dissidents called a “Federal Constitution with confederal characteristics”, even though he never uses the terms like “federation” or “confederation”. He prefers the term “union” or “association” which, he says, “can only come about voluntarily, when there is satisfactory benefit to all parties concerned” and cites the example of the European Community as the closest to his vision of China–Tibet relations.<sup>53</sup> However, on the whole, a comparative analysis of the two preceding cases indicates that most of the Dalai Lama’s demands made in 1988 have been more or less, met by the overseas Chinese – drafted “Federal Constitution with confederal characteristics”.

The Dalai Lama’s 1988 proposal, even though it is a carefully drafted document, raises a couple of questions. He implicitly proposed that a



regional peace conference on demilitarization and neutralization of Tibet should be held, presumably *after* the establishment of a “genuine union or association”. If past experience is any indication, then this sequential procedure might not work. It has to be a simultaneous international package in which Sino–Tibetan negotiations on the status of Tibet and the neutralization of Inner Asia by regional powers, if not preceding the former, have to proceed side by side. This is where one sees a constructive role for the UN in conflict transformation in Tibet. For as I shall try to show in the last section, in a larger sense Tibet in the modern era has become a tragic victim of Sino–Indian strategic rivalry in Inner Asia and the cis-Himalayas; and unless this rivalry is resolved through a mutually agreed neutralization of Tibet, no lasting solution to the Tibetan Question can be found. Otherwise strategic imperatives from China and India will retransform Tibet into an active arena of the “Great Game” that plagued Inner Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

My second comment concerns the role of modern educated class in the making of Tibet’s future, which the Dalai Lama ignores. The Dalai Lama’s strategy is that the people of Tibet or their representatives “will prepare Tibet’s new constitution on the basis of various drafts prepared in exile” under his supervision. He knows that the Dalai Lama’s charismatic influence among the Tibetans would ensure that his drafts would be more or less accepted in Tibet. The only “critical” role in this exercise is given to the so-called “leaders of Cholka-sum”. The Dalai Lama writes: “I shall constitute a small committee of leaders from Cholka-sum. ... This committee in consultation with the officials of various departments throughout Tibet, will summon an emergency meeting of the deputies representing administrative divisions no smaller than a district.”<sup>54</sup>

The Chinese Communists as a matter of policy and ideology have strictly prohibited the emergence of alternative leaders who might compete with the Party monopoly of power. And it is unfortunate but equally true that the Dalai Lama in exile has tended to discourage the emergence of alternative leaders, except ones officially approved by him or his family. However, both in exile and inside Tibet one observes the emergence of a modern educated class that is independent of Communist or Lamaist domination. Inside Tibet the colonial administration and propaganda apparatus have necessitated the education of a bilingual class that is becoming increasingly critical of Communist domination. In exile too, thanks to Indian and Western patronage of modern education among the younger generation of refugees, there is a growing number of free thinking young Tibetans. It is tragic that the Dalai Lama sees no role for such modern educated Tibetans in his vision of Tibet’s future in association with China.

Tibet’s geography has exercised considerable influence upon the evolution of her peculiar polity and unique culture. Her relative isolation from neighbouring countries, surrounded on all sides by mountainous

ranges but her sufficient cultural contacts with neighbouring civilizations, ensured an independent cultural development up to 1950. But her geo-strategic location tended to invite foreign interference in her antiquated political system, periodically in pre-modern times and more frequently in our times, leading to the Communist takeover.

The Communist takeover of Tibet in 1950 cannot be explained in terms of either historical claims or ideological motives. A more plausible explanation may be found in the strategic importance the Chinese mandarins have attached, since the early twentieth century, to Tibet, just as British strategists in India calculated. To the late Qing empire strategists, Tibet was the “lips” of the Chinese “mouth” and if the lips were open, foreign elements might enter the Chinese body politic. The Kuomintang (KMT) strategists used to describe Tibet as the “backdoor to China”. Maoist strategists have described it as the PR’s northwest “fortress” against social imperialism and revisionism (i.e. the former Soviet Union).<sup>55</sup>

During the Tang dynasty (649–756) the Tibetan empire<sup>56</sup> in Central Asia posed security threats to China. But it was not so much the matrimonial alliance that the Tang emperor established with the Tibetan king Song-tsen Gampo nor the frequent conflict that resulted in peace in Inner Asia. With its introduction in the eighth century, Buddhism gradually but quite systematically transformed a warrior nation into a peaceful community. Tibet then ceased to be security threat to the Chinese empire.

However, the various Mongol tribes continued to pose a security threat to China throughout the medieval period. It is in this context that the Chinese imperial court began to see a new role for Buddhist Tibet. The High Lamas of Tibet, through their enormous spiritual influence among the Tibetans and Mongols, were perceived as peace-makers and peace-keepers in China’s relations with Buddhist Central Asia. Therefore, most of the Chinese emperors made a point of cultivating friendships with the charismatic lamas of Tibet. This policy remained as long as Central Asia continued to be the major source of threat to the Chinese security system. But with the establishment of the British empire in the Indian subcontinent, China’s threat perceptions as well as the sources of danger completely changed. In the modern era, dominated by Western colonial/imperial powers, the Mongol warriors of Central Asia ceased to be a danger to Chinese national security. Increasingly, the Chinese security preoccupation was with what is called Western imperialism, and more specifically in relation to Tibet the British power expansion in the Indian subcontinent with its active interest in Inner Asia.

British interest in Tibet began in the 1770s as primarily a trade interest in Tibet and in using the latter as a gateway to further trade in Northwest China. But soon they discovered that trade prospects in Inner Asia were poor in view of the difficult terrain and lack of communication which would, they concluded, bring diminishing returns to imperialism. This,

however, did not rule out British strategic and political interests in Tibet because as the colonial officials repeatedly emphasized, British India shared over 2,000 miles of border with Tibet, not directly with China proper.

Thus, by the 1870s the British interest had changed into a strategic interest, pursued in the guise of “commercial” interest. With the commencement of the “Great Game” in Central Asia, British activities although always short of colonization, increased, unintentionally creating Chinese suspicion and insecurity. British agents, disguised as explorers or adventurers and missionaries, in Tibet deepened Chinese suspicions. In particular the 1904 Younghusband Expedition sensitized the Chinese government and the public to the strategic importance of Tibet as never before. Thus, by turn of the twentieth century the traditional Chinese image of Tibet as a deeply spiritual realm was transformed into a high security region. In this transformation which had fatal consequences for the modern fate of Tibet, the British colonial officials, albeit unintentionally, played no small role. It is now strategic concerns and defence matters that dominate the current Chinese thinking on Tibet.

We know that both Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi used to scoff at the ideas of buffer zones and a balance of power as out-moded imperialist scheming. But given the favourable opportunities and in the absence of Chinese military might in Inner Asia, Nehru would have pursued a modified, if necessary, policy towards Tibet, as an autonomous buffer state, as the British had done. This was in fact the substance of Nehru’s Tibet policy from 1947 to 1954.<sup>57</sup> The 1962 Sino-Indian war, the Nathula border clashes in 1967 and the near-conflict situation in Sumdo-rong Chu valley in 1987 inevitably questioned the fundamental assumptions of Nehru’s post-1954 China–Tibet policy complex, driving the Indian political elite to rediscover the wisdom of British policy towards Tibet.

There has been an enormous build up of arms on both sides of the once tranquil Himalayas: Tibet since 1952 and especially after 1959; and on the cis-Himalayas since 1962. Indian Ministry of Defence sources estimated the PLA strength in the TAR alone to be between 130,000 and 180,000. The Chinese sources estimated in the mid-1980s that India deploys 10 Mountain Divisions, 32 Infantry Brigades and 10 Mountain Artilleries along the Indian Himalayas. This mutual arms build up is preceded, or simultaneously accompanied by, extensive strategic road-building, on both sides of the Himalayas. The situation in the Himalayas is vividly described by a respected Indian environmentalist, Sunderlal Bahuguna, who lives in the Himalayas.

But today the Himalayan region is one of the most unquiet regions of the world, where governments spend a major share of their budgets in maintaining armies to guard their national frontiers. Instead of seers and sages praying for peace, one can find solitary sentries with

modern sophisticated arms sitting inside the bunkers. The sweet sound of holy hymns, blowing of cunch shells, and the ringing of sacred bells has been suppressed by the dreadful sound of machine guns and the helicopters hovering over the skies.<sup>58</sup>

This drastic transformation of a traditionally peaceful region into one of the most dangerous conflict zones in the world has taken place because the autonomous state that had historically functioned as a buffer between the two Asian giants has disappeared since 1950. The concept of a buffer state is not culture-bound in the sense identified with the era of imperialism; it is dictated by geopolitics and the near-symmetry of great neighbouring powers which seek to create durable structures of peace in their ultimate mutual interest through mutual recognition of the contested territory as a neutralized buffer zone. The post-1950 Sino-Indian strategic rivalry and arms race in Inner Asia and the cis-Himalayas stems from their leaders' failure to realize the practical wisdom of old-fashioned principles of international relations.

The crux of the strategic rivalry between the PRC and India is this: if the Chinese elites consider Tibet strategically important to China, the Indian elites think that it is equally vital to Indian national security. This is the practical meaning of Tibet as being "strategic". For if India dominated Tibet (as the British rulers did up to 1947), the Chinese feel insecure and threatened. Conversely if China dominated Tibet (as the PR has been doing since 1950), the Indians feel their whole northern security system is open to external danger. Such a strategic zero-sum game over Tibet may be resolved through the neutralization of the contested country so that mutual tensions and destructive arms races may be reduced, as Britain and Russia did in a bilateral treaty in 1907. Now such a treaty on the neutralization of Tibet should be signed by China and India, as two great Asian powers with equal interest in Tibet.

If the pattern of Central Asian geopolitics suggests a Sino-Indian agreement to neutralize Tibet, what does the Sino-Tibetan history have to say? What is the actual historical status of China in Tibet as it evolved over the ages? Have the Communist masters over-stepped the historical limits of the Chinese role in Tibet? And what sort of near future structure does history suggest for Tibet? These questions have become the focal points of this study, but there is no harm in summarizing our findings.

After surveying the significant periods of Tibetan history having a bearing on Sino-Tibetan relations, we may make some tentative generalizations. During the Disintegration Period (842-1247) lasting for 405 years and the Internal Struggle Period (1350-1642) lasting 292 years, China demonstrated political indifference to happenings in Tibet. There was no Chinese intervention nor were even tributary relations conducted regularly. This is surprising in view of the current Chinese claim that Tibet has always been

an integral part of China. During these two periods Tibet was not dependent on China.

However, Sino-Tibetan relations were more formal, regular and frequent during the two periods of Lama rule; the Sakya, 1249-1358 and the Gelugpa, 1642-1911. This tends to support the Tibetan historians' claim that Sino-Tibetan relations were essentially between a lay patron and a priest, more specifically between the Mongol emperors and the Sakya Lamas, between the Manchu emperors and the Dalai Lamas. The symbiotic nature of these peculiar relationships was explained in Chapter 10.

In short, in her recorded history, Tibet was independent for 281 years (600-842 and 1911-1950); neither dependent on nor independent from China for 697 years (842-1247 and 1350-1642); dependent on Mongol and Manchu empires for 378 years (1249-1358 and 1642-1911). Thus, we may say the history of Sino-Tibetan relations is ambiguous. But even during her dependency periods, Tibet enjoyed high degrees of genuine, domestic autonomy that most fair minded historians of any persuasion would not deny.

What did this emperor-lama relationship imply and entail? The core of this relationship demanded (periodically) a symbolic act of subordination by the Lama or his envoy to the Son of Heaven (emperor) as the military protector of a non-coercive regime which the Lama in question headed in Tibet. And the tributary relationship, through which this periodical symbolic act of subordination was maintained, was characterized by ceremonialism, not by political domination. Such a superordinate-subordinate relations were not confined to Tibet alone, though priest-patron relationship was peculiarly Sino-Tibetan; symbolic unequal relations were the ideological basis of Confucian foreign relations. They did not recognize the modern Western concept of legal equality of sovereign states. Tribute relations were essentially, in modern terms, a form of diplomatic recognition of actors (states) in an international system ordered or dominated by Imperial China. This includes not only Tibet but several other states in East Asia, Central Asia and Southeast Asia as well.

However, this symbolic acceptance of a superordinate-subordinate ceremonial relationship did not, on the whole, entail: (a) Chinese interference in Tibetan domestic affairs; (b) a Chinese army presence in Tibet except when requested for by lama rulers; (c) Han colonization of any part of Tibetan territory; (d) the integration of Tibet into China either politically, economically or culturally. In short, pre-1950 Tibet enjoyed complete and genuine autonomy.

In the name of ideology and a Marxist mission in Tibet, the Chinese Communists have ignored and distorted the patterns of Sino-Tibetan history. It is now time for the Communists to respect the verdict of history and restructure the centre-periphery power relations on a democratic and durable basis, because the Communist justification or rationale in the post-Communist era has become invalid.

While the Chinese imperial court at Beijing and the Tibetan ruling class of Lhasa maintained formal relations, there was no people-to-people contact except near Sino-Tibetan border areas such as parts of Amdo and Kham. This means that throughout the Tibetan history, Tibetan cultural identity<sup>59</sup> and civil society, which are fundamentally different from those of Hans (or any other ethnic group in Central Asia), remained sovereign, independent of any external influence or intervention for nearly 1,000 years. It is this informal but effective sovereignty of Tibetan cultural identity and civil society that constitutes the psychological core of Tibetan opposition to the Communist takeover and subsequent integration with the PRC. Therefore, we observe a close correlation between popular folk aspirations for Tibetan independence and the cultural sovereignty that ordinary Tibetans psychologically feel inside and outside Tibet. Independence (free from Chinese influence or interference) has been what they used to enjoy, despite legitimate domination and exploitation by the Tibetan governing class.

But the cultural and civil sovereignty that the common Tibetans automatically feel, as warranted by their unique culture and way of life, has been, as we have seen, tempered by the patterns of political history dominated by the power elites concerned. That is why since 1950 the Dalai Lama and Tibetan ruling class, on the whole, have compromised on the question of Tibetan independence, while negotiating with the Chinese overlords. The Dalai Lama's Strasbourg Statement in which he surrendered Tibet's defence and foreign policy to the PRC but demanded genuine and complete autonomy is a reasonable solution which is basically backed by the Chinese dissidents' federal constitution. It is a realistic compromise between the high expectations of the Tibetan masses for complete independence and the Han imperial power that completely denies it.

In short while the sovereignty of Tibetan cultural identity and civil society *vis-à-vis* the Hans is categorically clear, the history of Sino-Tibetan relations is ambiguous. This ambiguity resides in the resultant location of Tibet's political status between independence and dependency. But even such a limited sovereignty could not be achieved in the long run without an understanding of the dialectics of regional geopolitics which indicates the actual underlying conditions under which future structures of peace have to operate.

## Chapter 20

# Self-Determination in the Post-Communist Era: The Tibetan People's Case

There seems to be no consensus among international lawyers and political scientists on the question of whether *all* the other-determined peoples will have the right to self-determination or not. For national self-determination as such is one of the most contested concepts in the twentieth century political discourse. And, “achievements or not, of self-determination is generally resolved on the concrete plane of political struggle and not on the abstract level of relative rights”.<sup>1</sup>

The history of national self-determination is full of contradictions and double standards.<sup>2</sup> The UN Charter calls for the right of self-determination of peoples, but in the next breath it states its opposition to any attempt at the disruption of national unity and the territorial integrity of a member state. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) also follows this double-talk policy whenever it perceives tribal demands for self-determination in conflict with its larger visions of stability and peace in the African continent. In the Indian subcontinent, India denied self-determination in Kashmir but fought for the self-determination of Bangladesh. Pakistan has insisted on the right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination but denied it to Bangladesh. The Communist record is no better. The Chinese Marxists in the early 1920s and 1930s promised the Tibetans, Mongols and Uighurs the right of self-determination and even of secession. But after the seizure of state power in 1949, Mao Zedong denied self-determination even to the deserving minority nationalities in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Many more cases of such double standards may be cited, but our point is clear. National self-determination, as an emancipatory ideology, has enormous appeal to other-determined peoples everywhere, and because it invokes popular sovereignty as its core social message, hardly anyone in the democratic age can openly challenge it. But its implementation has serious implications to empires and their

contemporary successors, multinational states which number over 200 in the UN.

With such discouraging precedents, is it worthwhile raising the question of the Tibetan people's right to self-determination? The answer, I believe, is a qualified and relative "yes" for a number of reasons. First, the Tibetan case for self-determination is a credible one which has enjoyed widespread support from competent world bodies and national leaders for more than four decades since 1959.

It was Chiang Kaishek who first raised the question of the Tibetan people's right to national self-determination (27 March 1959) before the Dalai Lama or any Tibetan leader did. The Kuomintang (KMT) leader promised that "our government will meet your (Tibetan people's) wishes in accordance with the principle of national self-determination",<sup>3</sup> when the KMT recovers the Mainland. In October 1961 the UN General Assembly passed a Resolution "renewing" its call for "their [Tibetan people's] right to self-determination".<sup>4</sup> In its 1965 resolution, the UN reaffirmed its "resolutions 1353 (XIV) of 21 October 1959 and 1723 (XVI) of 20 December 1961 on the question of Tibet".<sup>5</sup> In November 1992, the Permanent People's Tribunal (based in Strasbourg) held for five days with both Chinese and Tibetan advocates, concluded that the PRC has denied the Tibetans their right to self-determination.<sup>6</sup> In July 1992, four US senators including Patrick Moynihan spoke in favour of the Tibetan people's right to self-determination,<sup>7</sup> which they declared the US government had supported before the Sino-American *detente* in the early 1970s. On 31 January 1994, a group of Chinese pro-democracy and dissident intellectuals from the PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong released a "proposed draft" of a "Constitution of Federal Republic of China", in which they promised the Tibetan people a "referendum" after 25 years of the Constitution's operation, to ascertain Tibet's position in relation to China. The present Dalai Lama has, from time to time, called for self-determination and the latest occasion was in 1991.<sup>8</sup>

Secondly, the new international context freed from Cold War rigidities and ideological orthodoxies, offers new possibilities even to the last Leninist regimes which are, none the less, undergoing a fundamental economic and political transformation. In particular, the collapse of the Soviet empire and the subsequent declaration of independence by formerly subjugated nations in Eurasia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia – numbering 29 countries – has serious implications to the persistent Tibetan demand for self-determination. They are the latest and most numerous cases of national self-determination by peaceful means since decolonization. We know that although the Chinese Communist empire might not meet a similar fate to the Soviet collapse which undeniably facilitated the Central Asian, Eurasian and Eastern European people's declaration of self-determination, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) shared a similar Leninist heritage on self-determination, as we shall show.



## *Self-Determination in the Post-Communist Era*

To understand why Lenin and his followers advocated that national self-determination in a colonial context meant secession of a territory and that the same principle, in the context of socialist states, meant only self-government, we must keep in mind the rising anticolonial movement in the first half of the twentieth century. This movement tended to lend credence to the Leninist redefinition of self-determination in view of the then widespread conflict between the colonial powers, mostly Western, and the colonized countries. The colonized countries demanded the right of self-determination, which in fact meant secession from the European colonial empires, and they found the necessary ideology and political support in the Leninist redefinition of self-determination. Above all, there was a convergence of interests between the anticolonial nationalists and the anti-imperialist Marxist-Leninists which led to a popular acceptance of Lenin's redefinition of self-determination.

Partly to outbid the Western powers for the support of subject nations and partly to exploit the ambiguity inherent in the concept of self-determination, one of the first things that the Soviet Government did in 1917 was to declare its support for the right of national self-determination. "With this declaration the ice broke, and the dammed-up waters of nationality began a wild rush which was to sweep onward until the end of the war and beyond in an increasingly powerful and ultimately uncontrollable torrent."<sup>9</sup> The Soviets added the fuel of self-determination to the fire of the anticolonial nationalist movements, setting the entire colonial world ablaze. From then on, the right of self-determination came to be associated increasingly, for all practical purposes, with the anticolonial movements seeking to overthrow the European colonial rule and establish national Governments. Self-determination in a socialist context became ideologically inconceivable.

With the anticolonial powers insisting that self-determination had "relevance only in the colonial realm", the colonial powers found themselves more and more on the defensive.<sup>10</sup> In fact, because of their political position, their stand on self-determination appeared not only defensive but ambiguous. Their instinctive reaction was not to yield to the anti-colonial demand too much or too soon. "The fact that the Charter which proclaimed the abstract principle of self-determination simultaneously established the two tutelage systems related in Chapters XI, XII and XIII is evidence that the Conference at San Francisco did not intend to liquidate colonialism immediately."<sup>11</sup> In the process the Soviet Union emerged as the champion of self-determination.

Though the Soviet Union could not be regarded as a flaming radical in 1945, it did support the principle of self-determination at the San Francisco Conference when the UN Charter was being drafted. At its suggestion, the clause "respect for the Principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples" was added to Articles 1 and 55.<sup>12</sup> By then, most of the European

empires in Asia and Africa had been overthrown, and the Soviet Union had already consolidated itself as a new, multinational state.

From the perspective of the late twentieth century, any attempt to establish a relationship between democracy and nationalism would be suspect since both are considered incongruous concepts. However, at the turn of the century, they were “generally taken as synonymous in the thought of the Western nations. The nation-state was regarded as the political expression of the democratic will of the people.”<sup>13</sup> Similar sentiments prevailed in Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>14</sup>

If a common denominator exists at all, it is the vague notion of popular sovereignty underlying both self-determination and democracy, especially the vulgarized democracy that seems to have been the popular perception in the non-European world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There “democracy” simply meant the replacement of divine or royal authority by popular mandate whereas, in the colonial context, it meant the replacement of the colonial power by native authority based on popular mandate.

In the Leninist redefinition of self-determination, the emphasis shifted from popular will to “national oppression” as a critical criterion and not the determination of popular will. It did not really matter whether the people in question expressed a desire for national self-determination. But where “national oppression” existed there was a general will to self-determination. The “oppressed people” should enjoy the right of self-determination and secede from the “oppressing nation”. In Lenin’s own words:

What is the most important, the fundamental idea of our thesis? The distinction between oppressed and oppressor nation. . . . The right of nations to self-determination means only the right to independence in a political sense, the right to free, political secession from the oppressing nation.<sup>15</sup>

If the word “oppressor” is replaced by “colonial”, and the word “oppressed” by “colonized”, a normative interpretation of self-determination will emerge. The formal-legalistic definition of self-determination has been replaced by a substantive-normative one. For all practical purposes national self-determination might well be defined now as a colonial people’s struggle to overthrow a colonial regime and establish a national government of some sort. All this, it should be noted, was made possible by Lenin’s contribution to, or deviation from, classical Marxism. If Marx saw Western colonialism as performing an historically necessary and objectively revolutionary role in disrupting the traditional social structure and the Asiatic mode of production in Asia and Africa, Lenin viewed it in terms of exploitation. The image of imperialism, therefore, changed from one of historic necessity to a matter of norm. Lenin’s notion of “national oppression” in this perspective would be an extension of his macro-theory

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of capitalist imperialism to the international realm; the concept of national oppression, a normative and nationalist rendering of colonialism in a particular country, would then be the critical criterion for judging self-determination.

Lenin's essay "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to self-determination" (1916),<sup>16</sup> might well be considered the Communist Manifesto of the twentieth century. The Chinese Marxists were generally known for their bold spirit of independence from the Soviet Union or the Comintern, and by the same token for their successful sinicization of Marxism. On the national-colonial question, however, they entirely agreed with the Soviet view. In all of Mao's *Selected Works* there are very few quotations from, or references to, Marx or Engels. The only works which Mao and his followers quoted at length are Lenin's essays on the national-colonial question and *Stalin's Marxism and the National-Colonial Question*.<sup>17</sup>

As Marxist-Leninists, the Chinese fully accepted Lenin's theory of capitalist imperialism, which provided the theoretical basis for their anticolonial nationalist movement. They wholeheartedly agreed with Lenin and Stalin that the right to secession applied only to colonial cases and that the principle of self-determination in a socialist context meant only self-government or autonomy. They, however, differed on the question of self-government; while the Soviets adopted a federalist framework, China opted for regional autonomy within a unitary state.

While there is no dispute among Marxists, Chinese or Russian, about the general strategic need to subordinate the national question to the ultimate socialist cause, such a subordination does allow a certain degree of flexibility which might be used to determine the weight of the national question in relation to the socialist cause. This is indeed the theoretical source of the tactical differences which often tend to coincide with national interests. Much, of course, depends on the historical circumstances under which the Marxists had to tackle the national question, but the essential difference between the Soviet and Chinese positions lies in this; while Lenin and Stalin thought that it might occasionally be necessary to recognize the right of self-determination even in a socialist context (as, for example, in the Finnish and Polish cases) to oppose imperialism, and in the longer-term the interests of socialism, Mao felt otherwise. He argued that the national minorities should be mobilized to oppose imperialism without the promise of national self-determination and that self-government was enough to entice them, as we have seen before.

In principle the Soviet Union still recognized the right to self-determination for its national minorities, which was in fact enshrined in the Soviet Constitution. The CCP's position has changed over a period of time. Until 1934 the CCP followed the Soviet model and recognized the right of its national minorities to national self-determination. However,

from the time of Mao's ascendancy in 1934, the CCP has completely dropped the right of its national minorities to national self-determination.

Differences also exist over the political status of minority nationalities within their respective constitutional frameworks. In the former Soviet Union, the Marxist-Leninist distinction between nation and nationality was maintained. Those ethnic groups which were adjudged to have reached the level of nation were given the status of republics. Some of them even had UN membership – like Ukraine and Belarus. China is declared a multinational unitary state and none of its ethnic groups has received the status of a republic. Also none of the ethnic groups has been allowed to apply for the membership of the United Nations.

Like others' views, Lenin's position on national self-determination was contradictory. As a Marxist historian, he concluded that "self-determination of nations means the political separation of those nations from alien national bodies, the formation of an independent national state" and generally he proclaimed the right of peoples to self-determination. However, as a Communist, Lenin declared that the proletariat "evaluates every national demand, every national separation from the angle of the class struggle of the workers".<sup>18</sup> But the important thing to note is that national self-determination became a part of the Soviet ideology, and was enshrined in the USSR's constitutions of 1924, 1936 and 1977. Each of these constitutions included the right of each Union republic (nation) "to freely secede from the USSR". Such a constitutional guarantee legitimated the popular referendums of the early 1990s in the fifteen former Soviet republics, leading to their final declaration of national self-determination and independence.<sup>19</sup>

In what follows we shall discuss in some detail the CCP's changing positions on the question of national self-determination for the non-Han social groups in China. It should be noted that the CCP also promised, in 1931, the right to national self-determination to the Mongolian, Tibetan and Uighur peoples. Later we shall demonstrate how the ideological assumptions of the Maoist alternative model of self-determination have practically lost their validity in the post-Communist era.

The CCP, founded in 1921, showed its concern for national minorities fairly early. Among the objectives listed in the Manifesto of the Second National Congress of the CCP (July 1922), the following pertain to the national minorities:

2. The removal of oppression by international imperialism and the complete independence of the Chinese nation.
3. The unification of China proper (including Manchuria) into a genuine democratic republic.
4. The achievement of a genuine republic by the liberation of Mongolia, Tibet and Sinkiang.

5. The establishment of a Chinese federated republic by the unification of China proper.<sup>20</sup>

The federal system envisaged two republics – one for the Han, including the Manchus, and the other for the national minorities. Nowhere else does the federal idea figure so prominently in Party documents as it does in this document. The political resolution of the Sixth National Congress held in Moscow from July to September 1928 calls for a “unified China” and at the same time (and in the same sentence) recognizes the principle of national self-determination as one of the “major slogans” of the Chinese Revolution.<sup>21</sup>

A categorical statement of the Party’s position on self-determination is contained in the Resolution of the First All-China Congress of Soviets on the Question of National Minorities in China passed at the Congress held in November 1931 in the Jiangsi Soviet. A cautious and somewhat watered down version of the resolution is to be found in the Constitution of the Jiangsi Soviet Republic (Article 14). The original resolution, however, merits being quoted at some length:

the First All-China Congress of Soviets of Worker’s, Peasants’ and Soldier’s Deputies declares that the Chinese Soviet Republic categorically and unconditionally recognizes the right of the national minorities to self-determination. This means that in districts like Mongolia, Tibet, Sinkiang, Yunnan, Guizhou and others, where the majority of the population belongs to non-Chinese nationalities, the toiling masses of these nationalities shall have the right to determine for themselves whether they wish to leave the Chinese Soviet Republic and create their own independent state, or whether they wish to join the Union of Soviet Republics, or form an autonomous area inside the Chinese Soviet Republic.<sup>22</sup>

In this document the Chinese Marxists went beyond the Bolshevik definition of self-determination; the Russian rhetoric became a reality here. The national minorities were told in no uncertain terms to choose one of three things: they could secede and form their own independent state, or join the Chinese Soviet Republic, or form an autonomous region within the Chinese Republic like the one envisaged by the Second National Congress in 1922.

Although it swore by the right of self-determination, the document did not foreclose other options for the national minorities. It argued that both the Chinese and the national minorities had suffered at the hands of “the imperialists and the Chinese militarists and landlords and the bourgeoisie”, that the national minorities suffered oppression at the hands of both the local elite and from the elite at the centre, and that therefore, the national minorities should unite with the Chinese masses to overthrow all

oppressors, domestic and foreign. It revived the idea, first mooted in 1922, of a separate republic for the national minorities. It stated that the Congress “openly declares before the toiling masses of all nationalities in China that it is the purpose of the Chinese Soviet Republic to create a single state for them without national barriers and to uproot all national enmity and national prejudices”.<sup>23</sup> It was this aspect of the Jiangsi Soviet resolution that Mao Zedong emphasized when he acceded to the leadership of the CCP in 1935.

In the face of Japanese attacks on China, the CCP's position on self-determination began to change after 1931. The CCP felt that it should mobilize all the national minorities along with the masses for the purpose of anti-imperialism, that is to oppose Japanese aggression. However, it balked at promising self-determination; instead it emphasized the need to promote national regional autonomy. Mao propounded this new line in his presidential report to the Second National Congress held at Ruijin in January 1934. “The point of departure for the Soviet national policy”, he declared, “is the capture of all the oppressed minorities around the Soviets as a means to increase the strength of the revolution against imperialism and KMT”.<sup>24</sup> Whereas the emphasis in the Jiangsi Soviet documents was on the right of self-determination, the emphasis now was on the need to liberate the national minorities from the double oppression of foreign imperialism and domestic reaction. Mao said that in the case of Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia, the ruling classes had directly surrendered to imperialism and accelerated the colonization of their countries.<sup>25</sup>

That Mao practically reversed the Jiangsi Soviet position by propounding this new line is quite clear. He did not quote from, nor did he refer to, the First All-China Congress of Soviets on the Question of National Minorities in China (1931), which had, as we might recall, underlined the right of self-determination most unambiguously. On the other hand he chose to quote from the Jiangsi Soviet Constitution (Article 14), with its considerably watered-down statement on self-determination. The Jiangsi Soviet Constitution emphasized liberation and development rather than self-determination. The main thrust of Mao's argument was that the national minorities had been doubly oppressed by their traditional ruling class and by the KMT Government; and that Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia in particular had succumbed to imperialism. He seemed to argue that the answer to the national minorities problem was not independence from China but liberation from oppression.

Mao's stand on self-determination, even in the face of imperialism, reflected his determination not to yield to the demand by the national minorities for the right to self-determination. This was quite different from the stand of the Soviet Union. Both Lenin and Stalin had maintained that although the socialist cause took precedence over the question of finding a solution to the nationalities problem, it might be necessary, in order to

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oppose imperialism, not only to pay lip-service to the right of self-determination but also to recognize the right occasionally (as, for example, in the Finnish case) in a socialist context. Mao on the other hand appeared determined not to make any concession, even in the face of the Japanese invasion. Under no circumstances would the national minorities be allowed to secede from China. Mao's solution was neither independence nor autonomy *per se*. Instead it was that the "free union of nationalities will replace national oppression, an event that is possible only under the Soviet".<sup>26</sup> This was the source of his answer to the nationalities problem in China. In 1970 he told Edgar Snow that China was "in itself United Nations", with several of its minority nationalities much larger in population and territory than some states in the UN.<sup>27</sup>

During August–November 1935, the Communist forces, led by Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and others, marched across the northwest region. On 20 December, they issued a statement specifically addressed to the people of Inner Mongolia, where the Japanese presence had begun to be felt and where there "was evidence that some Mongols" were sympathetic to Japanese-sponsored "autonomy".<sup>28</sup> According to Chang's paraphrasing, the statement said that the aim of the Chinese Revolution was not only to liberate the whole of China from imperialist and warlord oppression, "but even more to struggle for the liberation of the 'small and weak peoples' within the country". It was noted in the statement that only if "we and the people of Inner Mongolia struggle together could our common enemies, the Japanese imperialists and Chiang Kaishek be quickly defeated; similarly it was only in common struggle with us that the Inner Mongolian people could avoid national destruction and take the road of national rejuvenation".<sup>29</sup>

To win the Mongols over and mobilize them against the Japanese, the document, which was apparently written in the form of an appeal, made a number of promises, but all of a limited and domestic nature. It did not even mention the phrase "self-determination" despite its manifestly conciliatory tone. However, the following, which is the second point of the document, seems to be a rough description of the national regional autonomy that the Communists offered to the national minorities in lieu of self-determination after 1949.

We recognize the right of the people of Inner Mongolia to decide all questions pertaining to themselves, for no one has the right to forcefully [sic] interfere with the way of life, religious observances, etc. of the Inner Mongolian people. At the same time, the people of Inner Mongolia are free to build a system of their own choosing; they are at liberty to develop their own livelihood, establish their own government, unite in a federation with other peoples, or make themselves entirely separate. In a word, the people are sovereign, and all nationalities are equal.<sup>30</sup>

On 25 May 1936 the CCP issued a similar statement to the Hui people. This statement set forth some of the basic ideas and terms of regional autonomy. It promised to grant religious freedom and protect religious institutions, abolish oppressive taxes and improve living standards, and develop educational facilities and promote the culture of the Hui people. As regards mobilizing the Hui forces for the anti-Japanese war, it proposed to establish an “independent” Hui people’s anti-Japanese army. It called upon the Hui people to unite with the Han and other nationalities – the people of Turkey, Outer Mongolia, the Soviet Union, etc. – who were “sympathetic” to the cause of complete liberation of all peoples of China from Japanese imperialism. It defined self-determination much more explicitly than the previous statements:

(1) Our fundamental policy of national self-determination extends to the local affairs of the Hui people. In all Hui areas, free and independent political authority established by the Hui people themselves will decide all matters relating to politics, economics, religion, customs and habits, morals, education, and so forth. Wherever the Hui people are in a minority, whether in large regions or in the villages and districts, they shall, on the basis of the principle of the equality of nationalities, establish the Hui people’s autonomous governments and manage their own affairs.<sup>31</sup>

One can discern a pronounced difference between the CCP’s attitude towards the Mongols and the Hui. The statement addressed to the Mongols is ambiguous while the one addressed to the Hui people is forthright. For the Mongols, the prospect of independence was not ruled out; for the Hui, autonomy was clearly defined. This is perhaps because the Mongols differed more from the Han than the Hui. Except for their Islamic faith, the Hui are Han in most respects.

In 1940 the office of the Secretary of the CCP Central Committee reviewed the policy towards the Hui and Mongol peoples. On the basis of the policy recommendations made by that office, the Northwest Work Committee (presumably concerned with national minorities affairs) laid down certain basic policy guidelines. They were based on the premise that the best way to unite the national minorities against Japan was to practise the “principle of nationality equality”. This entailed a simultaneous transformation of the “great Hanism” allegedly practised by the KMT and the “narrow nationalism” practised by the national minorities. It was not just a wartime policy; even to this day it remains the cornerstone of the CCP’s attitude towards the national minorities. It urged the Government “to let them [the national minorities] manage their own internal affairs; to respect their religious beliefs, spoken and written languages and customs and habits; [and] to assist them in improving their economic conditions of life”.<sup>32</sup> This was the substance of the national regional autonomy which



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was advocated and implemented in the liberated areas before 1949 and in all national minority regions thereafter.

The CCP's basic stand on the question of self-determination during the anti-imperialist phase was summed up in one sentence in the major Party document outlining its strategy and tactics to be followed in the anti-Japanese war, entitled "The Ten Great Policies of the CCP for Anti-Japanese Resistance and National Salvation" (15 August 1937): "Mobilize Mongolians, Moslems, and other minority groups for a common struggle against Japan on the basis of the principles of self-determination and self-government".<sup>33</sup> The statement to the people of Inner Mongolia reflected the principle of self-determination without secession; to the Hui race, it implied self-government. Generally speaking, the concept of self-determination in China became increasingly associated with self-government or national regional autonomy.

As we have seen, the CCP's position in the post-1931 period on the right to self-determination marked a distinct departure both from its past policy and from Lenin's stand. It differed from the line taken by the Soviet Union in three respects. Whereas the Soviet Union recognized Finland's independence, China did not grant independence to any of its national minorities. Although the Soviet Union continued to pay lip-service to the principle of self-determination, it did not grant the right to any people after Finland's independence. On the other hand the CCP, by its own admission, "discontinued emphasizing the slogan of national self-determination and federalism".<sup>34</sup> And, lastly, whereas the political solution found for the national minorities in the Soviet Union was federated republics, in China it was national regional autonomy.

The CCP's vision of the political status of the national minorities within the constitutional framework of a new China changed from time to time. In 1922 it envisaged a united federated republic in which China proper with Manchuria would form a republic, and Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang another republic. With the rise of Mao to leadership, this idea of a federated republic was dropped in the mid-1930s because Mao Zedong "did not favour federalism for China, as his predecessors in the CCP leadership had".<sup>35</sup> If the vision of a federated republic reflected the Soviet model, the "national regional autonomy" offered to the national minorities as a political substitute for self-determination was the "basic policy for resolving the national question in our country".<sup>36</sup> It was defined as "local autonomy exercised under the unified leadership of the central people's government depending on superior, national organs of leadership". It specifically meant the "management of their own internal affairs by the people of the national minorities".<sup>37</sup>

What is this Maoist line on the national question? Until 1934 there is no record of what Mao, the Marxist had said on the issue of self-determination. As President of the Central Committee of the Chinese

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Soviet Republic, Mao presented a 32-page report to the Second National Congress. This report devoted about roughly one page to an outline of what it called the national policy of Soviets, which began to influence the CCP's policy towards the national minorities almost immediately. The essence of this policy was that the CCP would cease to call for self-determination even for anti-imperialist rhetorical purposes. It considered autonomy sufficient.

In his report to the Seventh National Congress held in April 1935, Mao was more forthright in expressing his views. Indeed he made no use of Communist jargon of any kind. The CCP, he said, was in "complete accord with Dr Sun's racial policy", which was to assist the national minorities in their political, economic and cultural development. Their languages, customs, habits and religious beliefs should, he added, "be respected".<sup>38</sup> He made no mention of self-determination.

What Mao indicated in effect was that the national minorities should not have the right to self-determination; for that, according to him, was not in their latent interest. Instead they should remain within China and receive the benefits of the Han revolution. The underlying assumption was that the national minorities would not be able to develop on their own without Han help. That is, the new China encompassed the limits of imperial China. Much of this argument was as old as China; Mao's contribution to this claim consisted in his emphatic insistence on equal treatment of non-Han peoples. There was an ironic convergence of Marxist paternalism with Chinese nationalism, each reinforcing the other.

Stuart Schram notes that while some of Mao's ideas underwent considerable change over the years, his sense of patriotism remained fairly constant. In particular his attachment to the Chinese nation, which included all the non-Han minorities, his admiration for the Han people, and his unshakable belief that only revolution could redeem China and restore its greatness, showed "an astonishing continuity of thought".<sup>39</sup>

That the nation to which Mao was attached was the Chinese Empire, which claimed several "tributary states", is beyond doubt. In 1936 Edgar Snow documented in Mao's words that his political consciousness was first aroused in 1906 by Chinese nationalism:

I began to have a certain amount of political consciousness, especially after I read a pamphlet telling of the dismemberment of China. I remember even now that this pamphlet opened with the sentence: "Alas, China will be subjugated." It told of Japan's occupation of Korea and Formosa, of the loss of suzerainty in Indo-China, Burma, and elsewhere. After I read this I felt depressed about the future of my country and began to realize that it was the duty of all the people to help save it.<sup>40</sup>

Is there any substantive difference between the patriotic feelings of Mao, the non-Marxist in 1906, and the learned views of Mao, the Marxist-Leninist

on the national question after 1934? The following two ideas illustrate that there is very little difference: (a) the new Socialist China must inherit all the territories which were either ruled over by imperial China or claimed by it; and (b) the Han are the most revolutionary people and can lead the non-Han peoples to a higher stage of historical development. If, in the pre-Marxist period, Mao's belief in the territorial integrity of the Chinese Empire was prompted by his sense of nationalism, his decision to deny the right of national self-determination to the non-Han peoples was rooted in his view that Socialism would automatically resolve the national question. Perhaps the only addition to his "natural" Han views were some Marxist-Leninist normative values, especially the proposition that the national question was the result of inequality and oppression. According to this belief, once inequality, for which Socialism claims to be the solvent *par excellence*, is removed, the national question in China would automatically be solved.

Once it was granted that inequality was the cause of the national question, the Maoist solution, like the Stalinist one, was simple enough: equality. "It is only by implementing the principle of national equality that the objective of unity, mutual help, and trust among the nationalities can be reached."<sup>41</sup> A similar sentiment was repeatedly written into successive constitutions, resolutions, and propaganda on the national minorities. In line with such a sentiment, the Chinese blurred the usual Communist distinction between "nations" and "nationalities". They treated them all as equal nationalities within a single Chinese nation. This is a constitutional fiction which facilitates Han majoritarianism, as we shall demonstrate.

In short, the structure of the Maoist model of regional autonomy as an alternative to national self-determination, consisted of the following ideological propositions: (a) that the "Nationality Question" is the effect of economic inequality; (b) that it is also the effect of political domination or feudal relations; (c) that with the establishment of a socialist system, all the problems of economic inequality and feudal domination would be systematically solved; (d) hence, there's no need for the right to national self-determination in a socialist context.

Such a theory of denial of self-determination for non-Han peoples in the PRC was based on the Marxist utopian belief that total transformation of man and society was possible. However, since the Chinese Communists are characterized by their strong sense of pragmatism, Maoists' resort to Marxian utopia as ground for the denial of self-determination appears, in retrospect, an ideological justification for Han hegemony and Han expansionism in non-Han regions. The fact is that the Marxist-Leninist assumptions on which Mao's theory of denial of national self-determination were based, are fundamentally questioned by the collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Russia and Central Asia. In all of these post-Communist societies, including the PRC, we observe the

reappearance of ethnic person and traditional culture, the very reverse of what socialist transformation aimed at. In other words the post-Maoist developments in China since the mid-1970s and post-Communist velvet revolutions since 1989, have fundamentally questioned the Marxist and Maoist assumptions, invalidating the Maoist model of regional autonomy as an alternative to self-determination.

The PRC, under the objective impact of capitalist economic reforms is currently experiencing similar post-Communist developments. However, its Soviet fate is prevented by two unique factors: (a) skilful and careful management of economic reforms; (b) the overwhelming Han majority (93 per cent) that have monopolized the state power structure and armed forces, thereby incapacitating the non-Han peoples' self-determination struggles. Meanwhile the Han elites' political and cultural hegemony, and Han mass expansionism in non-Han regions have become a fact of life in the PRC. The ways in which hegemony and expansionism came about involve complex political processes and historical trajectories. For our purpose, the following summary may suffice to explain how a socialist revolution in China has degenerated into Han hegemony as far as the Tibetan people are concerned.

The most important and striking aspect of this Maoist degeneration is the ethnicization of state power structures (including the top echelons of the CCP and the PLA) by the Han political elite. Begun as exigencies and expediency of the Han revolution, the ethnicization of power has a long history in Communist China. For brevity's sake, I may generalize<sup>42</sup> the following rough stages: The revolutionary turmoil and crisis situations compelled the early Chinese Marxist leaders, especially since the early 1930s, to rely on and trust their own ethnic group (Han) with positions in power. This was justified as revolutionary expediency, which, it was hoped, would not be long-term practice. Secondly, with the seizure of state power in 1949 statist imperatives (including those of secrecy and trust) necessitated further ethnicization of the state power structure, and this was justified as providing "revolutionary leadership". Thirdly, with the deradicalization of Communist politics, many of the Han elite, particularly ones dealing with minority nationalities, fell on statist and conservative arguments in order to justify Han hegemony in non-Han regions. That is, Tibetans (or Mongols, or Uighurs) were several epochs behind the Han people in terms of either "revolutionary experience" (according to the Marxist canon) or "cultural advancement" (according to the Confucian canon), and that without Han leadership and help, minority nationalities cannot progress and develop on their own. Out of such reasoning grew the Han-man's burden in Tibet.

Since the state power structure in Beijing and Lhasa is fundamentally ethnicized, its policies and practices in Tibet cannot be neutral; they are ethnically determined. Thus, the Chinese language, Han culture and Maoist

values are projected and propagated in Tibet as coterminous with “progress” and “modernity” while anything Tibetan such as language, dress, culture, is stigmatized as “backward”.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the Chinese-exported revolution in a non-revolutionary Tibetan situation has clearly degenerated into Han political and cultural hegemony.

Statistics, researched by Australian and British scholars, prove this. In Malcolm Lamb’s directory of officials in the PRC during the period 1968–78,<sup>44</sup> we do not find any Tibetan official in the crucial sectors of the Han power structure, be it in the state, the Party or the armed forces. Such posts with crucial decision-making power are completely monopolized by the Han political elite in Beijing. Nor is the situation any better in Tibet. Robert Barnett’s list of Provincial-level leaders in Tibetan areas (1950–92)<sup>45</sup> reveals that seven Han leaders during the period wielded supreme political power in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), most of them holding top posts concurrently in both the Party and the Army. While the TAR has a local government which permits some degree of Tibetan participation, Amdo (Qinghai) and Kham (Xikang) are without even a local government. They are under complete Han domination. During the period 1949–85 only Han Governors ruled Amdo, most of them holding the concurrent posts of local Party Secretary as well. All the top posts in the party, the Army and government are monopolized by the Han elite.

If the essence of “regional autonomy” is Han hegemony in the name of “Central leadership” and Han expansionism in the name of “development” of “border regions”, then it constitutes a serious case of “national oppression”,<sup>46</sup> a normative criteria, Lenin considered for the right to national self-determination. According to Lenin, the “oppressed nation” (e.g. Tibet) has the right to national self-determination from the “oppressing nation” (China).<sup>47</sup> This view is not unimportant because the CCP still claims to be Marxist-Leninist party.

As we have observed, the Han political hegemony that operates under the pretext of regional autonomy in Tibet is the most systematic and organized form of national oppression that oppresses the Tibetan people politically, culturally and economically. It has no parallel or precedent in the history of Sino–Tibetan relations. Therefore, the post-Mao leadership in Beijing needs to seriously rethink the existing Maoist structures of national oppression in non-Han areas, and offer the Tibetan people a more decentralized arrangement that facilitates at least internal self-determination, self-government and self-administration. The Tibetan race, in their long history of war and peace, have demonstrated their ability to self-rule.

It is evident that the CCP did not have Tibet specifically in mind when they evolved their minority nationality policy and regional autonomy formula. The Communists, since 1921, did not have direct experience of Tibet and Tibetans except briefly during the Long March when they passed through Eastern Tibet (Kham) in 1934–35. The Maoist ideas about

minority nationalities were based on their experiences of Inner Mongolian and Hui peoples during the Chinese Revolution which did not touch Tibet and Xinjiang at all. Thus, the Maoist faction offered to the (Inner) Mongolians complete regional autonomy in 1935 and a year later internal self-determination to the Hui people. In fact the formative phases of the Maoist model of regional autonomy had a lot to do with the exigencies of the anti-Japanese war. For instance, in January 1934 Mao declared, "The point of departure for the Soviet national policy is the capture of all the oppressed minorities around the Soviets as a means to increase the strength of the revolution against imperialism and KMT."<sup>48</sup> This became the cornerstone of Maoist policy toward Mongols and Huis whom they encountered during the anti-Japanese war and revolution. Tibet did not figure in their policy formulation until 1949–50.

However, when Tibet did figure in their general discussions on the Nationality Question as it did from 1922 to 1931, the Chinese Marxist solution was not regional autonomy. In 1922 the CCP envisaged a two-republic federal system: one for Mongolians, Tibetans and Uighurs; the other for Han China plus Manchuria. In 1928 it promised self-determination for non-Han social groups, and in 1931 the Party proclaimed the complete right to national self-determination including secession to the peoples of Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang, Yunnan, Guizhou and others. It is, therefore, clear that when the CCP carefully thought, freed from the exigencies of crisis situations, of future appropriate arrangements for non-Han peoples in the Chinese "Soviet" ideocracy, they considered two feasible and fair options: either a federal system or national self-determination. "Regional autonomy", which easily and quickly degenerated into Han elite hegemony and Han mass expansionism, was not considered before 1949.

Since the existing regional autonomy has resulted, intentionally or otherwise, in internal colonialism, a case can be made for "internal self-determination"<sup>49</sup> for the Tibetan people, based on the following grounds: (a) Chinese Marxist precedent (1922–31); (b) UN resolutions and international support since 1959; (c) the Tibetan people's persistent demand for national self-determination as manifested in their revolts of 1956 (Kham), 1959 (Central and Southern Tibet) and 1987 (Lhasa); (d) post-Communist developments that have invalidated the Maoist rationale for and assumptions of regional autonomy.

But do the Tibetans fulfil the prerequisites of self-determination as understood in international law and the UN practice? And is such a definition of the Tibetan people acceptable to the Maoist masters, who with their power, will ultimately decide the fate of the Tibetan people? That is why I address my argument more to the Chinese leaders and Han people, appealing to their Marxist-Leninist sense of justice and precedent as well as assuring that Chinese vital state interests would not be affected in the case of granting internal self-determination for the Tibetan people.

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Such a Sino-centric approach is in order as a number of American, Asian and European legal experts and law scholars have viewed the Question of Tibet (and its resolution) from the perspective of international law.<sup>50</sup> I propose to examine two definitions of a people, one from UN usage because the PRC is not only a UN member but also a permanent Security Council member; the other from the Marxist-Leninist tradition to which the Chinese Communists officially adhere.

The UN documents use the term “people” for those who have the right to self-determination<sup>51</sup> and in the Marxist-Leninist tradition, “nation” refers to the same entity. In most of the scholarly literature the two terms are almost interchangeable. But where they differ critically are in the constituents of a nation or people – the national self. It appears that the number of attributes of nationhood and the order in which they are placed depend largely on the national perspectives and purposes of the authors in mind. J. V. Stalin, whom Lenin entrusted the National-Colonial Question, defined the nation as an “historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture”.<sup>52</sup> The Chinese Communists’ definition adds two or more attributes (i.e. customs and history) to Stalin’s list; otherwise it is similar. As Chang Chih-I writes: “The distinctive attributes of a nation as represented by modern scientific research are commonality of language, culture, customs and historical tradition, a certain stage of socio-economic development and a certain pattern of territorial distribution.”<sup>53</sup>

The UN’s latest definition of a people, contained in a UNESCO report (1990), offers perhaps the most exhaustive attribute list published so far:

A people for the rights of people in international law, including the right to self-determination, has the following characteristics: (a) A group of individual human beings who enjoy some or all of the following common features: (i) A common historical tradition; (ii) Racial or ethnic identity; (iii) Cultural homogeneity; (iv) Linguistic unity; (v) Religious or Ideological affinity; (vi) Territorial connection; (vii) Common economic life. (b) The group must be of certain number who need not to be large (e.g. the people of micro-states) but must be more than a mere association of individuals within a state. (c) The group as a whole must have the will to be identified as a people or consciousness of being a people – allowing that groups or some members of such groups, though sharing the foregoing characteristics, may not have the will or consciousness. (d) Possibly the group must have institutions or other means of expressing its common characteristics and will for identity.<sup>54</sup>

The UNESCO definition adds two more items (i.e. race and religion/ideology) to the Chinese attributes list. But more important than the mere

**Table 20.1** UN, Soviet Union and Chinese criteria for people/nation

S. No.	UNESCO	Soviet	Chinese
1	Common historical tradition	Historically constituted stable community of people	Historical tradition
2	Racial or ethnic identity		
3	Cultural homogeneity	Common culture	Common culture
4	Linguistic unity	Common language	Common language
5	Religious or ideological affinity	Psychological make up (?)	Common customs (?)
6	Territorial connection	Common economic life	Certain stage of socio-economic development

*Source: Experts on Further Study of the Rights of Peoples (Paris: UNESCO, 1990); J. V. Stalin, Marxism and National-Colonial Question (San Francisco, 1945); George Moseley (trans), The Party and the National Question in China (Cambridge, Mass, 1966).*

addition of attributes, it renders dynamic dimensions (b), (c) and (d) to the definition of a people deserving the right to self-determination. It clarifies that it is not mere number but group coherence of a people (b) that matters in the consideration of the right to self-determination. Moreover, a people in question must have sufficiently demonstrated its consciousness of being a distinct people (c) through institutions or “other means of expressing its common characteristics and will for identity” (d).

Table 20.1 shows the comparative positions of the UN, Soviet and Chinese Marxist criteria for judging the necessary prerequisites of a people or nation deserving the right to self-determination. Terms or phrases differ due to their original formulation or subsequent translation differences but all three positions agree on the importance of a common language, culture, historical tradition, compact territory and common economic life. It is interesting to note that both the Soviet and Chinese Marxist authors have excluded race or ethnic identity as well as shared values and worldview (religious or ideological affinity) from their attribute lists. Perhaps such exclusions may have reflected pre-1986 Marxist biases. However, today no one would deny the importance of race and religion (ethno-culturality) in the formation and assertion of ethnic/national identities. The UN and Chinese attribute lists include “historical tradition” in the same phraseology but Stalin seemed to have had more of a social history conception when he defined the nation as a “historically constituted stable community of people”.

On the other hand while both the UNESCO and the Soviet experts agree on “common economic life” in the exact phraseology, the Chinese expert



writes, apart from the Han people who might have reached “a certain stage of socio-economic development” most of the minority nationalities are “tribal peoples in a pre-modern stage”.<sup>55</sup>

In Chinese, the term “nation” is usually translated as *minzu*, which was historically applied to the Han race. “Nationality” is translated as *buzu* and generally applied to minorities, literally meaning “tribe”. Chang’s view of minority nationalities as “tribal peoples” reflects general Sino-centricity and even Confucian/Han chauvinism. As far as the Tibetans are concerned, they are neither a tribe nor an ethnic group; they constitute a distinct civilizational category, according to serious French, Italian and Japanese Tibetologists.<sup>56</sup>

Secondly, Chang’s insistence upon a certain stage of socio-economic development might be considered in the Chinese context a debatable criterion for self-determination. Mao Zedong described even Han society at the time of the “liberation” as “semi-feudal”.<sup>57</sup> It is also interesting to note that most of the nationalist movements occurred in underdeveloped countries, not in industrially advanced societies. Levels of development might not have much to do with the right to self-determination, and any Chinese insistence upon it constitutes a defensive argument for internal colonialism and Han-man’s burden. We shall, therefore, use a value-neutral term “common economic life” as used by UNESCO and the Soviet experts (Table 20.1: (vii)). Apart from this we, more or less, conform to the UN and Chinese criteria for self-determination as shown in Table 20.2:

(a) *History* The Tibetan people have a fairly long and certainly rich *common historical tradition*. It consists of two main genres: *Rgyal-rabs* and *Chos-'byun*. The former is usually translated as royal chronicles such as the old *Tibetan Chronicle*, and the latter, which are much more numerous, as “history of the progress of dharma” (or simply as religious history). For the English reader, I refer to some authoritative historical works in English based on original Tibetan and other reliable sources.<sup>58</sup>

Apart from a common historical tradition, Tibetans also share deep common historical memories, specially those of the *Chos-rgyal* (early Religious Kings) and the Dalai Lamas.

(b) *Race* It is true that like the Chinese and Tibetans belong to the same broad Mongoloid race. But it is not the common physiology of a broad racial category even in a scientific sense that shapes racial or ethnic identity. Specific race origin myths of a particular sub-race, which are deeply embedded in the psyche of that sub-race, psychologically define its racial self-hood and identity. This is how, like the Japanese with their sun-god myth, Tibetans (*bodpa/bod-rigs*) racially differentiate themselves from the Chinese (*rgyami/rgya-rigs*), as two distinct races as far

as popular beliefs and self-images derived from ethnogenic myths are concerned.

Han race origin myths such as “Pan Gu” and “Yellow Emperor” are quite different from the Tibetans. Tibetans also have several ethnogenic myths but the most popular one since the Buddhist revolution (eighth–eleventh centuries AD) is this; the Tibetan people as a race, trace their parentage to a monkey (father) and a rock ogress (*spha byan- chub semspa dan ma-brag srinmo*). The monkey is believed to be a reincarnation of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara and the rock that of an ogress.<sup>59</sup> This myth is deeply internalized among the Tibetan people as a distinct race.

(c) *Culture* Tibetan people have not only a common culture, they possess a unique civilization that is comparable to other “great civilizations of Europe and the East” in the words of a College de France doyen.<sup>60</sup> Professor Hajime Nakamura of Tokyo University finds “an element of universality” in Tibetan religious culture, which he says, has spread to Bhutan, China, Ladakh, Manchuria, Nepal, Russia and Sikkim since late medieval times.<sup>61</sup> The late Professor Giuseppe Tucci of Rome University, a highly respected student of Tibetology and Buddhology, concluded that Tibet represented a unique case of a full-blown Mahayana Tantric Buddhist cultural category that was hard to find in other parts of Asia.<sup>62</sup> A French Tibetologist went so far as to observe: “Tibet is not only an ethnic group but a civilization. The Tibetans stand distinctly from the Chinese, with whom they have nothing in common.”<sup>63</sup>

This applies not only to the religious culture which, it is true, has uniquely characterized the Tibetan culture (*rig-gzhun*) but also to the domain of popular cultural traits such as personal names, food, dress, marriage institutions, birth and death rituals, etc. In fact the common Tibetan folk, in contrast with their ruling class who had adopted some elements of Chinese food habits and Mongolian dress, have little in common with the Han people. A comparative study of Chinese and Tibetan folk literature confirms this.<sup>64</sup>

What lends Tibetan culture a pan-Tibetan character are its common basis: Tibetan Buddhism, Bonpo residue and high plateau environment. Essentially, Tibetan culture is a peculiar product of the interaction between Tibetan Buddhism with Bonpo residue and the harsh environment which pervades every sector of social life on the high plateau. This common culture organizes (and motivates) Tibetan behaviour patterns, giving them high degrees of social unity and cultural homogeneity.

(d) *Language* An earlier generation of Western linguists classified Tibetan as belonging to the Tibeto-Burmese family of languages. Since the mid-1950s it has been reclassified as broadly falling within a linguistic family called Sino–Tibetan. Both are based on the assumptions of

hypothetical ancestor languages (Proto-Tibeto-Burman and Proto-Sino-Tibetan) which are no longer in existence. The latest research on the Tibetan language, conducted over ten years by Dr Stephan Beyer, indicates that “Tibetan is more distantly related to Burmese and more distantly still to Chinese.” Tibetan is a language “spoken primarily on the high plateau north of the Himalayas” – Tibet. It has had a writing system since the seventh century, borrowed from an Indian prototype but Tibetan itself is “unrelated to Sanskrit or any other Indic language”.<sup>65</sup> It has an “absolutely vast”<sup>66</sup> literature and may be considered among Asian languages second only to Chinese in the depth of its historical record.<sup>67</sup>

Certainly there are some regional dialects within the spoken language such as Lhasa, Golok, Kham, etc., but it is unified by a single writing system propagated by Lama missionaries and the Lhasa administration. Moreover, regional dialects are inter-communicable. For example, when Je Tsonghkapa travelled from Amdo to Central and Western Tibet, he did not have to employ a Lhasa interpreter. For the basic language structure is the same, the peculiarity of dialects is their different accents (phonology). The Tibetan people enjoy a high degree of linguistic unity which they call *bod-skad* (Tibetan speech community) and absolute uniformity in writing, with two basic scripts *uchen* (print form) and *umed* (cursive).<sup>68</sup>

(e) *Religion* That the Tibetan people have a common religion (previously called “Lamaism” and now appreciatively Tibetan Buddhism) is common knowledge both in the West and the East. However, it would be fair to state that Tibetan religion is not a monolith. Being one of the most complex religious systems in the world, it has four major sects (*nyin-ma-pa*, *sa-skyapa*, *bka'-brgyudpa* and *dge-lugs-pa*) which have a rich diversity (in terms of different guru lineages, philosophical interpretations, ritual practices, etc.) but within a basic unity.<sup>69</sup> The basic unity stems from the fact that all the sects accept the two Tibetan Buddhist canons, *bka'-gyur* and *bstan-igyur*, as their foundational texts. Moreover the sects are not concentrated in particular areas or regions (except Lhasa, Sakya) which would have been a destabilizing factor in Tibetan society; they are spread throughout the Tibetan plateau (and beyond) in close proximity to each other, thereby encouraging cultural interaction and healthy competition.

The formation of the four sects within Tibetan Buddhism has an ethnocultural significance to Tibetan cultural identity. They represented the “Tibetanization” of Buddhism to a degree that is uniquely Tibetan or lamaist. The process, however, did not distort the essence and logic of Buddha-Nagarjuna philosophy; it refined and elaborated Buddhist philosophy and practice to such a high degree that is well-known the world over.

Sectarian affiliations did not apply to the lay people who broadly described themselves as nan-pa (those within the fold of Buddhist law(s)), and generally respected all the Buddhist sects. Apart from Buddhists who formed the overwhelming majority, there were a few Bonpos, Christians and Muslims in Tibet. That the Tibetan people enjoyed a strong and close bond of religious affinity is a well-established social fact.

(f) *Territory* Do the Tibetan people have “a common territory” that they can call their ethnocultural homeland? If so, does it show a “certain pattern of territorial distribution” or “territorial connection”? The answer is yes. It is called the Tibetan Plateau in geography textbooks. It was explored in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by British, French and Swedish geographers who defined it as a high plateau or tableland.<sup>70</sup> On this high tableland was constructed the edifice of Tibetan civilization, walled in by the Hindukush to the southwest, the Karakorum and Himalayas to the south and southeast, the Altai and Tianshan to the north.

Within this splendid geographical isolation but with sufficient culture contacts with the major centres of ancient Asian civilization (i.e. India, China and Iran), the Tibetan people created, over the centuries, their common ethnogenic myths and historical tradition, cultural and linguistic identities, and their common economic life on the high Inner Asian plateau. The Tibetan Plateau is a unique geographical entity in and by itself which crystallized Tibetan national identity. It is a huge natural crucible within which Indian Mahayana Buddhism and Chinese traditional sciences melted, making them uniquely Tibetan or lamaistic.

(g) *Economy* In contrast with the traditional economy of China which is essentially a rice-growing one, the Tibetan economy consists of highland barley-growing (*zhin-pa*) and nomadic/dairy products (*shamar*). The Tibetan economy has been largely determined by its peculiar geography. The subsistence farming and dairy products tended to supplement each other, making a common economic life on the Tibetan plateau possible.<sup>71</sup> Whereas the Han people are essentially rice-eaters, the Tibetan people are tsampa (roasted and ground barley flour) eaters.

The foregoing list of national/popular attributes of a people/nation as required by the UN and the PRC definitions and the accompanying tables demonstrate that the Tibetan people fulfil all the necessary and sufficient requirements for self-determination. It is not simply the cataloguing of attributes that might constitute “a mere association of individuals” within a geographical space. In the Tibetan case, the national attributes are so interconnected and integrated, giving the Tibetan people high degrees of social coherence and political solidarity, as required by the UNESCO

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**Table 20.2** Application of UN and Chinese criteria for people/nation to the Tibetan case

S. No	<i>UN and Chinese criteria</i>	<i>Tibetan term</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	Common historical tradition	rgyal-rabs and chos-byun	Royal chronicles and history of progress of chos (Dharma)
2	Common racial identity	Bdpa/bod-rigs	Trace to "monkey and rock ogress" myth
3	Common culture	Rig-gzhurn	Buddhism-and Bon-induced culture
4	Linguistic unity	Bod-skad	Tibeto-Burmese family with Sanskrit-based alphabets
5	Shared values/worldview	Chos (Dharama)	Tibetan Buddhism
6	Territorial connection	Bod gans-chen-ljons	Tibetan Plateau surrounded by mountain ranges
7	Common economic life	Rtsampa/sha-mar	Barley growing economy (zhin-pa) supplemented by dairy (nomadic) products ('brogpa)

definition at (b) and (c). For instance: note the recurrence of the words *bod* (Tibet) and *Chos* (religion). They are the common and fundamental reference-points of the Tibetan people. Indeed, the Tibetan-speaking people inhabiting the Tibetan plateau constitute a common, functioning social system. They share the same ethnogenic myths, a common historical tradition, a common religion, similar social structures and political institutions, a common language unified by a single writing system, common economic life and occupy a geophysically and culturally well-defined, compact territory. Differences among the three or four regions (Amdo, Kham, U and Tsang) are relatively superficial (e.g. in dialect and dress) in comparison with the fundamental commonalities (see Table 20.2) they all share.

The Tibetan national consciousness, in modern times, has risen in almost direct proportion to the stages of the Communist takeover. In early 1952, a popular movement called *mi-man tsogs-'du* called the PRC to quit Tibet and declared Tibet's freedom.<sup>72</sup> In 1958 a Khampa militant organization called *chu-bzhi gans-'drug* fought against the PLA troops in Central and Southern Tibet. In 1959 the citizens of Lhasa and others revolted against the Chinese takeover.<sup>73</sup> After the abortive revolt and the Dalai Lama's escape to India, most observers thought the Tibetan people's will to resist the Chinese domination was broken. But this was proved

incorrect. In 1987 pro-independence demonstrations in Lhasa erupted. Between 1987 and 1992 there were 140 pro-independence demonstrations in Tibet.<sup>74</sup>

In exile the Dalai Lama functions, among other things, as the critical conscience of a subjugated people and as a national institution he symbolizes the consciousness of the Tibetans as a distinct people and unique civilization that is under threat of extinction. The Lama's global activities, championing the Tibetan cause, needs no elaboration as they are frequently reported in the international media. There are also several pan-Tibetan organizations such as the Tibetan Youth Congress, the Tibetan Freedom Movement, the Tibetan Women's Association, etc. that are actively asserting the Tibetan identity and championing the Tibetan cause.

The preceding documentation and description suggests that (a) the Tibetan people are a cohesive and well-integrated social group, as required by the UNESCO clause (b) definition; (b) that the Tibetans as a cohesive social group have given sufficient evidence of their consciousness as a people demanding self-determination through the institution of the Dalai Lama and other popular organizations as required by clauses (c) and (d) of the UNESCO definition.

The demand for Tibetan self-determination should not be construed as an elite conspiracy to restore their lost power and privileges. The Tibetan word for self-determination is *ran-thag ran-gchod*, literally meaning "self-decision, self-made". The word "self" is understood in both collective and individual senses. And this state of affairs was how it was in pre-1950 traditional Tibet, especially in relation to China or the Chinese. Whatever level and degree of Sino-Tibetan politico-cultural relations existed then were primarily confined to the Emperor in Beijing and the Dalai Lama in Lhasa. The vast majority of common Tibetans had never seen Han people in their life before 1950; for the Chinese presence was limited to Lhasa and the Sino-Tibetan border areas in Amdo and Kham. Hence, the Communist takeover in 1950 and subsequent massive Chinese population transfer to Tibet<sup>75</sup> appear, in popular Tibetan perception, as an act of internal colonialism and invasion, which they feel they must oppose and resist. Indeed the question of self-determination arises in a context of other-determination which Lenin called national oppression. The fact is that all the vital spheres of Tibetan people's life (i.e. political, cultural-ideological, economic and even social) are today Han-determined to an extent that never happened in the history of Sino-Tibetan relations.

In short, at least the Tibetan social history has been a history of internal self-determination. And this is what most of the Tibetan people mean when they demand *ran-thag, ran-gchod*. They strongly feel that they as a race, people or an ancient nation have demonstrated sufficient civilizational competence for self-rule.

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Some practical questions remain relating to Tibet's viability and the implications of the domino theory to the integrity and security of the PRC. We shall take them one by one.

1. *Will the Chinese granting of internal self-determination to the Tibetan people lead to the break-up of China?*

The PRC officially lists 55 minority nationalities<sup>76</sup> within its present boundaries. However, most of them are what Chang calls small tribal groups without much recorded history or literate culture, found mostly in Yunnan and Gansu provinces.<sup>77</sup> Without minimizing their group rights, such pre-literate tribes cannot be compared with Tibetan people whose national attributes we have just examined. In terms of civilizational competence, group cohesiveness and the history of self-determination struggles, the really significant non-Han peoples in the PRC are the Tibetans, Mongols and Uighurs.<sup>78</sup> Again without minimizing the Mongol and Uighur people's rights to self-determination, the Tibetan people have demonstrated the largest and most persistent self-determination struggle due to their cohesive social organization, unique national identity and able leadership under the Dalai Lama. This is true of neither the Mongols nor of the Uighurs; their national identities and political entities were not so well-established in history as those of the Tibetans.

Mao Zedong and other early Chinese Marxist leaders partly recognized this unique character and status of Tibet in the Middle Kingdom, when they signed the Seventeen Point Agreement with the Dalai Lama's government on 23 May 1951.<sup>79</sup> Such a treaty was not signed with any other minority nationality. The Tibetan demand for internal self-determination must be viewed as a political progression, under vastly changed circumstances, from the Seventeen Point Agreement of 1951. This precedent might moderate other non-Han social group's political demands within China. Finally, the Dalai Lama's Strasbourg proposal (1988)<sup>80</sup> calls, in essence, for internal self-determination which does not demand secession from China (the Lama termed it "in association with China"). Nor does the proposal endanger China's vital interests such as defence and foreign affairs, both of which he offered to Beijing.

In fact if Tibet is granted, through internal self-determination, the Associate status (the Dalai Lama) or an Autonomous Statehood (Chinese dissidents) the whole structure will have a peace-producing effect in Asia. For Tibet has been a political victim of Sino-Indian strategic rivalry since the mid-twentieth century. The crux of the Sino-Indian strategic rivalry is this: if the Chinese power elite consider Tibet strategically important to China, their Indian counterparts think it is equally vital to India's northern security system. For if India dominates Tibet (as the British Raj had done up to 1947) the Chinese feel insecure and threatened. Conversely, if China occupies Tibet (as the PRC has been doing since 1950), India feels her

whole northern security system extending over 3,200 km is open to external danger. Thus Tibet presents itself as a strategic dilemma to both the parties, producing an arms race and militarization on both sides of the Himalayas, as well as mutual suspicion and tension. Such a strategic zero-sum game over Tibet might be resolved through demilitarization and neutralization of the contested region, as Great Britain and Imperial Russia did in 1907, which ensured peace for 43 years. What I have suggested is in the basic interests of all three parties involved. It satisfies the Tibetan people's desire for internal self-determination and the security needs of China and India.<sup>81</sup>

2. *Will the implementation of self-determination in Tibet lead to the restoration of the ancien regime?*

This is not a mere academic question; it is a matter of concern to Chinese Marxists, Western supporters and the Tibetan intelligentsia. The Dalai Lama's recent constitution making projects in exile might reflect the direction in which the politicized sections of the Tibetan people seem to be moving. Ronald Schwartz, after much fieldwork in Tibet, observes that the Tibetan masses "now associate their struggle for independence with demands for democracy and human rights".<sup>82</sup>

Such democratic sentiments among the Tibetan people may be understood in the post-1959 context of relatively modern conditions inside and outside Tibet. Inside Tibet the Communist propaganda have propagated certain elements of an egalitarian ideology such as equality and freedom as the new canon, though Chinese Communists have hardly practised such values in Tibet. And in exile, owing primarily to the positive demonstration effects of the functioning Indian democracy, democratic sentiment among the Tibetan refugees is widespread in spite of the personality cult built around the Dalai Lama and his family.

Economically, Tibet might not become a Japan or Singapore but it could have a self-sufficient economy more developed than before. Tibet's is not a case of failed modernization because Tibetans simply refused to be modernized as attempted by the XIII Dalai Lama under British auspices. Tibetan refugee enterprises in Nepal and India, as observed by several social scientists,<sup>83</sup> indicate that the Tibetans, given the opportunity, can enter the modern world economy quite easily. I believe Tibet has most of the cultural preconditions for development and modernization that are found in contemporary industrializing countries in Asia.<sup>84</sup>

3. *Finally, in the event of internal self-determination, are the Tibetan people capable of unity, order and stability?*

These are difficult questions. We can briefly discuss them in the light of historical patterns and present trends of general unity as well as of elite conflicts. Shared commonalities of religion, culture, race, language, history and economic life within a compact territory (see Table 20.3) had given the



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**Table 20.3** Some contrasting features of Han and Tibetan ethnic groups

S. No	Features	Han	Tibetan
1	Race origin myth(s)	Yellow Emperor (Huangdi)	Monkey-Rock Ogress parentage
2	Homeland	Middle Kingdom (Zhongguo)	"Land of Snows"
3	Religion	Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism	Tibetan Buddhism
4	Language	Ideograph/monosyllabic	Alphabet/disyllabic
5	Ruler	Son of Heaven (Tianzi, Emperor)	Reincarnation of spyan-ras-gzigs (Dalai Lama)
6	Polity	Centralized bureaucratic system	Chos-srid gnyis-Iden "theocratic" system
7	Economy	Rice eaters	rtsampa eaters
8	Art/literature	Secular motives	Religious motives (e.g., thangka)
9	Civilization	Confucian	Mahayana Tantric Buddhist

Tibetan people, over the centuries, high degrees of cultural, social and linguistic homogeneity. The sense and consciousness of being bodpa (Tibetan) and nan-pa (Tibetan Buddhist) is deeply ingrained; it is accentuated by the Chinese presence in Tibet and living pan-Tibetan symbols like the Dalai Lama. In other words, there are more common factors making for Tibetan unity than for division, such shared commonalities can be manipulated for unity mobilization, as the present Dalai Lama has been ably doing.

The Tibetan people have not only the social experience of living and functioning within a larger society (*spyi-tsoqs*) which flows from the shared commonalities. They also have had the historical experience of functioning under the rule of their own government which they variously called *sdepa-gzhun/dga'-ldan pho-bran/bod-gzhun*.<sup>85</sup> In particular, the institution of the Dalai Lama is a pan-Tibetan religio-political symbol, *par excellence*. It creates a sense of Tibetan unity and national purpose.

While cultural homogeneity, linguistic and social unity were the foundation of the Tibetan political order, which ensured considerable social harmony, it is not without contestation. Challenges to the political order both in the past and now in exile, have come mostly from the Khampa chieftains. Even before 1950, large parts of Kham were already under the Chinese rule but Khampas enjoyed considerable freedom from both Beijing and Lhasa. They had, in the past, challenged the Lhasa government but usually not the authority of the Dalai Lama whom, they,

**Table 20.4** Tibetan language periodicals in exile, 1960–1998

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Periodical</i>	<i>Place of publication</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Periodicity</i>
1	Bod-mei Rang-Dwang (Tibetan Freedom)	Darjeeling	1960	Weekly
2	Shes-'bya (Sheja)	Dharamsala	1968	Monthly
3	Rang-btsan	Dharamsala	1985	Occasional
4	Ma-'Khyog Drang-thig	New Delhi	1979	Monthly
5	Dmangs-gtso	Dharamsala	1980	Fortnightly
6	Gtam-tsogs	Dharamsala	1981	Biannual
7	Lhag-Bsam Btsegs-pa	Dharamsala	1985	Annual
8	Skul-ba' Gtam	Dharamsala	1985	Occasional
9	Ljang-Gzhon	Dharamsala	1975	Annual
10	Zla-Gsar	Dharamsala	1987	Occasional
11	Gang-Rgyun	Dharamsala	1990	Occasional
12	Pha-Yul	Dharamsala	1990	Occasional
13	Rda-sai Pho-nya	Dharamsala	1990	Monthly
14	Bod-mei Rtsa-don	Darjeeling	1993	Weekly
15	Ti-sri Wodser	Dharamsala	1993	Biannual
16	Gang-ri Langtso	Dharamsala	1994	Annual
17	Bod-kyi Dus-bab	Dharamsala	1995	Fortnightly
18	Gnyen-chen Thang-lha	Kathmandu	1995	Fortnightly
19	Himalayai Rna-Sgra	Kathmandu	1996	Occasional
20	Himalayai Melong	Kathmandu	1997	Occasional
21	Drang-ldan	Delhi	1995	Monthly
22	Drol-ma	Dharamsala	1995	Occasional
23	Cholkha-sum	Dharamsala	1998	Fortnightly
24	Nor-lde	Sidhpur	1997	Monthly

Source: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1998.

like all other Tibetans, revere as the reincarnation of *spyan-ras gzigs*, the patron saint of Tibet. This trend continues even in exile. Surkhang Wangchen Gelek and his Lhasa group in the early 1960s, Gungthang Tsultrim and his 13 Khampa groups from the late 1960s, and Lithang Athar and his faction of *Chu-bzhi gans-'drug* in the mid-1990s did not challenge the authority of the Dalai Lama; they all contested Gyalo Thondup's monopolization of political power and foreign contacts. Thus, there is an urgent need in future to free the institution of the Dalai Lama from patrimonialism. Regionalism and sectarianism, particularly when the two forces are combined, are likely to be destabilizing factors but they can be

minimized and managed by the Dalai Lama. In short, the continuation of the institution of the Dalai Lama is a necessary condition for relative stability and order in post-self-determination Tibet.

We cannot discuss, here, all the questions relating to the practical modalities of self-determination in Tibet, which must be left to detailed negotiations among the parties concerned. However, the following three questions seem to be crucial and we will briefly discuss each in turn.

1. *Who will vote in the plebiscite?*

Since self-determination is a people's right (people or nation as defined by the UN (1990) and the PRC (1956), the criteria all being fulfilled by the Tibetan people, only the Tibetan people as defined in this paper and possibly those of mixed parentage ought to have the right to vote in a plebiscite.

Most of the Han people in Tibet (such as the PLA, administrative and technical personnel) are there on government order, not out of choice; they would be willing to return to the Han areas to which they are culturally and emotionally more attached, and which are climatically more suited to Han settlement. This might apply to Han settlers also, as happened recently in the case of Russian minorities in the former Soviet republics. However, this aspect needs further discussion and detailed negotiation.

2. *Who will conduct and supervise the plebiscite?*

Tibetan public opinion and most Western supporters feel that the PRC or their local puppet government in Lhasa cannot be trusted with the supervision of a fair and free plebiscite. The UN should be requested to administer the plebiscite, as it did in the case of the British Cameroons (1960) or East Timor (1999). And preferably the Chinese armed forces and security personnel should be withdrawn, to be temporarily replaced by neutral forces.

3. *What should be asked in the plebiscite?*

Obviously there are two principal choices: internal self-determination or the status quo. However, since the majority of the Tibetan people are not well-educated in modern ways, they do face difficulties in understanding the basic choices they are supposed to make. For instance, so far they are familiar with two extreme political concepts: *ran-btsan* (independence) as popularized by the Tibetan exiled government or *ran-skyon ljons* (autonomy) as promulgated by the Chinese Communists in Tibet. Our project is midway between the two extremes, whose subtleties and finer details must be spelled out and concretized to educate the Tibetan public. The Dalai Lama's 1988 Strasbourg proposal could form a baseline document for framing the questionnaire. In fact, if Beijing accepts that proposal, there is probably no need for a plebiscite in Tibet because the Dalai Lama enjoys the popular Tibetan mandate.

# Notes

## Introduction

- 1 The following works come to mind: Tieh-Tseng Li, *The Historical Status of Tibet* (New York, 1956); International Commission of Jurists, *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law* (Geneva: ICJ, 1959) and *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic: A Report to the International Commission of Jurists by its Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet* (Geneva: ICJ, 1960); Alfred P. Rubin, "The Position of Tibet in International Law", *The China Quarterly* (July–September, 1968), R. P. Anand, "The Status of Tibet in International Law", *International Studies*, Vol. 10, Special Issue, 1969; Michael C. Van Walt Van Praag, *The Status of Tibet* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1987); *The Legal Status of Tibet* (Dharamsala: Office of Information and International Relations, 1989); Robert McCorquodale and Nicholas Orosz (eds.), *Tibet: The Position in International Law* (Stuttgart: Hansjorg Mayer, 1994).
- 2 Mark Mancall, *China at the Center: 300 Years of Foreign Policy* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), p. 39.
- 3 Mancall, n. 2, p. 39.
- 4 *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 5 March 2000.
- 5 Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works, Vol. V* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1977), p. 64.
- 6 Austine L. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1967), 2nd edition.
- 7 TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow: The Secret Report of the 10th Panchen Lama* (London: Tibet Information Network, 1997), p. 63.

## Chapter 1

- 1 Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: Capital Publishing Co., 1951 [1940]). See also, Henri Maspero, *China in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Mass., University of Massachusetts Press, 1978).
- 2 Lattimore, n. 1, p. 15.
- 3 Lattimore, n. 1, p. 356.

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- 4 Lattimore, n. 1, p. 345.
- 5 Lattimore, n. 1, p. 345.
- 6 John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973), p. 20.
- 7 Daniel L. Overmyer, Introduction, "Chinese Religions – The State of the Field", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (February, 1995), p. 126.
- 8 Robert P. Kramers, "The Development of the Confucian Schools", *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: University Press, 1986), p. 749.
- 9 Yu Ying-shih, "Han Foreign Relations", *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 378.
- 10 For example, in the pre-1959 Tibetan currency notes issued by the Tibetan government has the following inscription: gnam-bkos dga'ldan pho-gran phyags-les rnam-rggal.
- 11 To describe *tian* as shamanistic belief might be perceived by such cultured people as derogatory towards the Chinese. However, some respected Sinologists such as David Keightly and K. C. Chang reach this conclusion. See David N. Keightly, "Neolithic and Shang Periods", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (February, 1995), pp. 129–33; "A conversation with K. C. Chang", *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (April 1995), p. 314.
- 12 Donald Harper, "Warring States, Ch'in and Han Periods", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (February, 1995), p. 155.
- 13 Dawa Norbu, *Culture and the Politics of Third World Nationalism* (London New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 67–81.
- 14 Lattimore, n. 1, p. 391. See also, L. C. Perelmov and A. C. Martinov, *Imperial China: Foreign Policy Conceptions and Methods* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983), pp. 6–20.
- 15 Yu, n. 9, p. 378.
- 16 Yu, n. 9, pp. 379–80.
- 17 Keightly, n. 11, p. 149.
- 18 Keightly, n. 11, p. 149.
- 19 Keightly, n. 11, p. 149.
- 20 Keightly, n. 11, p. 149.
- 21 Jing-shen Tao, *Two Sons of Heaven: Studies in Sung-Liao Relations* (Tucson: Arizona, 1988), p. 4.
- 22 Yu, n. 9, p. 380.
- 23 John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 6–11.
- 24 Tao, n. 21, p. 4.
- 25 Yu, n. 9, p. 383. Hsung-nu is believed to be of Turkic ancestors, and Ch'iang of Tibetan ancestors. Ch'iang may be what Tibetans call jang (jan) which is mentioned in the Gesar Epic.
- 26 Yu, n. 9, p. 386.
- 27 Yu, n. 9, p. 386; Fairbank, n. 23, p. 4.
- 28 Fairbank, n. 23, p. 3.
- 29 Lien-sheng Yang, "Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order", in Fairbank, n. 23, p. 20.
- 30 Yu, n. 9, p. 386.
- 31 Yu, n. 9, p. 408.
- 32 Yu, n. 9, p. 398.
- 33 Tao, n. 21, p. 7.
- 34 Mark Mancall, "The Ch'ing Tribute System: An Interpretive Essay", in Fairbank, n. 23, p. 66.

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- 35 Hae-jong Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period", in Fairbank, n. 23, p. 111.
- 36 Mancall, n. 34, p. 76; Yu, n. 9, p. 446.
- 37 Yang, n. 29, p. 21.
- 38 Wang Gangwu, "Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia: A Background Essay", in Fairbank, n. 23, p. 49.
- 39 Mancall, n. 34, p. 71.
- 40 Wang, n. 29, pp. 45 and 38. This section is based on a paper presented to "International Conference of Mongolists" held on 20–24 February 1995 at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.
- 41 Fairbank, n. 23, pp. 1–14; Yu, n. 9, pp. 377–83.
- 42 Fairbank, n. 23, p. 3.
- 43 Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: University Press, 1995), p. 254.
- 44 Johnston, n. 43, p. 249.
- 45 Johnston, n. 43, p. 265.
- 46 See, Morris Rossabi (ed.), *China Among Equals* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983).

## Chapter 2

- 1 Yihong Pan, "The Sino-Tibetan Treaties in the Tang Dynasty", *T'oung Pao*, Vol. LXXVIII (1992), pp. 17–21.
- 2 For the details of Chinese gifts she brought to Tibet, see Wang Jiawei and Nyima Gyailcain, *The Historical Status of China's Tibet* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 1997), pp. 8–12.
- 3 Yu Ying-Shih, "Han Foreign Relations", *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 410.
- 4 Yihong, n. 1, p. 117.
- 5 For the meaning and evolution of this term, see Chapter 9.
- 6 Yihong, n. 1, pp. 155–7.
- 7 H. E. Richardson, "Ancient Historical Edicts At Lhasa and The Mu Tsung/KHRI GTSUG LDE BRTSAN TREATY OF AD 821–822 From the Inscription at Lhasa", Prize Publication Fund, Vol. XIX, The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1952, p. 71.
- 8 Christopher I. Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia* (Princeton: University Press, 1987), p. 22.
- 9 The Sino-Tibetan treaties of 732, 783 and of 822 frequently use this kinship terminology. See, Yihong, n. 1, pp. 153–8; Richardson, n. 6, pp. 35–82.
- 10 Yihong, n. 1, pp. 124–5.
- 11 Beckwith, n. 8, pp. 19–20.
- 12 Beckwith, n. 8, p. 119.
- 13 Beckwith, n. 8, p. 199.
- 14 Beckwith, n. 8, pp. 144–5.
- 15 Yihong, n. 1, p. 122.
- 16 Beckwith, n. 8, p. 25.
- 17 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 2, p. 13.

## Chapter 3

- 1 Wang Jiawei and Nyima Gyailcain, *The Historical Status of China's Tibet* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 1997), p. 15.

## Notes

- 2 John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973), pp. 132–51.
- 3 Fairbank et al., n. 2, p. 140.
- 4 Fairbank et al., n. 2, p. 142.
- 5 Fairbank et al., n. 2, p. 124.
- 6 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 1, p. 15.
- 7 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 1, p. 15.
- 8 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 1, p. 18.
- 9 Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 56.
- 10 I try to explain this apparent paradox and other related issues in my article, “Indo-Tibetan Cultural Relations Through the Ages”, *Tibet House Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (May, 1998, New Delhi), pp. 4–5.
- 11 Shakabpa, n. 9, p. 59.
- 12 Shakabpa, n. 9, p. 60.

## Chapter 4

- 1 Wang Jiawei and N. Gyailcian, *The Historical Status of China's Tibet* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 1997), p. 21, 23 and 30.
- 2 Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 61–72 and 71; anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, (Dharamsala, India: Department of Information and International Relations, 1996), p. 22. The term “the Sakya Lamas” is referred to in the founding fathers of the Sakyapa sect, in particular and those lamas belonging to the *khon* lineage in general. More specifically, in the context of our discussion, it refers to the Sakya Pandita (Sa-skyia Pandita Kung-dg' rgyal-tsen) and Phagpa (Chos-rgyal 'phags-pa).
- 3 For a detailed monograph on Yuan–Sakya relations, see Jiun Yih Chang, “A Study of the Relationship between the Mongol Yuan Dynasty and the Tibetan Sa-Skyia Sect”, unpublished doctoral thesis, Indiana University, 1984.
- 4 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 1, p. 20.
- 5 Sakya Pandita's letter addressed to the religious and lay leaders of Tibet, from the Mongol court, indicate that such a negotiation did take place between the Khan and the Lama, and that the latter was persuaded to ask his fellow countrymen to submit on favourable conditions offered to the Lama: see the text of the letter cited from *Sa-skyi gdun-rabs rin-chen bang-mzod* in anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, pp. 10–12.
- 6 Shakabpa, n. 2, pp. 61–2; anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, p. 9; Wang and Gyailcain, n. 1, p. 22.
- 7 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 1, p. 22; Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 62; anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, p. 9.
- 8 Shakabpa, n. 2, pp. 64–5; anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, p. 14.
- 9 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 64; anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, p. 14.
- 10 For the detailed areas that constituted the twelve provinces of Yuan China, see anon., n. 2, pp. 17–18.
- 11 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 67; Wang and Gyailcain, n. 1, p. 25.
- 12 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 1, p. 26.
- 13 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 61; anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, p. 9.
- 14 Anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, pp. 12–13.
- 15 *Sa-skyi gdun-rabs rin-chen ban-mzod*.
- 16 Anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, p. 10.
- 17 Anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, p. 14; Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 64.

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- 18 Sa-skyi gdun-rabs rin-chen ban-mzod, cited in anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, p. 23.
- 19 Cited in anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, pp. 23–4; also cited in Shakabpa, n. 2, pp. 65–6.
- 20 John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Resichauer and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973), p. 152.
- 21 *Yuan Shih*, 209: 1b–19b, cited in Wang Gangwu, “Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia: A Background Essay”, in Fairbank, n. 20, p. 48.
- 22 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 67; anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, p. 25.
- 23 Anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 2, p. 25; Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 67.
- 24 See, Fairbank, n. 20, Morris Rossabi (ed.), *China Among Equals* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983).
- 25 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 69.
- 26 Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa cited in Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 83. Original source: Dpa-wo Gtsug-lag ‘Phrengwa, *Chos-‘byung mkhas-pai dga-bstan*, Vol. 2 (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 1986), p. 86.
- 27 William W. Rockhill, “The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China. 1944–1908”, *T’oung Pao*, Vol. XI (1910), p. 18.
- 28 Such as a statue of the Buddha, a Buddhist text and a miniature *stupa*, a *khadhar* (scarf).
- 29 BBC Summary of World Broadcast FE/D 3 to 65 (29 June 1998).

## Chapter 5

- 1 In this chapter, when I use the term “Inner” I mean Inner Tibet, which includes Amdo and Kham; and by “Outer”, Outer Tibet, which includes U-Tsang and Ngari.
- 2 Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 67. The post-Sakya period of Tibetan history is perhaps the least documented. However, I have found Shakabpa’s account a most informative one.
- 3 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 67.
- 4 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 69.
- 5 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 86.
- 6 For the details of these power struggles, see Shakabpa, n. 2, pp. 86–90.
- 7 Joshua Praver and Samuel N. Eisenstadt, *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. 5 (New York: Macmillan and the Free Press, 1968), p. 395.
- 8 It is interesting to note that just as the post-tsan period witnessed the emergence of great lama scholars and the founding of major sects of Tibetan Buddhism, the post-Sakya period also saw the birth of great lama scholars such as Tsongkhapa, Gorampa Sonam Senghe, Kun-khen Pekhar, Thangthong Gyalpo, Shamar Rinpoche, etc. The latter period witnessed Kargyu–Geluk conflict. See Zha-sgab-pa dban-phyug bde-ldan, *Bod-kyi Srid-don Rgyal-rbas*, Vol. 1 (Kalimpong, West Bengal: Shakabpa House, 1976), pp. 335–64.
- 9 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 82.
- 10 H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History* (London: OUP, 1962), p. 35.
- 11 Richardson, n. 10, p. 35.
- 12 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 81.
- 13 Wang Jaiwei and Nyima Gyailcain, *The Historical Status of China’s Tibet* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 1997), p. 41.
- 14 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, pp. 35 and 81.
- 15 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, pp. 42–3.



## Notes

- 16 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, p. 33.
- 17 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, p. 33.
- 18 Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 73.
- 19 Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIIIth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972); *Medieval History of Nepal* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il ed Estremo Oriente, 1958); *Central Tibet and the Mongols: The Yuan-Sa-Skya Period of Tibetan History* (Rome: IPIIEEO, 1990).
- 20 Sato's works are all in Japanese and so are not easily accessible. However, I might mention the following for reference: Sato Hisashi, "Gen matsu Min sho no Chibetto josei" in Tamura Jitsuzo (ed.), *Mindai Man-Mo shi kenkyu* (Kyoto: Kyoto University, 1963), pp. 485–585; "Mindai Chibetto no hachi tai kyo-o-ni tsuite", *Tokyoshi Kenkyu* (1962), pp. 295–314; Vol. XXII (1963), pp. 203–25; and Vol. XXII (1964), pp. 488–503; "Mindai Chibetto no Rigoma no keito ni tsuite", *Toyo gakuho*, Vol. XLV (1963), pp. 434–52.
- 21 Elliot Harris Sperling, "Early Ming Policy Toward Tibet: An Examination the Proposition that the early Emperors Adopted a 'Divide and Rule' policy toward Tibet." Unpublished doctoral dissertation (Indiana University, 1983), p. 244. This is one of the rare monographs devoted to the study of Ming-Tibet relations.
- 22 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, p. 31.
- 23 John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Resichauer and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973), p. 195.
- 24 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, p. 31.
- 25 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, pp. 31–3.
- 26 See Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton: University Press, 1995).
- 27 Fairbank et al., n. 23, p. 178 and 190.
- 28 Fairbank et al., n. 23, p. 178.
- 29 Fairbank, et al., n. 23, p. 188.
- 30 Fairbank et al., n. 23, p. 198.
- 31 Fairbank et al., n. 23, pp. 197–8.
- 32 Fairbank et al., n. 23, pp. 199–200.
- 33 Anon., *The Mongols and Tibet* (Dharamsala, India: Department of Information and International Relations, 1996), p. 138.
- 34 Sperling, n. 21, pp. 244–7; Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, pp. 32–7.
- 35 Mark Mancall, *China at the Centre* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), p. 39.
- 36 Anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 33, p. 33.
- 37 Fairbank et al., n. 23, p. 179.
- 38 Cited in Sperling, n. 21, pp. 74–5.
- 39 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, pp. 31–44.
- 40 Anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 3, p. 27.
- 41 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, pp. 40–1.
- 42 See A. S. Martynov, "Notes on Trade in the Ming Era", in *China and her Neighbours* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), pp. 182–99.
- 43 Wang and Gyailcain, n. 13, p. 43; Shakabpa, n. 2, p. 81.
- 44 Anon., *The Mongols and Tibet*, n. 33, p. 26.
- 45 Fairbank et al., n. 23, p. 185.

## Chapter 6

- 1 Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 103.

## Notes

- 2 Shakabpa, n. 1, p. 105.
- 3 Shakabpa, n. 1.
- 4 Zehiruddin Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Rome: Is. M.E.O., 1970), p. 95.
- 5 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 88.
- 6 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 85.
- 7 Ahmad, n. 4, pp. 85, 98 and 120.
- 8 Following Sir Charles Bell, Shakabpa gives this interpretation also, n. 1, p. 114 and 119.
- 9 Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIIIth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972 edition).
- 10 Petech, n. 9, p. 15.
- 11 Petech, n. 9, pp. 34 and 44.
- 12 Petech, n. 9, p. 32.
- 13 Petech, n. 9, p. 14.
- 14 Petech, n. 9, p. 32.
- 15 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 330.
- 16 Petech, n. 9, p. 53.
- 17 Shakabpa, n. 1, p. 95.
- 18 Shakabpa, n. 1, p. 114.
- 19 Shakabpa, n. 1, p. 120.
- 20 Oshibuchi Hajime, "Ryoyo Rama-fun Hibun no Kaisetsu", in Haneda Toru (ed.), *Naito Kakase Kanreki Shuguga Shinagagu Panso* (Kyoto, 1926), pp. 332-71.
- 21 Samuel M. Grupper, "Manchu Patronage and Tibetan Buddhism During the First Half of the Ch'ing Dynasty, *The Journal of the Tibet Society*, Vol. 4 (1984), Bloomington, pp. 51-2.
- 22 Grupper, n. 21, p. 53.
- 23 Thu'u Bkan Blo-bzan chos Kyi Nyima, *Gsum-'bum-ka* (New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1969), p. 326.
- 24 These are the real motives for the worshipper of tantric deities who protect him (skyobs-pa) and power (nus-pa).
- 25 Ahmad, n. 4, pp. 146-50, 153, 162.
- 26 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 176.
- 27 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 203, 295, 296, etc.
- 28 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 176.
- 29 Shakabpa, n. 1, p. 64.
- 30 Thu'u Bkan Blo-bzan, n. 23, p. 303.
- 31 This contrast is clearly reflected in the inner circle debate about the protocol to be accorded to the visiting V Dalai Lama. The Manchu officials argued that the Emperor should cut off the Great Wall to receive the Lama and that the former should enquire about the latter's health before being requested to leave. The Han officials opposed both these moves. See, Ahmed, n. 4, pp. 169-70.
- 32 For the various aspects of this relationship, see Ahmed, n. 4, pp. 85, 157, 159, 162 and 183.
- 33 Thu'u Bkan Blo-bzan, n. 23, pp. 227-48.
- 34 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 183.
- 35 That the Zunghars were Tibetanized is suggested by their names. See, Petech, n. 9, pp. 51, 74 and 199. Their fundamentalism is indicated by their militant intolerance towards the Nyingmapa sect; see, Ahmed, n. 4, p. 204.
- 36 Petech, n. 9, p. 78.
- 37 Ahmad, n. 4, pp. 286, 322 and 331.

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- 38 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 331.
- 39 Shakabpa, n. 1, pp. 111 and 113.
- 40 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 118.
- 41 Shakabpa, n. 1, p. 113.
- 42 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 198.
- 43 Ahmad, n. 4, p. 194.
- 44 Petech, n. 9, p. 205.
- 45 Dawa Norbu, "History of Geography", *Himal: The South Asian Magazine*, Vol. 11, No. 6 (June 1998), p. 29.
- 46 Ahmad, n. 4, pp. 84–5.
- 47 Petech, n. 9, pp. 76, 221.
- 48 Herbert Franke, "Tibetans in Yuan China" in John Langlois, Jr. (ed.), *China under Mongol Rule* (Princeton: University Press, 1981), p. 302.
- 49 Petech, n. 9, *passim*.
- 50 Ahmad, n. 4, *passim*.
- 51 Petech, n. 9, pp. 158–75; 216–35.
- 52 Petech, n. 9, p. 241.
- 53 That was how the VIII, IX, XI and XII Dalai Lamas "died" before they could reach their majority. See, Bina Roy Burman, *Religion and Politics in Tibet* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979), p. 12.
- 54 *Ambans* were conventionally described as the permanent imperial representatives of the Manchu Emperors in Lhasa since 1728. For more details, see Petech, n. 9, pp. 255–7.
- 55 The first three traditional protectors need no explanation, as they are self-evident in this study. The XIII Dalai Lama toyed with the idea of Russian "protection" from the 1890s until 1907, using Dorjiev as a go-between. From 1912 to 1947, British India informally acted as the "protector" of the lamaist regime. Finally, in 1950–51 and again in 1958–59, the Tibetan political elite sought clandestine "protection". If the present Dalai Lama frequently runs to the American President which attracts so much global media attention and which outrages "imperial" Communist authorities in Beijing, it is because of the Lama's instinctive need, which has been internalized for centuries, to search for a powerful "protector" (*'byin-bdag/chos rgyal*) the twentieth-century equivalent of the all-powerful Mongol Khan, in the context of Communist occupation of Tibet.
- 56 Petech, n. 9, pp. 78, 94.
- 57 Petech, n. 9, p. 223.
- 58 Tieh-tseng Li, *The Historical Status of Tibet* (New York: King's Croom Helm Press, 1956), p. 55.
- 59 Li, n. 58, p. 58.
- 60 The traditional Tibetan mode of governance was based on a coalition of leading Gelugpa lamas and lay nobility. Given the fact that the whole system was headed by the Dalai Lama, of the two coalition partners, the lama officials tended to have an edge over the other, particularly during the XIII Dalai Lama's time.
- 61 Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet, ICJ, *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic* (Geneva: International Commission on Jurists, 1960), p. 148.
- 62 Petech, n. 9, p. 231.
- 63 *Dharmaraja* means the king who rules in accordance with the basic tenets of Dharma (*chos*); and *Cakravartin*, a universal ruler, i.e. emperor. The lama writers since the twelfth century imagined the early warrior kings to be *Dharmaraja* and later lama rulers gave this title to Mongol warriors who

protected their non-coercive regime. This explains why the lama ruler could become a king, and appointed Mongols as “kings” of Tibet.

*Cakravartin*, like *Dharmaraja*, is an Indic concept which means the emperor who rules his empire in accordance with the basic tenets of Dharma. It is a title given by the Dalai and other High Lamas to the Mongol and Manchu emperors.

## Chapter 7

- 1 The use of “Non-change” in the heading to this chapter might sound a bit exaggerated because the XIII Dalai Lama made attempts at limited modernization programmes under the British auspices and Sir Charles Bell’s encouragement. However, such modernizing attempts were subverted and obstructed by the powerful, conservative monastic community whose abbots were instigated and bribed by Nationalist (KMT) Chinese agents. Therefore, it was non-change in Tibet, especially in relation to revolutionary changes in China and India going on at that time.
- 2 See Dawa Norbu, *Culture and the Politics of Tibet World Nationalism* (London/New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 149–50.
- 3 Morris Rosabi, *China and Inner Asia from 1368 to the Present Day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), p. 18.
- 4 Cited in Yu Ying-shih, “Han Foreign Relations”, *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 431.
- 5 See David M. Farguhar, “Emperors as Buddhistsattvas in the Governance of the Ch’ing Empire”, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (June 1978), pp. 53–4 which explains that the Qing emperors were not only Buddhists but were also regarded as high Buddhist deities.
- 6 Hugh E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History* (London: Shambala, 1984), pp. 43–60; see Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIIIth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972 edition).
- 7 See the path-breaking issue of *Chinese Studies in History*, Spring 1997, Vol. 30, No. 3, entitled “Tibet Through Chinese Eyes: Dissidents Speak Out”, pp. 8–100.
- 8 For example, Cao Changching calls for Tibet’s independence. See his article, n. 3, pp. 8–28.
- 9 Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: OUP, 1990), pp. 168–93; 261–87.
- 10 Cited in Joseph R. Levenson, *Liang Chichao and the Mind of Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California, 1967), p. 117.
- 11 Stuart R. Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 290.
- 12 Li Chien-ning, *The Political History of China 1840–1928* (Stanford: University Press, 1967), p. 165.
- 13 See, Tsieh-Tsung Li, *The Historical Status of Tibet* (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1956), pp. 70–129.
- 14 The British advocates of this line of legal thinking include most of the British colonial officials dealing with Tibet. See, works by Sir Charles Bell and Hugh Richardson as well as documentary studies by P. L. Mehra and Alaister Lamb.
- 15 This includes Han, Mongols, Manchus, Tibetans and Turks (Hui). This was Sun Yetsen’s conception of the “five race republic”.
- 16 Dick Wilson, *Mao The People’s Emperor* (London: Hutchinson, 1978).
- 17 In interviews with new arrivals from Amdo and Kham at Dharamsala (8 June 1999), nomads listed a number of taxes levied by the Chinese state such as *tsa-tral* (grass taxes), *shatral* (meat tax), *mar-tral* (butter tax), *bha-tral* (wool tax),

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etc. all of which they did not have to pay even to the feudal regime in Tibet. However, a Tibetan national from central Tibet, Gedun Gyatso, is not aware of such taxes being imposed in the Tibet Autonomous Region (New Delhi, 5 December 1999).

## Chapter 8

- 1 Michael C. van Walt van Praag, "Earnest Negotiations the only Answer to Growing Unrest in Tibet", *International Relations*, Vol. IX, No. 5 (May 1989), pp. 377–92. Dawa Norbu, "China's Dialogue with the Dalai Lama 1979–90: Prenegotiation Stage or Dead End?", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Fall 1991), pp. 351–72.
- 2 Topden Tsering, "Tibetan Referendum: From Here to Where?", *Tibetan Bulletin*, Vol. 1, Issue 2 (Dharamsala: July–August 1997), pp. 11–13, and see also in the same issue, articles on the four approaches to the Tibet issue, pp. 14–24.
- 3 They include the peasants and nomads of Tibet, and the sweater-sellers in India. My remarks on this silent majority are based on my experience as I was a participant in this debate during 1996–97 both at Dharamsala and settlement (village) levels.
- 4 The information is based on two long interviews with Sonam Dagpo and Dawa Tsering (1 June 1998) who specialize in overseas Chinese affairs at the Dalai Lama's Administration in Dharamsala, India. So far three Sino-Tibetan dialogues have been held (Washington, DC, 1992; Bonn, 1996 and London, 1997) between the Chinese dissidents and Tibetan exiles. There are about eleven Chinese dissident groups operating in Western countries, with whom Dharamsala is in touch.
- 5 See Suchita Ghosh, *Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations 1899–1914* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1977), pp. 153–4.
- 6 Hugh E. Richardson, *Tibet and her Neighbours* (London: The Tibet Society of The U.K., n.d.), p. 3.
- 7 For instance, Prime Minister Nehru's understanding of Tibetan autonomy seemed to have been similar to that of the British when he spoke in the Lok Sabha (Indian Parliament) in 1959, "When Premier Chou Enlai came here two or three years ago, he was good enough to discuss Tibet with me at considerable length. We had a frank and full talk. He told me that while Tibet had long been a part of China, they did not consider Tibet as a province of China. The people were different from the people of China proper. Therefore, they considered Tibet as an autonomous region which would enjoy autonomy," Statement to the Lok Sabha, 27 April 1959. It is interesting to note in 1997 Mr Indrajit Gupta, veteran Communist leader and Home Minister of the Janta Dal Government at the Centre, told Shankher Sharan in an interview that "autonomy would be the best solution for Tibet". See, *Tibetan Review*, Vol. XXXII, No. 8 (August 1997), pp. 14–16.
- 8 The Dalai Lama's political demand, as reflected in his 1988 Strasbourg Statement, amounted to what General Huang Musong called in 1934 "complete autonomy", but His Holiness did not use the term autonomy. If my memory and research is correct, he began to speak of Tibetan autonomy from 22 October 1993 (onward) when he delivered the "J. P. Memorial Lecture" at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. The last time I heard him speak on Tibetan autonomy was on the occasion of Tibetan Youth Congress annual meeting held on 27 August 1998, at Dharamsala (TCV). And, of course, he now frequently uses the term "autonomy" to designate the level of his demand for Tibet. See the

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- latest interviews with Maneesh Pandey: Holiness in Exile”, *The Times of India*, 28 June 1999.
- 9 Antonia Chiang, “No Place Like Home”, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 June 1999, p. 49.
  - 10 See Dawa Norbu, *Tibet The Road Ahead* (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 1997), pp. 339–44, for a description and discussion of this Chinese “federal constitution”, drafted by Chinese dissidents in early 1994.
  - 11 *Tibetan Review*, March 1998, p. 6. See also AFP report datelined Beijing (9 October 1996) which reports views and support of two Chinese dissidents Wang Xizhe and Liu Xiaobo, calling for internal self-determination and dialogue on Tibet.
  - 12 Liming Song, “General Huang Musong’s Mission to Lhasa and the Sino–Tibetan Negotiations in 1934”, in Helmut Krassner et al. (ed.), *Tibetan Studies* (Wien: Verlag Der Osterreichischen, 1997), p. 907.
  - 13 Whether Communists would have implemented everything as agreed in the Seventeen Point Agreement is a difficult question. Some think they might have. However, certain incidents took place in the 1950s which provided the necessary pretexts for accelerating the Communist hidden agenda such as the 1956 Khampa Revolt, the 1959 Lhasa Uprising, the Dalai Lama’s escape to India, etc.
  - 14 His Holiness The Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 100.
  - 15 Dawa Norbu, *Red Star Over Tibet* (London: William Collins and Sons, 1974), pp. 197–202.
  - 16 George Moseley, “China’s Fresh approach to the national minority question”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 24 (October–December 1965), pp. 16–17.
  - 17 Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, Vol. V (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 1977), p. 64.
  - 18 The Panchen Lama, *The Panchen Lama Lineage* (Dharamsala, India: Department of Information and International Relations, 1995), p. 11.
  - 19 This quote is from Tsegyam, a Chinese-speaking Tibetan scholar specializing in current Chinese affairs in a speech at Dharamsala on 28 August 1998.
  - 20 *News Review: Reports from Tibet, 1997* (London: Tibet Information Network, 1999), pp. 23–30; *Tibet: Crackdown on Humanity* (Dharamsala, India: Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 1999), pp. 37–46; *Closing the Door: Religious Repression in Tibet* (Dharamsala: Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, n.d.).
  - 21 This is the experience of Tibetan cadres who have escaped to India since the late 1960s, such as Kunsang Pajjor, Tsering Dorje, Dawa Tsering, etc. To this must be added: Rabsal, Kesang Gyaltsen, Sangye Kyab, Pema Bhum, etc.
  - 22 Eugene Kamenka and Alice E. S. Tay, “Self-determination and the Tibetan People”, Robert McCorquodale and Nicholas Orosz (eds.), *Tibet The Position in International Law* (London: Serindia, 1994), p. 161.
  - 23 Inner Party directives are highly confidential and circulated only among Party members. One such document on anti-religion policy in Tibet was smuggled out by Phuntsog Wangyal who was one of the members of the Tibetan delegation that visited Tibet in 1980. It is called “Basic Study Guide No. 55”.
  - 24 *Tibet 1950–1967* (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1968), p. 693.
  - 25 The Panchen Lama, n. 18, p. 25.
  - 26 The Panchen Lama’s courageous defence of the Tibetan people’s rights is contained in his “70,000 Character Petition” of 1962 addressed to Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. See *A Poisoned Arrow* (London: Tibet Information Network, 1997).

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- 27 Mao Zedong, "CCP Policy on Minority Nationalities" (pp. 7–8), "The Problem of Tibetan Minority Nationalities" (pp. 9–10), "Criticize Han Chauvinism" (pp. 53–4), "The Relationship Between Han Nationality and the Minority Nationalities" (pp. 55–6), and "The Question of the Minority Nationalities" (pp. 61–2), in *Chinese Law and Government*, Vol. XIV, No. 4 (Winter 1981).
- 28 Zhou Enlai, "Defending the Rights of National Autonomy and National Attributes", *Beijing Review*, 10 March 1980, pp. 21–3.
- 29 Liu Shaozi, "Political Report on the Minority Nationalities", *Political Report of The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to the Eighth National Congress of the Party* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1956), pp. 68–72.
- 30 Li Weihai, "Regional Autonomy for Nationalities", in *Chinese Law and Government*, n. 27, p. 13.
- 31 "General Programme of the People's Republic of China for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy for Minority Nationalities", in n. 27, pp. 30 and 35.
- 32 The 1978 PRC Constitution excerpts in n. 27, p. 77.
- 33 Cited in Edwin Pak-wah Leung, "Editor's Introduction", in n. 27, p. 5.
- 34 Colin Mackerras, *China's Minorities: Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century* (Hong Kong: OUP, 1994), p. 140.
- 35 *The Myth of Tibetan Autonomy* (Washington, DC: The International Campaign for Tibet and the International Human Rights Laws Group, 1994), p. 33.
- 36 Victoria Conner and Robert Barnett, *Leaders in Tibet* (London: Tibet Information Network, 1997), pp. 47–94 and 200–3.
- 37 Carl J. Friedrich, *Constitutional Government and Democracy* (Calcutta: Oxford IBH Publishing Co., 1974), p. 194.
- 38 Li Weihai, "Regional Autonomy for Nationalities", in n. 27, p. 13.
- 39 Ulanhu, "Report on the General Program for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy for Nationalities", in n. 27, p. 22.
- 40 Li, n. 27, p. 16.
- 41 Jereme Alan Cohen and Hungdah Chiu, *People's China and International Law*, Vol. I (Princeton: University Press, 1974), p. 106.
- 42 The Nationality Policy Research Group, "Be Earnest in Exercising National Autonomy", in n. 27, p. 72; cited in Mackerras, n. 34, p. 145.
- 43 Kamenka and Tay, n. 22, p. 159.
- 44 Dawa Norbu, *Culture and the Politics of Third World Nationalism* (London/ New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 239.
- 45 Norbu, n. 10, pp. 339–44.
- 46 Chiang, n. 9, p. 49.
- 47 The Dalai Lama, "Address to Members of European Parliament", *Tibetan Bulletin*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (May–July 1988), pp. 2–3. The Lama did not use the term "federation", he used a looser term "in association" which is close to federation.
- 48 Friedrich, n. 37, p. 190.
- 49 Professor Samdhong Rinpoche gives a Buddhist visionary account of Tibet's future including polity, society, economy, education, culture, etc. in his *Tibet: A Future Vision* (New Delhi: Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, 1996), pp. 14–40.
- 50 From 1994 to 1999 (except 1997) I spent the summer months (May and June) at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Gancheng Kyishong, Dharamsala, India. Apart from my library research, I spent time talking to a cross-section of the Dharamsala Tibetan population and others. My intention was to fathom the opinions of the silent majority whose voices are seldom heard. Although I talked

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to a number of such people over a total of a ten month period, I held in-depth interviews-cum-discussions with the following persons:

### A. *Gyanhchen, Kyishong Interviews* (Dharamsala, India: June 1999)

No.	Name	Interview Date
1.	Karma Manlam	31.5.99
2.	Rabsal	1.6.99
3.	Kalsang Topdhen	2.6.99
4.	Geshe Sonam Rinchen	4.6.99
5.	Thubten Rikey	6.6.99
6.	Peldon Tsamcho	6.6.99
7.	Khensur Thubten Phuntsog	6.6.99
8.	Thubten Samaphel	4.6.99
9.	Jampel Chosang	1.6.99
10.	Tsering Norzom	7.6.99

### B. *Interview-cum-discussion at Sahara, Dharamsala, 21 June 1999*

I held a discussion for nearly two hours with 22 Tibetan graduates who, after having graduated from Indian Universities, were then undergoing civil service training at Sahara, Dharamsala, India under the aegis of the Dalai Lama's Administration on the date mentioned above.

Gauging public opinion inside Tibet is one of the major hurdles which so far no one has managed to cross. I have tried to get glimpses and clues by talking to post-1962 refugees from various parts of Tibet. Refugees keep crossing the Himalayas, mainly through Nepal, for example in 1998, according to Mr Tashi Norbu, Director of the Tibetan Reception Centre for New Arrivals (McLeod Ganj) 3,760 refugees from Amdo, Kham and Central Tibet arrived at his Centre. I had in-depth interviews with the following fresh arrivals who reached Dharamsala during the first half of 1999.

### C. *Interviews with fresh arrivals from Kham, Amdo and Central Tibet* (McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, India, June 1999)

No.	Name	Interview Date
1.	Tenzin Dolma	8.6.99
2.	Gyamtso	8.6.99
3.	Gonpo Sonam	8.6.99
4.	Namgyal	8.6.99
5.	Kesang Gyaltsen	8.6.99
6.	Sangye Kyab	8.6.99

### D. *Lecture-cum-discussion at Dolma-Ling Nunnery, Sidhpur, Kangra, India, on 5 June 1998*

Nuns have played a prominent role in post-1959 protests against the Chinese Authorities in and around Lhasa. A large number of nuns (176) had managed to escape to India and found freedom and sanctuary in Dolma-Ling Nunnery, Sidhpur. Here I initiated a discussion on "Tibetan autonomy" with the nuns on the above-mentioned date for three hours.

E. Lecture-cum-discussion on the subject matter with a group of young educated Tibetans working in the Dalai Lama's Bureau, Charitable Trust, Paljor Publications, Potala Travets, Tibetan Medical Centre, etc. on 10 September 1999. The more articulate among them, like their colleagues in Dharamsala, stressed the need to demand the area and quantum of autonomy applicable for all three regions of Tibet, cholkha-gsum.



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- F. On 23 January 2000 I participated in a panel discussion on the Dalai Lama's Strasbourg Statement, held at the Tibetan Children's Village, Bylekuppe, Karnatapa. The discussion was chaired by Mrs Tsering Norzom.
- 51 The Dalai Lama, n. 47, pp. 2–3.
- 52 A “ceremonial sovereign” might not exactly resemble the present day rubber-stamp president. The former was more of a cultural than political personage whose words carried great weight because of his cosmic standing. He was more respected, if not venerated, rather than feared. His power was expressed through rituals and ceremonies, not usually through coercive means.
- 53 There is a strong pan-Tibetan lobby that sprang up in Dharamsala since 1997–98 called “*Cholkha-gsum*” constitutive of Amdo, Kham and U-Tsang. This lobby with the support of refugee power elite and Dharamsala politicians is very active in Dharamsala. Tsering Norzom, Peldon Tsamcho and Karma Monlam (n. 50) cited the Dalai Lama's support for all the three regions of Tibet whatever status and gains he might obtain from his negotiations with China. Therefore, i.e. inclusion of Kham and Amdo into the TAR, is going to be a major obstacle in future Sino–Tibetan negotiations.
- 54 Dr Kunchok Tsundue, who did fieldwork in the TAR, Sichuan and Yuanan during 1993–94, confirmed this in June 1999. I am grateful to him for his reliable and insightful information on the current situation on Tibet.
- 55 See also Gamanappa S. Balavantgol, “Hazards of Development and Environmental Degradation: A Case Study of Tibet” (unpublished doctoral thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, July 1999), pp. 417–65.
- 56 Norbu, n. 1, p. 353.
- 57 See, n. 50, c.
- 58 See, n. 20.
- 59 Mackerras, n. 34, pp. 145–66, demonstrates how each revolt by a minority nationality leads to tighter Chinese control over them, which is neither good for the Chinese image nor for the minority nationality's welfare, both material and cultural.
- 60 Tenzin Dolma, n. 50, c.
- 61 Examples of this category are listed in n. 21. To this may be added, Rabasal, Kesang Gyaltsen, Sangye Kyab, Dhondub Gyal, Pema Bhum, etc.
- 62 I was surprised to hear two fresh arrivals (from Amdo and Kham), Kesang Gyaltsen and Sangye Kyab telling me during the interview how they used to debate about Tibetan history at the Chinese university. The debate is similar to what is going on among the young Tibetan scholars in exile: critical and somewhat positivistic re-reading of Tibetan history in a colonial context.
- 63 Kesang Gyaltsen and Sangye Kyab, n. 62.
- 64 The Panchen Lama, n. 26, p. 96.
- 65 n. 50, A.
- 66 Cartriona Bass, *Education in Tibet* (London/New York: Zed Books, 1998), reveals that in 1995 a Tibetan school pilot project in the TAR ended with the Tibetan students studying in a Tibetan medium school passing school graduation examination with an average of 80 per cent, compared with an average of 39 per cent for Tibetan students in a Chinese medium secondary school, p. 237.

## Chapter 9

- 1 I have roughly dated the Buddhist Renaissance/Revolution from what Tibetan historians call the later or second spread of Buddhism (*bstenpa phyi-dhar*)

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- which to me seems to be the most transformative period in the history of Buddhism in Tibet. I have relied for dates on David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (Boston: Shambhala, 1986), pp. 288–90.
- 2 Since the word is so well-known in western languages, I have stuck to the Western spelling of Blama, but throughout this paper, I use it in the Tibetan meaning of the term – incarnate or high (lama) not ordinary monk (*graba*).
  - 3 Now a book-length study has come out on this period alone. See Norbrang O-rgyan, *Bod sil-bu' byung-wa brjodpa shel-dkar phrengwa* (Lhasa: Tibetan People's Publishing House, 1991), pp. 157–454.
  - 4 Literature in this field is vast and it would be almost impossible to mention them all here. Therefore, I give some samples: Nel-Pa Pandita Chos-'Byung; Bu-Ston Rin-Po-Chen, Chos-'Byung (1322 AD); Mtsal-Pa Kun-Dga Rdor-Rje, Deb-Ther Dmar-Po (1346 AD); Gos Lo-Tsa-Ba Gzhon-Nu, Deb-Ther Snon-Po (1476–78 AD); Sa-Skya Bsod-Nams Rgyal-Mtsan, Gyal-Rabs Gsal-Ba'I Me-Long (1361 AD); see also Dan Martin, *Tibetan Histories, A Bibliography of Tibetan-language Historical Works* (London: Serindia, 1998).
  - 5 Taranath, Rgya-gar Chos-'byung (Sichuan: Nationalities Press, n.d.), pp. 36–54; Sumpa Yeshis dpal-'byor, Chos-'byung dpag-bsum ljon-bzang (Gansu: Nationalities Press, 1992), pp. 122–46.
  - 6 Cf. Zhwa-Sgab-Pa Dbang-Phyug Bde-Ldan, *Bod Kyi Srid-Don Rgyal Rabs* (Kalimpong (India): Shakabpa House, 1976), Vol. I, p. 247. Translator Rga Brtson-'Grus tells Lha Lama how the Tibetan kings were Buddhisatva-like and how the three great Chos-Rgyals patronized Buddhism, etc. in order to persuade Lha Lama to visit Tibet.
  - 7 It is interesting to note that recent translations from Tibetan into English authorized by eminent lamas are works of Sulekha genre. Cf. Nagarjuna and the VII Dalai Lama, *The Precious Garland and the Song of Mindfulness*, translated and edited by Jeffrey Hopkins and Lati Rinpoche with Anne Klein (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1975). Ven, Lozang Jamspal, Ven, Ngawang Samten Chophel, Peter Della Santina (translated), *Nagarjuna's letter to King Gautamiputra* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1989), p. 2.
  - 8 Srong-btsan Sgambo, *Bka-chem bka' khol-ma* (Gansu: Nationalities Press, 1989), p. 2.
  - 9 A Chinese-speaking Tibetan, former Commander-in-Chief of the XIV Dalai Lama's bodyguard (Sku-Srung Sde-Dpon), Stag-Lha Phun-Tsogs Bkra-Shis has translated from Chinese sources and compiled this 680 page volume entitled *Rgya'i Yig-Tsang Nan Gsal-B'i Bod-Kyi Rgyal-Rabs Gsal-B'i Melong* (Dharmasala, India, 1973).
  - 10 Saskya Bka-'Bum, Pha 7, p. 400. Cf. also Chogyal Phagpa, *A Gift of Dharma to Kublai Khan* (trans.) by Acharya Lobsang Jamspal and Acharya Manjusiddhartha (Victoria, BC: Victoria Buddhist Dharma Society, 1976).
  - 11 Stag-Lha, n. 9, pp. 619–20.
  - 12 Cf. J. Bacot, P. W. Thomas and C. Toussaint, *Documents de Touen-Houang relatifs a L'Histoire du Tibet* (Paris, 1940); Bsod-nams skyid dan dban-rgyal, *Tun-hong nas thon-pa' gna-boi bod-yig shog-dril* (Beijing: Nationalities Press, 1983); Dban-rgyal dan bsodnam skyid, *Tun-hong nas thon-pa' bod-kyi lo-rgyus yig cha* (Beijing: Nationalities Press, 1980).
  - 13 H. E. Richardson, *Ancient Historical Edicts at Lhasa and The Mu Tsung/Khri Gtsug Lde BRTSAN Treaty of AD 821–822 From The Inscription At Lhasa* (London: Luzac and Co., 1952); *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1985).

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- 14 Cf. Erick Haarh, *The Yar-Lun Dynasty. A study with particular regard to the contribution of myths and legends to the history of ancient Tibet and the origin and nature of its kings* (Copenhagen, 1969).
- 15 Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (London: OUP, 1927), p. 25; H. E. Richardson, *A Short History of Tibet* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1962), pp. 28–33.
- 16 “So long as”, writes Chalmers Johnson, “society’s values and the realities with which it must deal in order to exist in harmony with each other, the society is immune from revolution.” That “harmony” was disrupted by the introduction and the subsequent Renaissance of Buddhism. Cf. Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 60.
- 17 *Tibetan Review*, Vol. VIII, No. 3 (March 1973), p. 10. It was at this time that I became curious about the meaning and role of *btsan* in early Tibetan history. For the names and dates of Tsan rulers, see, Bod-kyi rgyal-rabs lo-tsig ‘khrul-spong zin brigs (Dharamsala, India: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1989), pp. 8–9.
- 18 Stag-Lha, n. 9, pp. 2, 137, 231.
- 19 Don-grub rgyal dan khrin-chen dbyin, *Tan-yig gsar-myin las byun-ba’ bod chen-poi srid-lugs* (Qinghai: Nationalities Press, 1983), pp. 7–8.
- 20 Stag-Lha, n. 9, pp. 196–7, and *passim*.
- 21 Reinhard Bendix defines power as “the use of force as an attribute of authority”, and mandate to rule as “the justifications which attempt to make use of force legitimate”. Cf. *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 16–17.
- 22 Snellgrove and Richardson, n. 1, p. 65.
- 23 Zhwa-Sgab-Pa, n. 6, pp. 23–4.
- 24 Zhwa-Sgab-Pa, n. 6, p. 216.
- 25 Sarat Chandra Das, *Tibetan–English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1976), pp. 1003–4.
- 26 Tucci, *Painted Scrolls*, II (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1949), p. 718.
- 27 Dge-Bshes Chos-Kyi Grags-Pa’, *Brda-Dag Ming-Tshi Gsal-Ba Bzhugs-So* (Beijing: Nationalities Press, 1957), p. 674.
- 28 Cf. Maokru’u Zh’i Gsung Btus (Beijing: Nationalities Press, 1968), pp. 102–14. See also Bod-rgya Tsig-mzod Chenmo, Vol. II, (Beijing: Nationalities Press, 1985), p. 2197.
- 29 Richardson, n. 13, p. 55.
- 30 It is said since Gri-Gum, Tibetan kings could not return to heaven by means of this sky-cord because of his ill-omened name which literally means “killed by impurity”. Impurity probably was regarded as the cause of the loss of his magical power. Cf. R. A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), pp. 48–9.
- 31 See for an authentic painting of *btsan* in Stephen Beyer, *The Cult of Tara: Magic and Ritual in Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 297.
- 32 Stag-Lha, n. 9, p. 277.
- 33 Stag-lha, n. 9, pp. 278–9.
- 34 Don-grub rgyal dan khrinchen dbying, n. 19, p. 7.
- 35 Zhwa-Sgab-Pa, n. 6, p. 256.
- 36 Stag-Lha, n. 9, p. 652.
- 37 Stag-Lha, n. 9, pp. 295–7; Zhwa-Sga-Pa, pp. 152–3.
- 38 Stag-Lha, n. 9, p. 291.
- 39 Don-grub rgyal dan khrinchen dbying, n. 19, pp. 6–7.
- 40 Joseph Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1961), p. 25.

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- 41 I realize such figures now sound incredible but they are mentioned in the New Tang Annals. The warrior kings counted in hundreds (*rgya-phrag*) or thousands (*stong-phrag*).
- 42 Don-grub rgyal dan khrinchen dbying, n. 19, pp. 132–94; Stag-Lha, n. 9.
- 43 Stag-Lha, n. 9, pp. 397–442.
- 44 Stag-Lha, n. 9, pp. 74, 138, 33.
- 45 Lucius Petch, *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh* (Calcutta, 1930), pp. 73–4.
- 46 Christopher I. Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia* (Princeton: University Press, 1987), which deals mostly with the military activities of the warrior kings in the early middle ages; and Todd Allen Gibson, “From Btsanpo to Btsan: The Demonization of the Sacred Kingship” (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1991) which focuses on the concept of *btsanpo* and how it got transformed into *btsan* deity.
- 47 Don-grub rgyal dan khrinchen dbying, n. 19.
- 48 Bsod-nams skyid dan dban-rgyal; Dban-rgyal dan bsodnam skyid, n. 12.
- 49 Bon religion has been so much Buddhicized during the past 1,000 years or so that it is now difficult to get pure or unadulterated Bonpo texts. The post eleventh-century Bonpo historians, especially present day Bonpo scholars repeat the chos-‘byung scholars’ view of their (Bonpo) warrior kings as chos-rgyal. See *Three Sources for a History of Bon* (Solan, H. P., India: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1974), pp. 291–6. However, a few unadulterated texts survive in ancient Bonpo ritual texts on *bkang gso*, specifically devoted to the cult of *btsan*. Mchog gsum rgyal-ba sras bcas dan bka skon dam bcas skyi thugs dam bskan bai gun pod Vol. II (Solan, India: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1973), pp. 158–218. It is interesting to note that the editor’s subheading for this section is “dmag dpon chenpo’ gter-bskan”, meaning propitiating ritual to the great general.
- 50 In addition to n. 4, I might mention the following representative chos-‘byung works: Bsod nams rgyal mtsen, rgyal rabs gsal ba’ melong (Beijing: Nationalities Press, 1981), pp. 65–6; Panchen sod nams gragspa, rgyal-rabs ‘phrul-gyi lde-mig gam deb-ther dmarpo (Lhasa: Tibetan People’s Publishing House, 1982), pp. 18, 42; Rgyal-dbang lnga-pa chenpo, Bod kyi deb-ther dpyid rgyal-po’ glu-dbyung (Xylographic copy at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives), pp. 41–71; Dpa-bo gtsug-lag khrengwa, Chos-‘byung mkhaspa’ dga-ston, Vol. I (Beijing: Nationalities Press, 1985), pp. 172–280, etc.
- 51 Srong-btsan Sgampo, n. 8, pp. 2–271. It is interesting to note that this work is attributed to the most beloved and most well-known of all chos-rgyals. This text in the tradition of gter-ma was discovered by Atisha in 1049 AD, n. 4, p. 2.
- 52 Norbrang O-rgyan, n. 3, pp. 4–33; 157–66.
- 53 Das (1902), n. 25, pp. 1003–4; Alexander Csoma De Koros, *Tibetan-English Dictionary* (New Delhi: Gaurav Publishing House, 1991 [1834]), p. 205; H. A. Jaschke, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1944 [1881]), pp. 192 and 434.
- 54 Mchog gsum Rgyal-ba sras bcass dan bka skon dam bcas skyi thugs dam bskan bai gun pod Vol. II, n. 49.
- 55 Beyer, n. 31, p. 297.
- 56 Loden Sherap Daygab Rinpoche, *Buddhist Symbols in Tibetan Culture* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), p. 79.
- 57 We might recall the Bonpo ritual text entitled “dmag dpon chenpo” gter bskan”, meaning “propitiating the great general” referring specifically to *btsan*. See, n. 49.
- 58 Richardson, *Ancient Historical Edicts*, n. 13, p. 55.
- 59 According to early Tibetan cosmology which has three-tiered hierarchical structure, *lha* figures first residing in the sky which has special spiritual

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significance to the pre-Buddhist Bonpos. Next comes *btsan* situated between sky and earth; and *glu* below the earth. In ancient texts it appears both 'khrul and 'phrul spellings were interchangeably used, meaning magic. However, as Buddhism gained ascendancy, Buddhist scholars began to differentiate their "miracle" (rdzu 'phrul) from Bonpo "magic" (rgyu-'khrul).

60 Das, n. 25, p. 855.

61 Interview with Sangye Tendar Naga who researches the early temples in Tibet, at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala, India on 5 July, 1995.

62 The T'ang dynasty exercised tight control over the monastic establishment in China. By 729 it was taking a census of the monastic community every three years to keep the number of monks within bounds. Government permission was required for ordination of new monks. Cf. Edwin O. Reischauer and John K. Fairbank, *East Asia The Great Tradition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 174.

## Chapter 10

- 1 For a discussion of these concepts and their evolution, see Dawa Norbu, "Btsan, Blama-Dponpo and Sprul-Sku; Changing notions of authority and shifting basis of power, and their combined impact on political development in Tibet, 600–1950." This paper was delivered at the 9th Wisconsin Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison (1980), pp. 1–36.
- 2 Political realities, however, did slowly compel the lama rulers to realize the necessity of some kind of force: the Dalai Lama's government raised a 500 man bodyguard; the V Dalai Lama's government raised 3,000 men; during the VII Dalai Lama's reign Pho-lha-nas raised a 1,000 man army from Gtsan. Thus at the turn of the century Ekai Kawaguchi observed: "The standing army of Tibet is said to consist of five thousand men, but from my own observation, I think this number somewhat exaggerated. In any case, it is hardly sufficient to protect a country containing six millions of inhabitants against foreign invasion and civil commotion. However, in Tibet social order is not kept by soldiers nor by the despotic power of the ruler. Religion is the force that keeps the country in good order." *Three Years in Tibet* (Benares and London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1909), p. 549. In the early 1920s the XIII Dalai Lama introduced with British help a small police force in the capital. But as David Macdonald noted, it "proved so unpopular that only a remnant is now left in Lhasa". *The Land of the Lama* (London: Sieley, Service and Co., 1926), p. 59. For further details, see Rgyal-rtse Rnamrgyal dban-dus, *Bod ljons rgyal khab chen po'I srid lugs dan 'brel ba'I drag po dmag pi lo rgyus rags bsdus* (Dharamsala: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1976).
- 3 For the purpose of this chapter a regime may be defined as "a manner, method or system of rule of government" (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*).
- 4 In 1930 the monks of Dhargay Gonpa (Dar-rgyas dgon-pa) in Kanze fought along with Tibetan troops against Chinese forces to regain Kanze and Nyarong. In 1947 monks of Sera Byes Monastery took up arms in support of Reting Rinpoche to fight against Tibetan government troops. And in 1959 thousands of monks in Lhasa joined Khampa guerillas to fight against the Chinese People's Liberation Army during the Tibetan uprising.
- 5 It should also be noted from the outset that we have left out the two periods of Sino-Tibetan relations between the governments of China and Tibet during these periods, though various chieftains particularly near the Sino-Tibetan borders vied for imperial patronage as Li T'ieh-tsong painstakingly records in

- Tibet: Today and Yesterday* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1960), pp. 25–8. Moreover, although Hisashi Sato's recent study of Ming–Tibet relations copiously documents the intensity and immense volume of intercourse between the two countries during the Ming period, those relations were predominantly cultural and commercial in nature. They lack the political pattern so characteristic of the Yuan–Sa-skya or Qing–Dalai Lama relationship.
- 6 Another relationship during the period involved the Karmapa lamas. This is omitted for purely analytical reasons. Because the Karmapas never really became rulers of Tibet in the manner of the Sakya or Dalai Lamas, their relations with China were of a different nature. However, their influence, spiritual or otherwise, in the lamaist world and especially in the cis-Himalayas cannot be underestimated. Cf. Nik Douglas and Meryle White, *Karmapa, The Black Hat Lama of Tibet* (London: Luzac, 1976), pp. 42–3, 49–50, 55, 61 and 76; and also Karma Thinley, *The History of the Sixteen Karmapas of Tibet* (Boulder, Colorado: Prajna Press, 1980), pp. 41–127. The Karmapas' missions to the emperors, however, had “little influence on political developments in Tibet or China”. The VI Karmapa (1416–1453) sent eight missions to the Ming emperor between 1436 and 1450. Although the Ming Shih describes such missions as “tributes”, H. E. Richardson concludes: “Representatives of a Lama who made no claim to exercise temporal dominion over Tibet cannot have brought tribute in the strict sense of the word.” “The Karma-pa Sect: A Historical Note”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (October 1958), p. 149.
- 7 The question surrounding the etymology of chol-kha and the political boundaries of the regions termed chol-kha gsum in the thirteenth century have not yet been clarified. Petech suggests that chol-kha is derived from a Mongol term, colge, corresponding to the Chinese lu, circuit. See his “Remarks” in Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (eds.), *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1980), p. 234. Since the Yuan period, however, the phrase chol-kha gsum phul-lo became fixed as a literary expression: Cf. Sarat Chandra Das, *Tibetan–English Dictionary*, p. 428. Petech specifies the chol-kha gsum to be Dbus, Gtsan and Mna-ris, excluding Khams and Amdo. This contradicts not only Tibetan claims but also the views of most other experts. Richardson writes that the domain offered by Khubilai to the Sa-skya Lama Phags-pa included “all Tibet from the far west to the Koko Nor”. [*Tibet and Its History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 34.] Li, n. 5, p. 20, lists the regions of the domain as follows: “1. Tibet proper comprising the thirteen districts of U and Tsang, 2. Kham and 3. Amdo.” This list accords with Shakabpa's division of the chol-kha gsum, the boundaries being roughly indicated by well known traditional landmarks in Tibet. [Zwa-sgab-pa Dban-phyug bde-ldan, Bod-kyi srid-don rgyal-rabs] (Kalimpong, India: Shakabpa House, 1976), Vol. I, p. 283.
- According to Tibetan sources, ‘Phags-pa gave the Khan and his family circles the Hevajra initiation peculiar to the Sa-skya sect on three occasions, and Khubilai accordingly made three offerings to his guru for each (dban-yon): 1. Bod khri-skor beu-gsum; 2. Bod chol-kha gsum; and 3. Rgya mi-yul chen-ma. i.e. a large Chinese province, along with other gifts (ibid., pp. 282–3). This process of centralization, consolidation and transfer of power has been variously interpreted as having conferred upon the lama the status of “Vice-regent” (Richardson), “ruler” (Li), etc. Tibetan writers, however, are unanimous in their interpretation: the whole process was an act of offering (‘bul-ba) in the religious sense, conferring “ownership rights”, and therefore the right to rule over Tibet. My own view should be evident throughout this chapter, especially in the concluding section, and in my earlier paper (Wisconsin, 1980).

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- 8 Joseph Kolmas, *Tibet and Imperial China* (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1967), p. 20.
- 9 *Zwa-sgab-pa Dban-phug bde-ldan, Bod-kyi srid-don rgyal-ralos*, Vol. I, p. 311.
- 10 Norbu, n. 1, p. 32.
- 11 This idea is more fully developed in Norbu, n. 1, pp. 2–3.
- 12 Petech, in Aris and Aung, n. 7, p. 294.
- 13 Sarat Chandra Das, “Tibet under the Tartar Emperors of China”, *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Extra No. 1, 1904), p. 97.
- 14 Herbert Franke, “Tibetans in Yuan China”, in John D. Langlois Jr. (ed.), *China under Mongol Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 302.
- 15 Kolmas, n. 8, p. 28.
- 16 The Dge-lugs-pa founder Rje Tson-kha-pa (1357–1419) was invited to China on two occasions (1416 and 1419), but he declined the invitation.
- 17 However the Bka-brgyud-pa sect as such was heavily involved with the regional politics of the times. The Tibetan ruler Ta’I Situ Byan-chub Rgyal-mtshan greatly honoured the III Karma-pa in 1327, the ruler of Central Tibet invited the V Karma-pa to Lhasa in 1412, and Sde-srid Karma Bstan-skyon dban-po, who was a devout follower of the X Karma-pa, carried out an intensive crusade against the Dge-lugs-pa order in Tibet. Cf. Douglas and White, n. 6, pp. 55, 64, 85 and 70. The only Bka-brgyud-pa lama to become a ruler of Tibet (1498–1512?) was the IV Zwa-dmar sprul-sku, who was elected to the office of mgon-skyabs in 1498 by the ministers of the Rin-spuns regime. See Si-tu Pap-chen Chos-kyun-gnas and Be-lo Tshe-dban kun-khyab, Sgrub brgyud Karma kam tshan brgyud pa rin po che’I rnam par thar pa rabs kyi ‘byun gnas nor bu zla ba chu sal gyi phren ba (New Delhi, 1972), Vol. 1, p. 611.
- 18 H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, p. 38. The Chinese have, of course, refuted this view, but Richardson has recently defended it based on “a summary of the evidence from Chinese, Tibetan and Western sources”. See Hugh E. Richardson, “Regurgitating an Imperial Political Myth”, *Tibetan Review*, Vol. XVII, No. 9 (September 1982), pp. 13–14.
- 19 Bsod-nams rgya-mtsho (1543–88) was at the time the actual head of the Dge-lugs-pa order. He was posthumously recognized as third in the line of Dalai Lamas.
- 20 Stag-lha Phun-tshogs bkra-sis, *Rgya’I yig tshan nan gsal b’ bod kyi rgyal Rabs gsal ba’I me lon* (Dharamsala: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1973), pp. 631–2.
- 21 John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 202.
- 22 Fairbank, n. 21, p. 14.
- 23 W. W. Rockhill, “The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and Their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China, 1644–1908”, *Toung Pao*, Vol. XI (1910), p. 18.
- 24 Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 36.
- 25 For a presentation of this view, see *Ta-la’I Bla-ma* (XIV), *Nos kyi yul dan nos kyi mi man* (Darjeeling: Tibetan Freedom Press, 1963), pp. 67–78; and also *Zwa-sgab-pa*, n. 7, pp. 263–313.
- 26 Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1950). See also Zehiruddin Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Rome: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970).
- 27 Li, n. 5, pp. 33–65.
- 28 For example, the ability of the Qing to drive the Gurkha invaders out of Tibet in 1791 strengthened their position in Lhasa. Further measures of imperial control included: (1) authorization of Ambans to participate in the Tibetan

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- administration and to discuss matters with the Dalai and Panchen Lamas; (2) requirements that the Tibetans submit certain vital questions for the Ambans' decision; (3) responsibility of the Amban for defence and foreign trade, as well as local levies and finances; and (4) withdrawal of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas' right to memorialize the throne directly – they now had to act through the Amban. Cf. Li, n. 5, pp. 53–4.
- 29 Rockhill, n. 23, p. 46.
- 30 Ram Rahul, *The Government and Politics of Tibet* (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1969), p. 17.
- 31 Raghu Vira, *Tibet A Souvenir* (New Delhi: Afro-Asian Convention on Tibet and Against Colonialism in Asia and Africa, 1960), p. 59.
- 32 Cited by H. H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in his address to the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, “The International Status of Tibet” (7 September 1959), in which he reiterated Tibet's independence. Cf. Rahul, n. 30, Appendix 2, pp. 129 and 132.
- 33 This is where I depart from those writers who have adopted a rather legalistic approach to the subject, including the Chinese who date their claims to sovereignty in Tibet from 1720. Professor Zehiruddin Ahmad thus examines the imperial edict of 1719 as the central point of his “The Historical Status of China in Tibet”, *Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia*, Vol. I, Nos. 1–2 (1972–73), pp. 99–108. See also G. Tucci, “La Regalita Sacra nell antico Tibet”, in *Studies in the History of Religions*, Vol. IV (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1950), pp. 189–203.
- 34 This definition differs slightly from Prof. Stein's conception of an “ecclesiastical state”, implying mostly monastic domination of the state. This is not inappropriate, but is a corollary of my argument. Cf. R. A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 138.
- 35 “Towards Sectarian Harmony and National Unity”, *Tibetan Review*, Vol. X, No. 9 (September 1976), special issue on the Tibetan religious sects, p. 4. Dun-dkar Blo-bzan phrin-las has followed up the thesis albeit casting the inter-sectarian struggles in the Marxist mould of class struggle. Cf. *Bod kyi chos srid zun 'brel skor bsad pa* (Beijing: Nationalities Press, 1981), pp. 62–110.
- 36 Norbu, n. 1, p. 55.
- 37 Geoffrey Samuel, “Tibet as a Stateless Society and some Islamic Parallels”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XLI, No. 2 (February 1982), pp. 216–29. We have no space here for empirical details but I must question Professor Samuel's very conception of comparative studies. His method leads either to finding static “parallels” to prove that A is like B or it leads to ecological determinism, a disease that has already infected so-called Himalayan Studies. Classical comparativists analyse how a single problem or a set of such problems is handled differently or similarly under different historical situations. For example, Geertz, whom Samuel quotes profusely, shows how Islam in Indonesia (*Peddlers and Princes*, 1963) differs from Islam in Morocco (Islam Observed, 1968). In our case we might demonstrate how problems arising from lack of coercive means were tackled in Tibet, post-war Japan and the Byzantine Empire. The way of scientific knowledge is in differentiating, not in creating parallels which may be applied in diplomacy or propaganda, but not to scholarship.
- 38 Dawa T. Norbu, “Marxism, Nationalism and Revolution: The Rise of Neo-nationalism in Communist countries” (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, May 1982), pp. 507–8.
- 39 The other three theories are Divine Rule, Social Contract and Sociological Theories of the State. Cf. Harasankar Bhattacharya and Utpal Roy, *An Introduction to Political Science* (Calcutta: Calcutta Book House, 1979),



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- pp. 31–84. The following books and articles provide the necessary empirical as well as theoretical bases for the argument I am here developing: Prince Peter, *The Aristocracy of Central Tibet* (Kalimpong: Tibet Mirror Press, 1956); Melvyn C. Goldstein, “An Anthropological Study of the Tibetan Political System” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle, 1968); Ram Rahul, n. 30; C. W. Cassinelli and Robert B. Ekvall, *A Tibetan Principality* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969); Nirmal Chandra Sinha, *Prolegomena to Lamaist Polity* (Calcutta: Firma Mukhopadhyay, 1969); Luciano Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet* (Rome: Is M.E.O., 1973); Phuntsog Wangyal, “The Influence of Religion on Tibetan Politics”, *The Tibet Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July–September 1975), pp. 78–86; Bina Roy Burman, *Religion and Politics in Tibet* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1979); Norbu, n. 1, (1980); *Dun-dkar*, n. 35; Franz Michael, *Rule by Incarnation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). It should be noted that, apart from Goldstein and Rahul, Samuel has ignored this literature, which is relevant to his subject.
- 40 Some emperors carried this policy to an extreme by aiming to confer ideological hegemony upon the dominant sect, while excluding or even persecuting the others. In 1270 the Yuan emperor attempted to issue a decree banning all sects but the Sa-skyapa in Tibet, and was only dissuaded by the intercession of ‘Phags-pa. Cf. *Dun-dkar*, n. 35, p. 70. Similar happenings characterize the Ming relation with the Karma-pas, and that of the Qing and Dge-lugs-pas. Cf. Petech, n. 26, p. 94.
- 41 The ancient Tibetans defined China as Rgya-nag-zin-chen bco-brgyad, China with her eighteen provinces. That this refers only to the territories inhabited by Han Chinese people is confirmed by the Tibetan word China, Rgya-nag: rgya means “space” or “territory”, and nag means “black”. China is thus that space or territory inhabited by the “black-gowned ones”, i.e. the Confucian scholars who were for Tibetans the foremost symbol of traditional China.
- 42 However, it should be noted that apart from the Tang the dynasties which embraced or patronized Buddhism were of non-Chinese descent, e.g. Wei (385–550), Yuan (1270–1368) and Qing (1644–1911).
- 43 It appears that legitimation by high lamas was particularly a feature of Imperial succession crises, e.g., the XIII Dalai Lama’s legitimation of Pu-i in 1908. Cf. Douglas and White, p. 49; and Christian Klieger, “The nature of the Patron–Priest relationship in Tibetan Culture”, *Tibet Society Bulletin*, Vol. V, No. 12 (1978), p. 3.
- 44 The Communists continued the traditional policy of using eminent lamas to achieve Chinese foreign policy objectives. Almost immediately after the “liberation” of Tibet, in 1952 the Communists set up a Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA). Out of its 93 members, 29 were Tibetans, and three of the four honorary presidents, the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, and Sherab Gyatso (Ses-rab rgya-mtsho) were Tibetans. The CBA was an instrument of the so-called Chinese Buddhist diplomacy, especially directed against South and Southeast Asian countries from 1952 to 1966. Cf. Holmes Welch, *Buddhism under Mao* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 169–229.

## Chapter 11

- 1 Dawa Norbu, “Analysis of Sino-Tibetan Relationships: Imperial Power, Non-coercive Regime and Military Dependency”, in Barbara Aziz and Mathew Kapstein (eds.), *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985), pp. 176–95.

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- 2 Heather Spence, "British Policy and the 'Development' of Tibet 1912-1933", (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wallongong, Australia, 1993), p. 2.
- 3 Cf. G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (3 vols., Rome, 1949); D. L. Snellgrove and H. E. Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (London, 1968), R. A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (London, 1972).
- 4 George Woodcock, *Into Tibet* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 31.
- 5 Dawa Norbu (trans.), *Khache Phalu's Advice on the Art of Living* (Dharamshala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1987), pp. i-xi.
- 6 John MacGregor, *Tibet: A Chronicle of Exploration* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1972), pp. 31-48. The quote is from p. 81.
- 7 Graham Sandberg, *Exploration of Tibet* (Delhi: Cosmos, 1973), pp. 85-6.
- 8 H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 71.
- 9 These tributes were called lo-phyag (annual submission). Bhutan used to pay annual tributes but Ladakh being far away used to pay every second year. Usually tributes consisted of local products of the countries concerned. For example, Ladakh used to offer apricots, etc. and Bhutan various types of Bhutanese cloth. It appears Sikkim stopped tributes when it became a British protectorate in 1890. Alastair Lamb also notes the existence of *Lapchak*. See his book, *British India and Tibet* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 200.
- 10 Sarat Chandra Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet* (New Delhi: Manjusri Publishing House, 1970); first published in 1902, p. 181.
- 11 Clement R. Markham (ed.), *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa* (New Delhi: Manjusri Publishing House, 1971); first published in 1876, p. 131.
- 12 Markham, n. 11, pp. 275-6.
- 13 MacGregor, n. 6, pp. 41-2.
- 14 Markham, n. 11, p. 158.
- 15 Das, n. 10, p. 193.
- 16 Markham, n. 11, pp. 137-8.
- 17 Samuel Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of Teshoo Lama in Tibet* (London: W. Bulmer & Co., 1800), pp. 177-8.
- 18 Das, n. 10, p. 181.
- 19 Markham, n. 11, p. 69.
- 20 Peter Hopkirk, *Trepassers on the Roof of the World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 1.
- 21 Hopkirk, n. 20, pp. 61-117; Sandberg, n. 7, pp. 186-202.
- 22 See Nikolai S. Kuleshov, *Russia's Tibet File* (Dharamshala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1990), p. 10.
- 23 Ekai Kawaguchi, *Three Years on Tibet* (Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1979); first published in 1909, pp. 496-9.
- 24 Lamb, n. 9, p. 100.
- 25 Lamb, n. 9, p. 124.
- 26 Premen Addy, *Tibet on the Imperial Chessboard* (New Delhi: Academic Publishers, 1984), p. 22.
- 27 Addy, n. 26, p. 50.
- 28 See Lamb, n. 9, pp. 353-57 and p. 319.
- 29 Addy, n. 26, p. 165.
- 30 Richardson, n. 8, p. 104.
- 31 Markham, n. 11, p. 100.
- 32 Woodcock, n. 4, p. 81.

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- 33 Suchitra Ghosh, *Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations, 1897-1914* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1977), p. 44.
- 34 Ghosh, n. 33, p. 108.
- 35 Parshotam Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1968), p. 379.
- 36 Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (London: OUP, 1968), p. 247.
- 37 Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960 edition), p. 260.
- 38 Bidya Nand, *British India and Tibet* (New Delhi: Oxford and IBH, 1975), p. 3.
- 39 Parshotam Mehra, *The Northern Frontier*, Vol. I, 1906-14 (Delhi: OUP, 1979), p. 177.
- 40 Mehra, n. 39, p. 49.
- 41 Mehra, n. 39, p. 8.
- 42 Addy, n. 26, p. 11.
- 43 Addy, n. 26, p. 124.
- 44 Addy, n. 26, p. 338.
- 45 Markham, n. 11, p. 130.
- 46 Markham, n. 11, p. 273.
- 47 Das, n. 10, p. 181.
- 48 Kawaguchi, n. 23, p. 504.
- 49 Sir Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1971).
- 50 Bell, n. 36, p. 22.
- 51 For Ambans see Josef Kolmas, "The Ambans and Assistant Ambans of Tibet, 1727-1912", Per Kvaerne (ed.), *Tibetan Studies*, Vol. I (Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994), pp. 454-67.
- 52 Ghosh, n. 33, p. 17.
- 53 Lamb, n. 37, p. 264; Mehra, n. 39, p. 225.
- 54 Ghosh, n. 33, pp. 153-4. Yuan Skih-k'ai was to argue along similar lines. Cf. Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh, *Himalayan Triangle* (London: British Library, 1988), p. 2.
- 55 Ghosh, n. 33, p. 58; Lamb, n. 37, p. 264.
- 56 Reinhard Bendix and Guenther Roth, *Scholarship and Partisanship: Essays on Max Weber* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 214.
- 57 By early 1920s, British Ambassador Alston observed that the Chinese foreign office was largely controlled by "the foreign educated young Chinese". Cf. Spence, n. 2, p. 201.
- 58 Elliot Sperling, "The Chinese Venture into K'am, 1904-11 and the Role of Chao Erh-feng", *The Tibet Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (April/June, 1976), pp. 10-36; Alastair Lamb, *The McMohan Line* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 181-95.
- 59 Mehra, n. 39, p. xv.
- 60 Fang Furen and Suo Wenging, *Highlights of Tibetan History* (Beijing: New World Press, 1984), pp. 121-9; Ya Hanzhang, *The Biographies of the Dalai Lamas* (Beijing, Foreign Language Press, 1991), pp. 129-30, 133-49.
- 61 Ghosh, n. 33, p. 119.
- 62 Addy, n. 26, p. 156.
- 63 Addy, n. 26, p. 22.
- 64 Addy, n. 26, p. 124; Mehra, n. 35, p. 143; Ghosh, n. 33, p. 127.
- 65 Mehra, n. 39, pp. 145 and 81.
- 66 Mehra, n. 39, p. 67 and 177; Spence, n. 2, pp. 36, 163, 297, 306, 311.
- 67 Richardson, n. 8, p. 68.
- 68 Younghusband, n. 49, pp. 117, 142, 179, 263, 270.

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- 69 Mehra, n. 39, p. 145.
- 70 Frederic A. Greenhut II, *The Tibetan Frontiers Question* (New Delhi: Chand and Co., 1982), pp. 28–9. Hugh E. Richardson, *Tibet and Her Neighbours* (London: Tibet Society of the United Kingdom, n.d.), p. 3.
- 71 Ghosh, n. 33, p. 203.
- 72 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1963), Vol. 21, pp. 26–7. Mehra, n. 39, p. 7; Greenhut II, n. 70, pp. 28–9.
- 73 Mehra, n. 39, p. 67; Greenhut II, n. 70, pp. 28–9.
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- 75 Victoria Conner and Robert Barnett, *Leaders in Tibet: A Directory* (London: Tibet Information Network, 1997).
- 76 Peter Grogan, “Population Transfer”, Robert McCorquodale and Nicholas Orooz (ed.), *Tibet: The Position in International Law* (London: Serindia, 1994), pp. 180–5. *New Majority: Chinese Population Transfer into Tibet* (London: Tibet Support Group, 1995).
- 77 L. Oppenheim, *International Law: A Treatise Vol. 1 – Peace* (London: Longman, 1955), pp. 189–90.
- 78 L. Oppenheim, *International Law, Vol. 2 Disputes, War and Neutrality* (London: Longman, 1952), p. 39.
- 79 Michael C. Van Walt van Praag, *The Status of Tibet* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 70–3.
- 80 Dawa Norbu, “The History of Geography”, *Himal*, Vol. 11, No. 6 (June 1998), pp. 28–9.
- 81 S. C. Bajpai, *The Northern Frontier of India* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1970), pp. 32–46.
- 82 MacGregor. n. 6, p. 90.
- 83 Lamb, n. 37, p. 8; Mehra, n. 35, p. 8; Younghusband, n. 49, p. 59.
- 84 C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanades*, Vol. 12. (Leiden: Liechten-Stein, 1973), p. 17.
- 85 Younghusband, n. 49, Appendix, pp. 439–41.
- 86 Ghosh, n. 33, p. 26; Younghusband, n. 49, p. 441.
- 87 Richardson, n. 8, pp. 75–6; Addy, n. 26, p. 49.
- 88 Younghusband, n. 49, p. 48.
- 89 Mehra, n. 35, p. 163; Lamb, n. 37, p. 210.
- 90 Addy, n. 26, pp. 29, 47, 55 and 59.
- 91 Spence, n. 2, p. 220; Addy, n. 26, p. 242.
- 92 Bell, n. 36, p. 157.
- 93 Younghusband, n. 49, p. 439.
- 94 Alastair Lamb, *Asian Frontiers* (London: Pall Mall, 1968), p. 65.
- 95 Unlike in a protectorate status in the modern sense in which the defence of the protectorate state is the sole responsibility of the protecting power, Tibet managed when it could by itself without Chinese help, e.g. Tibet–Ladakh War of 1681–83, Tibet–Dogra War of 1841–42, Tibet–Nepal War of 1855–56. This suggests China’s protectorship was more of an unwritten understanding than a legal/formal treaty between China and Tibet.
- 96 Alex McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj: The Frontier Cadre, 1904–1947* (London: Curzon Press, 1997), pp. 228–37.
- 97 Addy, n. 26, p. 67.
- 98 Mehra, n. 39, p. 66.
- 99 Quotations cited in this paper are mostly from British sources which are found in the works by Alastair Lamb, Parshotam Mehra, Suchitra Ghosh, Premen

Addy, Heather Spence, etc. I am grateful to these historians whose labour I have exploited.

## Chapter 12

- 1 See the full text as published by *Xinhua*, Beijing, 27 May, 1951.
- 2 This is the official title of the Agreement. Tibetans usually call it “the Seventeen Point Agreement”.
- 3 Melvyn C. Goldstein, “Tibet Capitulates: The Seventeen Point Agreement”, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951* (Berkeley: University of California, 1989), pp. 737–72; Tsering Shakya, “The Genesis of the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951”, Per Kvaerne (ed.), *Tibetan Studies*, Vol. 2 (Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994), pp. 739–54; Song Liming, “Reflections on the Seventeen Point Agreement of 1951”, *Chinese Studies in History*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Spring 1997), pp. 48–62.
- 4 Dawa Norbu, “Chinese Communist Views on National Self-Determination, 1922–1956”, *International Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (October–December 1988), pp. 317–42.
- 5 Dick Wilson, *The Long March 1935* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 221.
- 6 Robert Ford, *Captured in Tibet* (London: George Harrap, 1957), p. 11, 21; Shakya, n. 3, p. 740.
- 7 Since the Chinese Communist broadcast, as a typical propaganda, raised social questions, the Tibetan Government deemed it appropriate for the Tibetan National Assembly (*tsong-du*) to respond. Therefore Khenchung Thubten Gyalpo, Tsipon Shakabpa and Geshe Lodo (*blo-gros*) Gyatso were sent by the National Assembly, not by the Dalai Lama or the Tibet Government. Because of this, the Shakabpa mission has been downplayed or not mentioned at all in the recent Tibetan diasporic literature as having no sanction from the Dalai Lama. But Shakabpa was authorized and empowered by the Tibetan National Assembly. See, Zha-sgab dwan-phyug bde-ldan, *Bod-kyi strid-don rgyal-rabs*, Vol. 2 (Kalimpong: Shakabpa House, 1976), pp. 408–12.
- 8 Lhawutara Thub-bstan btsan-dar, “Bod zhi-bas bchins-grol byun-thabs skor-gyi gros-mthun don-tsan bchu-bdun-la min rtags bkod-pa snon-rjes-su” in *Bodkyi Rig-gnas lo-rgyus dpyid gzhi rgyu-cha bdams bsgrigs* (Lhasa: Tibetan People’s Publishing House, 1982), p. 4.
- 9 Chang Kuo-hua, “Tibet Returns to the Bosom of the Motherland”, *Survey of China Mainland Press* (SCMP), No. 2854, 6 November 1962, p. 6.
- 10 Shakya, n. 3, p. 744.
- 11 Zha-sgab, n. 7, p. 423.
- 12 *The People’s Daily*, 17 November 1950.
- 13 See Goldstein, n. 3, pp. 645–71 for a good discussion of the complex interplay of the USA, Britain and India on the Shakabpa Peace mission during the late 1940s and early 1950s.
- 14 Goldstein, n. 3, p. 671.
- 15 See n. 12.
- 16 I.e. the Chinese Communist Party.
- 17 Chang, n. 9, pp. 1–2.
- 18 Chang, n. 9, p. 2.
- 19 Dawa Norbu, “The 1959 Tibetan Rebellion: An Interpretation”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 77 (March 1979), pp. 74–93.

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- 20 Chang, n. 9, p. 2.
- 21 Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme, *A Great Turn in Tibetan History* (Beijing: New Star Publishers, 1991), p. 7.
- 22 Lhawutara, n. 8, p. 108.
- 23 Chang, n. 9, p. 5.
- 24 Stag-lha Phuntsog btrashi, *Mitse byun-ba brojodpa*, Vol. 2 (Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1995), p. 62.
- 25 Khe-smad bsod-nams dwañ dus, “Rgya-bod dbar don-tsan bchu-bdun jdog-stans skor”, *Gtam Tsogs*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Dharamsala, 1986), p. 46.
- 26 His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People* (New York: Potala Corporation, 1977 [1962]), p. 115.
- 27 Dawa Norbu, “Han Hegemony and Tibetan Ethnicity”, *International Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (July–September 1995), pp. 297–310.
- 28 Chang, n. 9, p. 3.
- 29 The Dalai Lama, n. 26, writes, “In 1948, while I was still a student, the government heard there were Chinese Communist spies in the country. They had come to find out how strong our army was, and whether we were receiving military aid from any foreign power” (p. 80).
- 30 Chang, n. 9, p. 5.
- 31 Chang, n. 9, p. 6.
- 32 Zha-sgab, n. 7, p. 419.
- 33 *The Important Documents of the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Committee* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1949), pp. 18–19.
- 34 Dawa Norbu, “Imperialism and Inner Asia 1775–1907”, in K. Warikoo and Dawa Norbu (eds.), *Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1992), pp. 30–56.
- 35 *United States Foreign Relations*, 693.93 B/11-2250, cited in Goldstein, n. 3, pp. 740–6.
- 36 Na-phod nga-dban ‘jig-med, Rgyal-yons mi-dmans thus-tsogs rgyun yud kyi Au-yon krañ gzhon-pa, ran-skyon Ljongs mi-dmans ‘thus-tsogs rgyun yud kyi kru ren na-phod nga-dban ‘jig-med kyis ran-skyon ljons kyi skabs lä-pia mi-dmans thus tsog kyi tsogs-‘du thens gnyis-pa’ thog gnan-ba’ galche gsun bshad (Lhasa: mimeograph, 1989), p. 27. I am grateful to Tsieng Shakya for giving me a copy of this important document.
- 37 Ngobo, n. 36.
- 38 Goldstein, n. 35, pp. 740–6.
- 39 Khe-smad bsod-nams dban-‘dus, Sgas-po lo-rgys bal gnam (Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1982), p. 137.
- 40 Zha-sgab, n. 7, pp. 407–12.
- 41 Stag-lha phun-stogs bkra-shis, n. 24, pp. 38–40.
- 42 Lu’o Yue-hung, Bod zhibas bchins grol skorgyi nyin-tho gnad-bshus, in *Bod-kyi rig-gnas lo- rgyus rdu-cha bdams-bsgrigs* (Lhasa: Tibetan People’s Publishing House, 1982), pp. 118–19.
- 43 Zha-sgab, n. 7, p. 422.
- 44 This is my rough rendering of “bod-ljons rgyal-bstan chab-srid” which may be equivalent to the Western concept of sovereignty.
- 45 See n. 44.
- 46 Zha-sgab, n. 7, p. 425.
- 47 Na-phod nag-dban jigs-med, n. 36, p. 29.
- 48 Na-phod nag-dwan jigs-med, n. 36, p. 30.
- 49 Shakya, n. 3, p. 746.

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- 50 It should be noted that the third Chinese demand (i.e. Tibet's foreign relations would be handled by Beijing) was pressed on Shakabpa operating from Delhi but not on Ngabo operating within Tibet.
- 51 Na-phod nag-dwan jigs-med, n. 36, p. 29.
- 52 Khe-mod bsodnams dwan-'dus, n. 38, p. 137.
- 53 International Commission of Jurists, *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law* (Geneva: ICJ, 1959), pp. 75–99; ICJ, *Tibet and the People's Republic of China* (Delhi: Sterling, 1966), pp. 139–65.
- 54 Dawa Norbu, "Historical Introduction", *A Poisoned Arrow: The Secret Report of the 10th Panchen Lama* (London: Tibet Information Network, 1997), p. xxv.
- 55 Shakya, n. 3, p. 746.
- 56 Lu'o, n. 42, p. 127.
- 57 Chang Kuo-hua, n. 9, p. 3. Gaddi Rinpoche and Taktse Rinpoche were sent by the Communists to persuade the Dalai Lama and his government to enter into negotiation for "peaceful liberation".
- 58 Yuan Shan, "The Dalai Lama and the Seventeen Article Agreement" (Beijing: New Star Publication, 1991), pp. 5–6.
- 59 Goldstein, n. 3, pp. 763–72.
- 60 Khe smad bsod-nams dwañ-'du, n. 39, p. 126; Stag-lha phun-tsogs bkrashis, n. 24, p. 60.
- 61 Stag-lha phun-tsogs bkrashis, n. 24, p. 60.
- 62 Chang, n. 9, pp. 1–7.
- 63 Lu'o, n. 42, pp. 117–69.
- 64 Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme, n. 21, pp. 6–8; *Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme on Tibetan Issues* (Beijing: New Star Publishers, 1991), pp. 10–12.
- 65 Ngapoi, n. 21, pp. 6–8.
- 66 Nag-phod nag dhan jigs-med, n. 36, pp. 28–9.
- 67 Nag-phod, n. 36, p. 31.
- 68 Nag-phod, n. 36, p. 30.
- 69 Nag-phod, n. 36, p. 31.
- 70 Nag-phod, n. 36, p. 32.
- 71 Nag-phod, n. 36, pp. 35–6.
- 72 Nag-phod, n. 36, p. 38.
- 73 Nag-phod, n. 36, pp. 33–36.
- 74 Stag-lha, n. 24, pp. 55–6.
- 75 Lhawutara, n. 8, p. 109.
- 76 Lhawutara, n. 8, p. 105.
- 77 Lhawutara, n. 8, p. 107.
- 78 Lhawutara, n. 8, p. 107.
- 79 Lhawutara, n. 8, p. 106.
- 80 Lhawutara, n. 8, p. 96.
- 81 Lhawutara, n. 8, p. 101.
- 82 Khe-smad, n. 25.
- 83 Khe-smad, n. 38.
- 84 Khe-smad, n. 25, p. 37.
- 85 Khe-smad, n. 39, p. 115.
- 86 Khe-smad, n. 25, pp. 37–8.
- 87 Khe-smad, n. 25, p. 48.
- 88 Khe-smad, n. 39, p. 121.
- 89 Khe-smad, n. 25, p. 42.
- 90 Khe-smad, n. 25, p. 42 and n. 39, p. 122.

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- 91 Khe-smad, n. 39, p. 137.
- 92 Khe-smad, n. 39, p. 137.
- 93 Khe-smad, n. 25, p. 49; and n. 39, p. 130.
- 94 Bsam-grub pho-bran bstan zin don-grub, *Mi-tsai rb-rlabs khrug-po* (Dehradun: Taring House, 1987), p. 108.
- 95 Bsam-grub pho-bran, n. 94, p. 40.
- 96 Bsam grub pho-bran, n. 94, p. 110.
- 97 Bsam grub pho-bran, n. 94, p. 111.
- 98 Stag-lha, n. 24, pp. 33–4.
- 99 Stag-lha, n. 24, pp. 38–9; Lu'o, n. 41, p. 117.
- 100 Stag-lha, n. 24, p. 40.
- 101 Stag-lha, n. 24, pp. 42–4.
- 102 Stag-lha, n. 24, p. 51.
- 103 Stag-lha, n. 24, pp. 55–6.
- 104 Stag-lha, n. 24, p. 58.
- 105 Stag-lha, n. 24, pp. 58–60.
- 106 Thubten Legmon only recorded words concerned with religious freedom. He requested the Chinese while on their way to Beijing to make sure that the freedom of religion was genuine and lasting. Lu'o, n. 42, pp. 121–2.
- 107 Sandhu Rinchen, interview (New Delhi), 17 September 1997.
- 108 Goldstein, n. 3, pp. 737–72.
- 109 *The Law of Treaties, International Legal Materials*, Vol. VIII, No. 4 (July 1969), p. 698.
- 110 Nag-phod, n. 35, p. 30.
- 111 Nag-phod, n. 35, p. 35.
- 112 Zha-sgab, n. 7, p. 428.
- 113 Khe-smad, n. 25, p. 37; Lhawutara, n. 8, p. 105.
- 114 On the Panchen Lama and the PLA issues.
- 115 Zha-sgab, n. 7, pp. 420–7.
- 116 The Dalai Lama, n. 26, p. 88.
- 117 Khe-smad, n. 25, p. 49.
- 118 I am grateful to Kunsang Paljor for this information. Kunsang Paljor was working for the Chinese Administration in Lhasa before his escape to India in the late 1960s.
- 119 This is clear from the fact that he was not to go via India with the rest of the delegates. Lu'o Yu-hung notes in his diary that he drafted Ngabo's speech. Lu'o, n. 42, p. 123.
- 120 The Dalai Lama, Press Statement issued in Mussoorie on 20 June, 1959 in *1959 Tibet Documents* (Dharamsala: Information Office, 1987), p. 15.
- 121 Yuan Shan, n. 58, p. 13.
- 122 Yuan, n. 58, p. 10.
- 123 The Dalai Lama, n. 26, p. 98.
- 124 The Dalai Lama, n. 26, p. 126.
- 125 The Dalai Lama, n. 26, p. 133.
- 126 The Dalai Lama, n. 119, p. 12.
- 127 The Dalai Lama, n. 119, p. 17.
- 128 The Dalai Lama, n. 119, p. 15.
- 129 "Mimang Tsongdu" was a popular movement that began in Lhasa in 1952 by three ordinary Tibetans. It called upon China to leave Tibet. Because it sought to mobilize the common masses and the fact that this organization started independent of the Chinese Communist Party, its ideology tends to question the Chinese Communist mandate to "liberation". In particular its anti-Chinese



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- nationalism was considered subversive. Therefore, the Chinese leaders asked the Kashag to ban this organization on 12 April 1952.
- 130 Yuan Shan, n. 57, p. 13. "Communique on the Revolt", NCNA, Peking, March 28, 1959.
- 131 As Professor Goldstein writes: "By the end of November 1950, the situation in Lhasa was grim. Kham and the entire military force stationed there were lost; the United States and Britain had refused to accept Tibetan delegations seeking diplomatic and military assistance against the Chinese; the United Nations was unwilling to consider China's invasion of Tibet; India would not offer strong military and diplomatic support; only a few thousand troops were available to protect the road from Chamdo, and it was likely that the Chinese would be able to march into Lhasa whenever they chose. A feeling of isolation and vulnerability permeated the Lhasa religious and secular leadership", n. 3, p. 737.
- 132 Goldstein, n. 3, p. 753.
- 133 Chris Mullin, "The CIA: Tibetan Conspiracy", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 September 1975, pp. 30 and 34.
- 134 Nirmal C. Sinha, "The Seventeen Point Agreement: Vindication and Liquidation of Tibet's Independence", *Tibetan Review*, September 1974, pp. 21-3.
- 135 Na-phod, n. 36, p. 38.
- 136 Song Liming, n. 3, p. 59.

## Chapter 13

- 1 I use "theocracy" as the nearest western equivalent of the Buddhist polity that existed in Tibet. Although Tibetologists and Tibetans are likely to object to the term, I use it as a political and social concept within the western political science tradition.
- 2 See the full document in Chanakya Sen (ed.), *Tibet Disappears* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1960), p. 48.
- 3 Wang Jiawei and Nyima Gyalcan, *The Historical Status of China's Tibet* (Beijing: China Continental Press, 1997), p. 80-110; Furen Wang and Wenqing Suo, *Highlights of Tibetan History* (Beijing: New World Press, 1984), pp. 149-54; Ya Hanzhang, *The Biographies of the Dalai Lamas* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1991), pp. 288-316.
- 4 When two English-type schools were opened in Tibet as a first step towards modernization, it is said that the Chinese bribed the abbots of Drepung, Sera and Ganden Monasteries in Lhasa to force the Tibetan Government to close down the schools in Lhasa and Gyantse.
- 5 This point comes through clearly while talking to the older generation of monk-officials (rtse-grung) and aristocratic lay officials (sku-grag) from Lhasa.
- 6 I have in mind books such as *Seven Years in Tibet*, by Heinrich Harrer; *Tibet and Its History* by H. E. Richardson, *My Journey to Lhasa*, by Alexander David-Neil, and well-known books by Sir Charles Bell, Professor Giuseppe Tucci, and George Patterson, all of whom visited Tibet on several occasions before the Communist takeover.
- 7 See the English translation in *Tibetan Review* (May-June 1973), pp. 10-11. For a more cautious and scholarly treatment of the subject, see D. L. Snellgrove and H. E. Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (New York: Praeger, 1968); R. A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972).
- 8 See Chusei Suzuki's article, "China's relations with Inner Asia", in John F. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 180-97.

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- 9 Dawa Norbu, "The Tibetan response to Chinese Liberation", *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 62 (October 1975), p. 226.
- 10 Dick Wilson, *The Long March 1935* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 221.
- 11 Wilson, n. 10, p. 221.
- 12 George Mosely, "China's fresh approach to the national minority question", *The China Quarterly*, No. 24 (October–December 1965), pp. 16–17.
- 13 See T. N. Takla's interesting article, "Notes on some early Tibetan Communists", *Tibetan Review* (June–July 1969), pp. 7–9.
- 14 Cited in Wilson, n. 10, p. 220.
- 15 *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. V (Beijing, 1977), p. 64.
- 16 Dawa Norbu, *Red Star Over Tibet* (London: Collins, 1974), pp. 116–17. For the general policy toward national minorities as such, see June T. Dreyer, "Traditional minorities elites and the CPR elite engaged in the minority nationalities work", in Robert A. Scalapino (ed.) *Elites in the People's Republic of China* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1972), pp. 416–50.
- 17 See the full document in Sen, n. 2, pp. 78–81.
- 18 See the most interesting revelation by a group of Red Guards, "How the revolt in Tibet broke out", in *Tibet 1950–1967* (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1968), p. 690.
- 19 Norbu, n. 16, p. 125.
- 20 For a clear and detailed account of the question of Inner and Outer Tibet, see Melvyn C. Goldstein, "Change, Conflict and Continuity Among a Community of Nomadic Pastoralists; A Case Study from Western Tibet, 1950–1990", in Robert Barnett and Shirin Akiner (ed.), *Resistance and Reform in Tibet* (London: Hurst and Co, 1994), pp. 76–90.
- 21 Take for example Derge which was halved into "Chinese" and Tibetan territories separated by the Driчу river. Juchen Thubten Namgyal who was one of the chiefs at Derge and who now lives at Dharamsala told me in an interview in April 1976, "Once you have crossed the Driчу, you are in Tibetan territory and you can do anything you like: including kill Chinese and get away with that." Thubten was sent twice to Lhasa in the mid-1950s to plead with Dalai Lama and Tibetan Government that they persuade the Chinese to extend the same liberal policy to Kham as well. His missions were in vain. See also, n. 36.
- 22 Franz Michael, *Rule by Incarnation: Tibetan Buddhism and its Role in Society and State* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 27–64.
- 23 The framework for this analysis and theoretical assumptions are based on Chalmers A. Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966).
- 24 Dr Gopal Singh (ed.), *National Integration: Tibet Issue* (published by the editor in New Delhi, 1964), p. 18. See also, The 10th Panchen Lama, *A Poisoned Arrow* (London: Tibet Information Network, 1997), pp. 11, 76, 98.
- 25 Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang, *Four Rivers, Six Ranges* (Dharasala, India: Information and Publicity Office of HH The Dalai Lama, 1973), pp. 37–9. See also Jamyang Norbu, *Warriors of Tibet* (London: Wisdom Publications 1986), pp. 83–8.
- 26 For the Chinese accounts and views of revolt, see *Concerning the Question of Tibet* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1959).
- 27 George N. Patterson, "China and Tibet: background to the revolt", *The China Quarterly*, No. 1 (January–March 1960), p. 96.
- 28 The last piece of information is from *The Guardian*, 2 September 1954.
- 29 *New York Times*, 28 August 1954.
- 30 Anna Louise Strong, *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet* (Beijing: New World Press, 1960), pp. 65–6.

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- 31 *Tibet 1950–1967*, n. 18, p. 359.
- 32 Quoted by New China News Agency, *Tibet 1950–1967*, n. 18, p. 368.
- 33 Michel Peissel, *Cavaliers of Kham* (London: Heinemann, 1972), p. 67.
- 34 Peissel, n. 33, p. 82.
- 35 Andrugtsang, n. 25, p. 47.
- 36 I have heard numerous tales of ruthless Chinese military action in Eastern Tibet from Khampas in exile which indeed contrast starkly with what I have experienced in Western Tibet. This was evidently due to the differentiated policies Communists pursued in Inner and Outer Tibet. Most convincing up-to-date evidence is that of the 10th Panchen Lama, n. 24, pp. 96–123. It is also interesting to note that most of the evidence for the International Commission of Jurists report on a charge of genocide in Tibet came from Amdo and Kham; see ICJ, *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic* (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1966), pp. 23–58.
- 37 Peissel, n. 33, p. 68.
- 38 Peissel, n. 33, p. 90.
- 39 Andrugtsang, n. 25, pp. 55–62.
- 40 Andrugtsang, n. 25, p. 62; Kunga Samten Dewatshang, *Flight At The Cuckoo's Behest* (New Delhi: Paljor Publication, 1997), pp. 110–44.
- 41 Andrugtsang, n. 25, pp. 88, 90 and 60.
- 42 Peissel, n. 33, p. 96.
- 43 For the Dalai Lama's view, see his memoirs, *My Land and My People* (London: Panther Books, 1964), in particular chapters 7 and 9.
- 44 Peissel, n. 33, p. 90. For George Patterson's view, see his *Tibet in Revolt* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960).
- 45 In an interview with the author at Dharamsala in June 1973.
- 46 Patterson, n. 27, p. 96.
- 47 Peissel, n. 33, p. 101.
- 48 Peissel, n. 33, p. 114.
- 49 Barber, *From the Land of Lost Content* (London: Collins, 1969).
- 50 Leoshe Thubtentarpa, who was most active in Sino-Tibetan politics in the 1950s and who visited China on several occasions, told me this in an interview at Dharamsala in July 1976. See his watered-down memoirs. *Bod-gzhung rtse-yig-tsang daiñ phyi-rgyal las-khungts* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1998).
- 51 Barber, n. 49, p. 71.
- 52 It is important to note that the Tibetans were both anti-Chinese and anti-Communist at the time of the revolt. Ordinarily, however, they tend to distinguish between *rgyami rnyingpa* (Old Chinese) and *rgyami-gsarpa* (New Chinese, i.e. Communist).
- 53 N. 18, p. 351.
- 54 N. 18, p. 366.
- 55 Revealing eye-witness accounts are to be found in *Tibetan Review* (March 1969), pp. 3–9.
- 56 H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History* (London Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 25.
- 57 Tibet's traditional cabinet.
- 58 Uyon Lhan-Khang, "The Preparatory Committee for Tibet Autonomous Region", office set up to gradually replace the Tibetan Government.
- 59 Literally, "Soldiers/Defenders of faith", e.g. Tibetan Army (brtan-srung dmagmi).
- 60 N. 18, p. 384.
- 61 N. 18, p. 352.

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- 62 Andrugtsang, n. 25, pp. 52–3. The Dalai Lama's foreword, p. 6.
- 63 N. 18, p. 353.
- 64 *New York Times*, 19 September 1976.
- 65 Estimates of the crowds that gathered around the Dalai Lama's palace leading demonstrations against the Chinese in early March 1959, range between 10,000 to 30,000.
- 66 Andrugtsang, n. 25, p. 48.
- 67 Jamyang Norbu, "The Tibetan Resistance Movement and the Role of the C.I.A." in Barnett and Akiner, n. 20, p. 189.
- 68 Phuntsog Wangyal, "Political development in Tibet, 1950–1959", unpublished M. Phil thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1974, p. 82.
- 69 Peissel, n. 33, p. 78.
- 70 Since this chapter was published as an article in March 1979 (*The China Quarterly*, No. 77), some more factual details have come to light, especially the CIA role in the revolt. However, the main objective argument of this article remains valid: that the causality of the revolt has to be sought in the faulty Communist policy in Kham and Amdo, and that its nature was essentially religious which clashed with the Communist spirit and reform. Therefore, while revising this paper for this book, I have not much touched the main body of the text; I have merely referred to post-1979 works which reinforce the argument. The CIA role is discussed separately in Chapter 15 in some detail. For a latest analysis of the 1959 revolt, see Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows* (London: Pimlico 1999), pp. 163–96. For a good study of the 1987–88 pro-independence demonstrations in Lhasa, see Ronald D. Schwartz, *Circle of Protest: Political Ritual in the Tibetan Uprising* (London: Hurst and Co, 1994).

## Chapter 14

- 1 On becoming editor of *Tibetan Review* in June 1972, I took special interest in strategic developments. This resulted in a special focus issue of the *Tibetan Review* (September/October 1975), pp. 3–6, 15–26. See also, Dawa Norbu, "Strategic Development in Tibet: Implications for its Neighbours", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (March 1979), pp. 245–59; Dawa Norbu, "Chinese Strategic Thinking on Tibet and the Himalayan Region", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XII, No. 4 (July 1988).
- 2 Qin Hongxun, *Transport in Tibet* (China Continental Press, 1997), pp. 15–16.
- 3 Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960); Parshotam Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1968); Premen Addy, *Tibet on the Imperial Chessboard* (New Delhi: Academic Publishers, 1984).
- 4 Dawa Norbu, "Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations: The Centrality of Marginality", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 11 (November 1997), pp. 1078–80.
- 5 For the full text, see *Tibetan Review* (New Delhi, April 1969), pp. 5–6.
- 6 During the Bangladesh crisis, India and Russia signed a treaty of "Peace, Friendship and Cooperation", which China reportedly interpreted as a military pact designed to "liberate" Xinjiang and Tibet. See B. K. Tiwari's report in *The Indian Express* (New Delhi) 13 March 1973.
- 7 See the *People's Daily*, 9 September 1975; *Peking Review*, No. 28 (19 September 1975); and *Red Flag*, No. 9 (1975). It was hardly fortuitous that in September 1975 Hua Guofeng, then Minister of Public Security, led the central delegation to attend the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the founding of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Hua Guofeng described Tibet as the strategic

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- “fortress” on China’s southwest frontiers. In 1965 also it had been Hua’s predecessor who led the central delegation to the founding anniversary of TAR.
- 8 Chinese Communist Party or CPC.
  - 9 *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, 9 September 1991, p. 31.
  - 10 *FBIS*, n. 9, p. 31.
  - 11 Some developments indicate this sense of completion. In 1974 the Khampa guerrilla base in Mustang (Nepal) was dismantled. In 1975 Lhasa was open to Asian and Western visitors. In the same year China announced that 97 per cent of the Tibetan counties were connected by roads. *Radio Lhasa* (Tibetan broadcast), 9 September 1975.
  - 12 Feng-hwa Mah, “The First Five Year Plan and Its International Aspects” in C. F. Remer (ed.), *Three Essays on International Economics of Communist China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), p. 49.
  - 13 Translated by George Moseley, under the title, *The Party and the National Question in China* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1966), p. 107.
  - 14 *Xinhua* (Beijing) 3 November 1997.
  - 15 The Dalai Lama, *Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet* (New Delhi: Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1987).
  - 16 Elliot Sperling, “The Chinese Venture into K’am 1904–11 and the Role of Chao Erh-feng”, *The Tibet Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Dharamsala, April/June 1976), pp. 10–36.
  - 17 For details of how the Chinese organized Tibetan labour forces for the road construction work, see Dawa Norbu, *Red Star Over Tibet* (London: Collins, 1974), pp. 111–17.
  - 18 *Radio Lhasa* (Tibetan broadcast), 9 September 1975. It was the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Tibet Autonomous Region on which date China released most of its statistics on Tibet.
  - 19 Dawa Norbu, “The 1959 Tibetan Rebellion: An Interpretation”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 77 (March 1979), pp. 81–7.
  - 20 Michel Piessel, *Cavaliers of Kham* (London: Heinemann, 1972), p. 194.
  - 21 At the time of the border clashes in 1967, there was only one motorable road in Chumbi Valley. According to a China-educated Tibetan cadre now living in India, Chinese strategists then feared a two-pronged attack from India – one from Bhutan, which is only about six miles from the old road, and another from Sikkim, whose capital Gangtok is about twelve miles from the new road. Such an attack from South Asia, if successful, can cut off the Chinese military artery leading to the strategic Nathula Pass, and march across Central Tibet to Lhasa.
  - 22 *Tibetan Review* (June/July 1972), p. 8.
  - 23 N. 22, pp. 7–8.
  - 24 Margaret W. Fisher, Leo E. Rose and Robert A. Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground: Sino-Indian Rivalry in Ladakh* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 135.
  - 25 *Survey of World Broadcast (SWB) Far East/123 G 15*, 11 October 1994, p. 31.
  - 26 *Transport in Tibet* (China Continental Press, 1996), p. 2.
  - 27 Qin Hongxun, *Transport in Tibet* (China Continental Press, 1997), pp. 12–13.
  - 28 *FBIS CHI-94-200*, 17 October, 1994, p. 82.
  - 29 *Xinhua* 8 August 1995; *Xinhua* 27 October 1995; *FBIS CH-96 5* February 1996, p. 19; *FBIS CHI-96-067*, 5 April 1996, p. 35.
  - 30 These airfields are located at the following places: Kartse, Kantse, North Koko Nor, Lithang, Jekondo, Tachienlu, Nakchukha, Chamdo, Drachi-Dranang, Nyahang (east Tibet); Lhasa, Gyantse, Shigatse, Ghonkhar Dzong (central Tibet); and Phari, Chusul, Tram, Worog, Gartok, Kassu, Ngari, and Thingri (western Tibet).

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- 31 John Ackerly, *Nuclear Tibet* (Washington DC, 1993: International Campaign for Tibet, 1993), p. 55.
- 32 Qin, n. 2, pp. 26–31.
- 33 Civil Aviation Administration of China.
- 34 Qin, n. 2, p. 29.
- 35 Ackerly, n. 31, p. 53.
- 36 *Aviation Week and Space Technology* 19 October 1987.
- 37 N. 36.
- 38 *Tibetan Review* (March 1974), p. 4.
- 39 Cited in *Tibetan Review* (September/October 1975), p. 6.
- 40 Ministry of Defence, Government of India, *Annual Report, 1995–96*, p. 4.
- 41 I have arrived at these estimates after consultation, especially with Robert Bennett, former Director of Tibet Information Network (London), March 1998, and with Dr Rajesh Kadian (USA), October 1998.
- 42 David S. G. Goodman, *China's Provincial Leaders 1949–1985*, Vol. 1. Directory, Cardiff University Press, 1986, pp. 136–7; Victoria Conner and Robert Barnett, *Leaders in Tibet* (London: Tibet Information Network, 1997), pp. 47–67.
- 43 *Tibetan Review* (August 1972), p. 8.
- 44 SWB-FE 4806 B 11/6, 17 January, 1975.
- 45 White Paper on China's National Defence (27 July 1998) in *News from China*, Embassy of the People's Republic of China, New Delhi, 5 August 1998, p. xiii.
- 46 SWB-FE/2548 G/8, 9 February 1996.
- 47 My estimate is based on Tai Ming Cheung, "Guarding China's Domestic Front Line: The People's Armed Police and China's Stability", *The China Quarterly*, No. 146 (June 1996), p. 529. Tai states that the PAP regiments range from 800 to 2,000 troops; and a small province like Hainan Island has five regiments while the most populous province like Sichuan has more than 30 regiments.
- 48 Tai Cheung, n. 47, p. 538.
- 49 Quoted in *Tibetan Review* (August–September 1969), pp. 5–6.
- 50 *Tibetan Review* (January–February 1973), p. 4.
- 51 For the complete report, see, *Tibetan Review* (March 1974), pp. 4–5.
- 52 United News of India (UNI) report datelined Moscow, 25 August 1974.
- 53 S. K. Ghosh, "Nuclear Base in Tibet", *Tibetan Review* (September–October 1975), pp. 23–4.
- 54 Ackerly, n. 31, pp. 50–1, where the author argues that no nuclear missiles are stationed in Nagchuka.
- 55 *Tibetan Bulletin* (Dharamsala), July–August 1992, p. 12.
- 56 Ackerly, n. 31, p. 47.
- 57 Ackerly, n. 31, pp. 49–50.
- 58 *FBIS*, n. 9, p. 31.
- 59 *Communist China and Tibet: The First Dozen Years* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), p. 210.
- 60 SWB-FE 4742/A3/4, 30 October 1974.
- 61 SWB-FE/3318/A3/1, 27 February 1970.
- 62 Leo E. Rose, *Nepal: Strategy for Survival* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 185. See also S. D. Mumi, *Foreign Policy of Nepal* (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1973).
- 63 Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1961), p. 374.
- 64 *Parliamentary Debates*, Pt. II, (17 March 1950), Col. 1697–8.
- 65 Leo E. Rose, *The Politics of Bhutan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 74.

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- 66 According to reliable sources, the Chinese agreed to settle the Sino-Bhutanese border as the Bhutanese wanted on the condition that Thimphu allows a Chinese Embassy to function in Thimphu. Cf. Deepak Roy, "Tibetan Population Controversy", unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1998, p. 79.
- 67 John Franklin Copper, *China's Foreign Aid* (Mass: Lexington Books, 1976), pp. 49-51.
- 68 The area was used by Tibetan Khampa guerrillas as the base of operations against Chinese troops in Tibet from 1960 to 1972.
- 69 Iznestia, 12 February 1972; Radio Moscow, 10 April 1973; T. Rathimov, "How China Suppresses Its Minorities" *Tibetan Review* (July 1973), pp. 16 and 13.
- 70 *Literaturnaya Gazeta* 22 March 1973.
- 71 Harian W. Jencks, "Defending China", *Current History*, Vol. 86, No. 521, (September 1987), pp. 266, 269.
- 72 Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 190.
- 73 In other words the Chinese, after the occupation of Tibet, find themselves in the same advantageous position as the British raj at the turn of the century. As Lord Curzon stated, "What I mean is that Tibet itself and not Nepal must be the buffer state that we must endeavour to create", cited in Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 260.
- 74 Chinese official reactions to India's nuclear tests have been widely reported. All the Chinese scholars interviewed by an Indian weekly (*Frontline*, 25 September 1998) condemned the Indian nuclear tests in no uncertain terms, pp. 4-21.
- 75 White Paper, n. 45, p. vi, x, iv.
- 76 White Paper, n. 45. pp. iv-v, xv, xviii, xix.
- 77 White Paper, n. 45, p. v.
- 78 Arat R. Jerath, "China Chill Puts border talks in deep freeze", *Indian Express* 28 September 1998, p. 9.
- 79 Jerath, n. 78, p. 9.
- 80 Norbu, n. 4, pp. 1078-95.
- 81 This is again according to reliable sources in New Delhi, who said five to six crores per day.
- 82 *The Panchen Lama Speaks* (Dharamsala, India: Department of Information and International Relations, 1991), p. 6.
- 83 I am grateful to Col. (Retd) Virendra Sahai Verma (who is doing his Ph.D. with me) for his critical yet sympathetic comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

## Chapter 15

- 1 It is difficult to define "the Tibetan cause" because its paramount leader, the Dalai Lama keeps on changing his stance on the cause and the issue. However, as it stands now (September 1998) the "Tibetan cause" may be defined as essentially the Tibetan diasporic struggle, supported by the West, for substantive autonomy that will ensure internal self-determination in such domestic spheres as polity and economy, society and culture, etc. It is also seen as a popular Tibetan struggle for human rights, democracy and freedom. "The Tibet Issue" or "Tibet Question", as they are interchangeably used, refers to the legal and political problematics of the issue or question. It includes contending discourse on the international status of Tibet as understood in international law and as reflected in Sino-Tibetan historical relations; the legality or illegality of the Communist occupation; contesting views on the current situation in Tibet; and the Tibetan people's right to self-determination.

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- 2 The following literature reflects the extent, the scale and the intensity of the continuing China policy debate in the USA: Winston Lord, "China and America: Beyond the Chill", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Fall 1989), pp. 1–26; Michael Oksenberg, "The China Problem", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (Summer 1991), pp. 1–16; Roger W. Sullivan, "Discarding the China Card", *Foreign Policy*, No. 86 (September 1992), pp. 3–23; Barbar B. Conable, Jr. and David Lampton, "China: The Coming Power", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Winter 1992–93), pp. 133–49; Bryce Harland, "For a Strong China", *Foreign Policy*, No. 94 (September 1994), pp. 48–68; Jack A. Goldstone, "The Coming Chinese Collapse", *Foreign Policy*, No. 99 (Summer 1995), pp. 35–53; Robert S. Ross, "Enter the Dragon", *Foreign Policy*, No. 104 (Fall 1996), pp. 18–26; Greg Mastel, "Beijing at Bay", *Foreign Policy*, No. 104 pp. 27–34; Chas W. Freeman Jr., "Sino-American Relations: Back to Basics", *Foreign Policy*, No. 104 pp. 3–17; David M. Lampton, "China: Think Again", *Foreign Policy*, No. 110 (Spring 1998), pp. 13–27; Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, "China: Coming Conflict with America", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (March–April 1997); Robert S. Ross, "Beijing as Conservative Power", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 2 pp. 33–44; Minxian Pei, "Is China Democratizing", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (January–February 1998), pp. 68–82. Denny Roy, "Hegemon on the Horizon? China's Threat to East Asian Security", *International Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Summer 1994), pp. 149–68. Among the recent books on the China debate may be mentioned the following: Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997); Ezra F. Vogel (ed.), *Living with China: US–China Relations in the 21st Century* (New York: Norton, 1998); Robert C. Rowland, *United States Policy Toward the PRC* (Lincolnwood, Illinois: National Textbook Co., 1995); Scott Deatherage (ed.), *Modifying Our Policy Toward the People's Republic of China* (Lincolnwood, Illinois: National Textbook Co., 1995).
- 3 These lobbies include the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), the Students for Free Tibet, Tibet Support Groups, the US-Tibet Committee, Independence for Tibet Committee, and International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet. Of these, the most organized, most articulated and best-funded is the Washington, D.C. based ICT, established in 1988. It was headed, until recently, by the Dalai Lama's special envoy Lodi Gyari, now by John Ackerly. It claims 30,000 members, brings out several publications on contemporary Tibet and related issues, and lobbies effectively with the US Congress.
- 4 Albert Sigfried Willner, "The Eisenhower Administration and Tibet, 1953–1961: Influence and the Making of US Foreign Policy" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, 1995), p. 159.
- 5 Guangqui Xu, "The United States and the Tibet Issue", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 11 (November 1997), p. 1066; Willner, n. 4, p. 164.
- 6 Edmund Clubb, "Tibet's Strategic Position", *Eastern World*, No. 12 (December 1956), p. 19.
- 7 Willner, n. 4, pp. 20, 143 and 146.
- 8 Willner, n. 4, p. 132.
- 9 "Khampas" or "Khambas" are the inhabitants of Khams (Eastern Tibet), and are generally considered Tibetan warriors. They were the first among the Tibetans to revolt against China. See, George N. Patterson, *Tibet in Revolt* (London: Faber, 1960); Michel Peissel, *Cavaliers of Kham* (London: Heinemann, 1972); Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang, *Four Rivers, Six Ranges Dharamsala: Information Office of the H.H. the Dalai Lama*, 1973); Jamyang Norbu, *Warriors of Tibet*



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- (London: Wisdom Publications, 1986); Kunga Samten Dewatshang, *Flight at the Cuckoo's Behest* (New Delhi: Paljor Publications, 1997).
- 10 Chris Mullin, "The CIA: Tibetan Conspiracy", *Far Eastern Economic Review* (5 September 1975), pp. 30 and 34; Willner, n. 4, p. 143.
  - 11 Willner, n. 4, p. 156 and 165.
  - 12 Willner, n. 4, p. 153 and 156.
  - 13 Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951* (Berkeley: University of California, 1989), p. 636. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the US* [FRUS] (1950), Vol. 6, p. 550.
  - 14 John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), p. 169.
  - 15 Ramananda Sengupta, "Tibet: Three to Tango", *Outlook* (New Delhi, 17 November 1997), pp. 38–9.
  - 16 Lowell Thomas, "Flight from Tibet", *New York Times*, 3 June 1959, p. 23.
  - 17 Goldstein, n. 13, p. 626.
  - 18 Mullin, n. 10, p. 30; Roger McCarthy, *Tears of the Lotus* (New York: McFarland and Co., 1997), p. 245.
  - 19 FRUS (1949), Vol. 9, p. 1065.
  - 20 FRUS (1950), Vol. 6 (1976), p. 613.
  - 21 Mullin, n. 10, pp. 30–4.
  - 22 Goldstein, n. 13, p. 666; Willner, n. 4, p. 130.
  - 23 In 1947, the Kashag (Tibetan Cabinet) asked India for a large supply of arms including mortars, aircraft guns and ammunition. The Government of India sanctioned the sale of some arms. See, Goldstein, n. 13, pp. 619–20.
  - 24 FRUS (1950), Vol. 6, p. 424.
  - 25 Goldstein, n. 13, pp. 636 and 663.
  - 26 Dawa Norbu, "Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations: The Centrality of Marginality", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 11 (November 1997), pp. 1078–95.
  - 27 Goldstein, n. 13, pp. 774–75 and 781.
  - 28 Goldstein, n. 13, p. 786.
  - 29 FRUS (1950) Vol. 6, p. 7.
  - 30 John F. Avedon, *In Exile from the Land of Snows* (New York: Knopf, 1984). p. 47.
  - 31 FRUS (1955–57) Vol. 3, p. 669.
  - 32 Mullin, n. 10, p. 30.
  - 33 McCarthy, n. 18, p. 245.
  - 34 Prados, n. 14, p. 169.
  - 35 *Denver Post* (Colorado) 16 July 1959.
  - 36 Prados, n. 14, p. 164.
  - 37 Mullin, n. 10, p. 164.
  - 38 Mullin, n. 10, p. 30.
  - 39 Prados, n. 14, p. 156; FRUS (1952–54) Vol. 12, p. 749.
  - 40 This observation and others that follow in this section are based on my personal experience in the USA during my six-year study and stay there (1976–82). I visited a number of meditation/Dharma centres in California, New Mexico, Oregon, New York and New Jersey. See also my interview with Professor Jeffrey Hopkins, "Emptiness is Dynamic and Rich", *Tibetan Review*, Vol. VIII, Nos. 16–17 (October–November 1973), p. 25.
  - 41 This figure and others on related subjects were collected during the summer of 1998 in Dharmasala (Himachal Pradesh) where the Dalai Lama's exiled government resides.
  - 42 Viz. Shambhala Publications (Boston), Dharma Publishing (Oakland), Snow Lion Publications (Ithaca, New York) and Wisdom Publications (Boston).

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- 43 This was true particularly during crisis periods (1950–51; 1958–59) when the American Embassy officials (New Delhi) made desperate attempts to get their messages to the Dalai Lama. The Lama's two elder brothers were of immense help to the American agents during those difficult days. Hence, Washington's uncritical support to the Dalai Lama's family, especially Gyalo Thondup. See, Goldstein, n. 13, pp. 773–9; Patterson, n. 9, p. 82.
- 44 Swings in public moods such as anti-Communist waves in the 1950s and 1960s, and the hate-China mood since June 1989 (Tiananmen Incidents) have been crucial to the mobilization of popular American support for Tibet. American citizens write more letters, under such moods, to their Congress persons concerning the plight of Tibetans, according to Tibetan lobbyists in Washington. Cf. Willner, n. 4, pp. 118–39.
- 45 The US Congress, *Congressional Ceremony to Welcome His Holiness The Dalai Lama of Tibet* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1992), pp. 89–98; *International Resolution and Recognition on Tibet, 1950–1997* (Dharamsala: Department of Information and International Relations, 1998). I have relied mainly on these two documents for this section.
- 46 *The US Statutes at Large* (1987), Vol. 101 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1989), p. 1423. The latest Congressional concern was shown by the U.S. Representative Frank Wolf who visited the Lhasa area incognito for five days (9–13 August 1997) and his findings received world-wide publicity.
- 47 Xu, n. 5, p. 1074.
- 48 *Wall Street Journal* 10 May 1993.
- 49 *New York Times* 7 October 1987.
- 50 102nd Congress, *US and Chinese Policies Toward Occupied Tibet: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations*, Washington, DC, 28 July 1992.
- 51 “Jimmy Carter Sees Truth About Tibet”, *Beijing Review* (13 July 1987), p. 7.
- 52 “China Rebuffs Tibet Bills by U.S.-EP”, *Beijing Review* (27 March 1989), p. 8.
- 53 Xu, n. 5, p. 1075.
- 54 Gyalo Thondup moved in the early 1970s to Hong Kong on American advice and reportedly stayed in touch with Americans and Chinese there.
- 55 Thubten Samphel, “The Changing U.S. Policy on Tibet”, *Tibetan Review*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 7 (July 1993), p. 17. See also, *Tibet in the United Nations, 1950–1961* (New Delhi: Bureau of H.H. the Dalai Lama, n.d.).
- 56 Xu, n. 5, p. 1066.
- 57 Interview with Tenzin N. Tethong, Representative of H.H. the Dalai Lama, Office of Tibet, New York, July 1982.
- 58 This was true except the monetary and material assistance rendered to the Tibetan refugees in the early 1960s. Much of the CIA financial aid intended for the Khampa guerrillas in Mustang and channelled via Gyalo Thondup since early 1962 did not reach them. As Chris Mullin writes, “In fact, it appears, the ordinary soldiers were lucky if they received anything more than the meagre rations. . . . It is not disputed that large sums of CIA money disappeared into private pockets well before it could reach its intended destination. Gyalo Thondup blames Baba Yeshe, who, he says, did not keep proper accounts. Yeshe blames Gyalo Thondup, who, he says, instructed him to send receipts to the Americans for larger sums than he in fact received”. Mullin, n. 10, p. 34.
- 59 *FRUS* (1950) Vol. 6, pp. 612–13; Ken Herold, *Tibet and the United States of America: An Annotated Chronology of Relations in the 20th Century* (San Francisco: International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet, 1994), p. 25.
- 60 The Dalai Lama, “Address to Members of European Parliament”, *Tibetan Bulletin*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Dharamsala, May–July 1988), pp. 2–3. (This is also

- known as the "Strasbourg Statement": see also *Newsweek*, 27 March 1989, p. 56.)
- 61 This is a revised and updated version of a talk of the same title presented at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (Dharamsala, India), 29 May 1998.

## Chapter 16

- 1 *Tibet and Peace in South Asia* (New Delhi: National Committee for Tibet and Peace in South Asia, 1991), pp. 46–7.
- 2 See, in particular, Nehru's address to the Lok Sabha, 7 December 1950. *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 1, No. 18 (New Delhi: Parliament of India, 1950). In his letters to V. K. Krishna Menon and K. M. Panikkar in 1950, Nehru not only used the same British terminology ("Chinese suzerainty" and Tibetan "autonomy") but also argued along the same lines. See Jawaharlal Nehru, *Selected Works*, Vol. 15 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 429, 433.
- 3 There is, so far, no official Indian statement to this effect available. But evidence for such an argument may be discerned from a number of policy actions that Nehru's government took during the period 1947–50. In 1947 an official Tibetan delegation was invited to participate in the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi. Immediately after independence, Nehru's government wrote to Lhasa, stating that all past treaty commitments would be respected. In 1949 the government of India sent General Zorawar C. Bakshi to advise the Lhasa government on defence matters. And at the time of the Communist takeover in 1950, Nehru strongly protested against the Chinese entry into Tibet. See Dawa Norbu, "Chinese Strategic Thinking on Tibet and the Himalayan region", *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi) Vol. 12, No. 4 (July 1988), p. 373.
- 4 Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 2, pp. 434–6; *Zha-Sgabs-pa dban phyug bde-ldan, Bodkyi Srid-don rgyal-rabs*, Vol. 2 (Kalimpong: Shakabpa House, 1976), 417–18.
- 5 Charles H. Heimsath and Surjit Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971), p. 202.
- 6 A. Appadorai (ed.) *Select Documents on India's Foreign and Relations 1947–1972* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 547–9.
- 7 A *Times* (London) correspondent (29 July 1949) commented that "if India preferred to abandon Tibet to its fate, Western powers were in no position to object to Chinese takeover of Tibet".
- 8 Cited in D. R. Mankekar, *The Guilty Men of 1962* (Bombay: Tulsi Shah Enterprises, 1968), p. 138.
- 9 Nehru, n. 2, pp. 429, 433, 435, 442. See also his statement to the Lok Sabha, on 27 April 1959, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. XXX, 1959 (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1959), p. 13499.
- 10 Examples include 1954–58 and 1989–93. See Appendix in R. K. Jain (ed), *China–South Asia Relations, 1947–1980* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1981), pp. 577–85; Dawa Norbu, "India–China Relations: The Latest Phase", unpublished text of Pandit Hridayanath Kunzuru Memorial Lecture on International Affairs delivered on 31 March 1993, at JNU City Centre, New Delhi.
- 11 Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, Vol. 5 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1977) p. 64.
- 12 This was reflected in the Chinese press. See *Kwangming Daily*, 3 September 1949; *World Culture* (Shanghai) 28 October 1949; *Observer* (Shanghai) 11 April 1950.

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- 13 *Premier Chou En-Lai's letter to the Asian and African Countries on the Sino Indian Boundary Question* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1962), pp. 3–4.
- 14 Mr Jagath S. Mehta, in his speech at the South Asia Seminar on “Non-Violence in the Modern World System”, 2 October 1995, at the India International Centre, New Delhi. For details of the Chinese and Indian evidence for their respective boundary claims, see *Report of the Officials of the Government of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question* (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, 1961).
- 15 Dawa Norbu, *Red Star over Tibet* (London: Collins, 1974), pp. 110–17.
- 16 Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1970), p. 12; W. F. Van Eekelen, *Indian Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute with China* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), pp. 21–4.
- 17 Maxwell, n. 16, p. 123; *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, September 1957–April 1963*, Vol. 4 (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1964), p. 212.
- 18 They include 24,000 sq. km in Ladakh, about 320 sq. km in the middle sector, and some 51,200 sq. km in the eastern sector.
- 19 L. J. Kavic, *India's Quest for Security: Defence Policies 1947–1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 68, 70, 184.
- 20 Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, Vol. 2 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 89.
- 21 See Nehru's statement to the Lok Sabha on 27 April 1959, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. XXX, 1959, p. 13500.
- 22 *White Paper 11* (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, November 1960), pp. 8–16.
- 23 *White Paper*, n. 22, p. 188.
- 24 Agehananda Bharati, “Actual and Ideal Himalayas: Hindu Views of the Mountain”, in James F. Fisher (ed.), *Himalayan Anthropology* (The Hague: Morton Publishers, 1978), pp. 77–82.
- 25 Maxwell, n. 16, p. 127. Respected sources, including Nehru himself, substantiate my hypothesis that Hindu images of and religious emotions attached to the Himalayas significantly coloured the then Indian attitude toward the Sino–Indian boundary dispute and the 1962 conflict. I am aware that contemporary Indian writers on such subjects are likely to disagree with this view in their attempt to project “rational” strategic thinking in India, then as now. This may be a case of retrospective determinism, and it may reflect the current rationalistic thinking of the small defence elite – but not that of the Hindu masses even now. In any case, the evidence I have cited suggests that in the late 1950s and early 1960s both India's secularized political elite and its Hindu masses fell under the sway of religious emotions when dealing with the Himalayan boundary and Tibet issue.
- 26 Agehananda Bharati, “References to Tibet in Medieval Indian Literary Documents”, *Tibet Society Bulletin*, Vol. 3 (Bloomington, 1969), pp. 46–70.
- 27 This emotive slogan, coined by Hindu nationalists in the 1950s, continues to this day. In the 1950s Ram Swarup organized Hindu support for Tibet and the Himalayas around this slogan. Today Anand Kumar continues to mobilize Hindu support for Tibet along the same lines.
- 28 Nehru cited in Maxwell, n. 16, p. 121.
- 29 Dawa Norbu, *Culture and Politics of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 145–52.
- 30 Jawaharlal Nehru, *India and the World* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1936), pp. 251–3.

## Notes

- 31 They included Acharya Kripalani, Sardar Patel, Jai Prakash Narain, and Rammanohar Lohia, all of whose criticisms proved to be quite far-sighted in the event of the 1962 war; see Durga Das, (ed.), *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Correspondence* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1971), pp. 245–341; Rammanohar Lohia, *India, China, and Northern Frontiers* (Hyderabad: Navahind, 1963), pp. 121–32; Dr G. C. Kendadamath, *J. B. Kripalani* (Varanasi: Ganga Kaveri Publishing House, 1992), pp. 153–61.
- 32 Now called “Special Frontier Force”.
- 33 Swarn Lata Sharma, *Tibet: Self-determination among Nations* (New Delhi: Criterion Publication, 1988), p. 109.
- 34 *Times of India* (New Delhi) 1 May 1980.
- 35 Dawa Norbu, “China’s Dialogue with the Dalai Lama, 1978–90: Prenegotiation Stage or Dead End?” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Fall 1991), pp. 351, 365, 372.
- 36 Mr K. Natwar Singh, who accompanied Rajiv Gandhi, said out of the 40 minutes the Chinese president spent talking with the Indian Prime Minister, Jiang Zemin spent about 30 minutes talking about Tibet with Rajiv Gandhi. This was stated by Mr Singh in his speech to a seminar on “Indian and Chinese Foreign Relations,” on 18–21 February 1992, at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi, on the first day (18 February 1992). Regarding the Li Peng visit, see *Hindu* (New Delhi) 14 December 1991.
- 37 This is an updated version of an article which appeared in *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 11 (November 1997), pp. 1078–95.

## Chapter 17

- 1 Julian Baum *et al.*, “Upping The Ante”, *Far Eastern Economic Review* (FEER) (22 July 1999), pp. 18–19.
- 2 Earling Hoh, “Soul Searching”, *FEER* (9 September 1999), pp. 70–2.
- 3 Reuter, “China on military alert over Taiwan”, *Newstimes* (Hyderabad), 17 July 1999.
- 4 “President urged to push China to renounce use of force on Taiwan”, *New Strait Times* (Kuala Lumpur) 11 June 1998.
- 5 Frank Ching, “Lee Teng Hui’s View point”, *FEER* (3 June 1999), p. 35.
- 6 *FEER* (25 July 1999), p. 19.
- 7 AP dispatch datelined Beijing, 1 January 1979.
- 8 *The New York Times* 31 January 1979.
- 9 I have benefited while writing this paper from discussions with some Taiwanese sources in the Bay Area (California), whose names I withhold for security reasons (1979).
- 10 Robert A. Scalapino, “Diplomatic Prospects and the Security of Taiwan”. A written statement submitted to the US Senate, Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC 7 February 1979.
- 11 Recently, a reporter noted that the Nationalist propaganda has dropped the word “bandits” from their usual references to Communist leaders. See *The New York Times* 12 January 1979, *The Central Daily News*, 11 January 1979.
- 12 Scalapino, n. 10, p. 15.
- 13 E. K. Snyder, A. J. Gregor and M. H. Chang, *The Taiwan Relations Act and the Defence of the Republic of China* (University of California, Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1980).
- 14 Scalapino, n. 10, p. 13.

## Notes

- 15 Ye Jianjing's fourth point promises only that "Taiwan's current socio-economic system will remain unchanged", and not the political system. It should also be noted that the fifth point states, "People in authority and representative personages of various circles in Taiwan" not the KMT as a political party, may share power with the CCP in running the state (*Xinhua* 30 September 1981).
- 16 Chanakya Sen (ed.), *Tibet Disappears* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1960), p. 80.
- 17 Sen, n. 16, p. 78.
- 18 AP, n. 7.
- 19 "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan", *Beijing Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (5 January 1975), p. 17.
- 20 *The New York Times*, 3 December 1978.
- 21 NYT 10 January 1979.
- 22 NYT 31 January 1979.
- 23 *Beijing Review*, n. 19.
- 24 NYT n. 20.
- 25 Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers* (London: The Cresset Press, 1969), p. 216.
- 26 Sen, n. 16, p. 78.
- 27 NYT n. 20.
- 28 NYT n. 21.
- 29 *Xinhua*, 30 September 1981.
- 30 *Tibet 1950-1967* (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1968), p. 693.
- 31 Lowell Dittmer, *Liu Shao-chi and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1974), p. 227.
- 32 *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. V (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1977), pp. 73-6.)
- 33 *Tibet*, n. 30, p. 699.
- 34 Dawa Norbu, "Strategic Development in Tibet: Implications for its neighbors", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (March 1979), p. 255.
- 35 *Tibet* n. 30, p. 699.
- 36 *Tibet* n. 30, p. 697.
- 37 *Tibet* n. 30, p. 693.
- 38 *Tibet* n. 30, p. 698.
- 39 *Tibet* n. 30, p. 690.
- 40 *Tibet* n. 30, p. 691.
- 41 *Tibet* n. 30, p. 693.
- 42 June Dreyer, 'Traditional Minorities Elites and the CPR Elite engaged in Minority Nationalities Work' in Robert A. Scalapino (ed.), *Elites in the People's Republic of China* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1972), pp. 446-50.
- 43 *Tibet* n. 30, p. 201.
- 44 Various chairs were created for the traditional ruling class who were paid lavishly with Chinese silver dollars called dayuan. The new ranking also accorded with the old hierarchy.
- 45 The present Panchen Lama was a Chinese choice imposed on the Tibetans, who did not have a chance to test the authenticity of his reincarnation in the traditional way. As the Dalai Lama writes in his memoirs, *My Land and My People* (New York: Potala Corporation, 1977):

In 1950, two possible candidates had been discovered in Tibet itself, and the Chinese themselves had put forward a candidate in the territory they ruled. During the negotiations in Beijing which ended in so-called

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Agreement of 1951, I had a telegram from Ngabo, the leader of our delegation, saying that if the Chinese candidate was not accepted it would hinder his negotiations (p. 103).

Ironically enough, in 1964 the Panchen Lama was reported to have opposed the Chinese rule in Tibet and was eclipsed from the Chinese political scene until 1978, when he reemerged.

- 46 *Beijing Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (5 January 1979), p. 4.
- 47 *Beijing Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (12 January 1979), pp. 5–6.
- 48 Scalapino, n. 10, p. 13.
- 49 *Beijing Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1, p. 17.
- 50 *The New York Times*, 10 January 1979.
- 51 Hence, the “US was understood to be distressed at Taiwan’s blanket rejection of Ye’s offer”. See *The China Quarterly*, 89 (March 1982), pp. 146–7.
- 52 The ninth and last point of the PRC–US Communiqué on US Arms Sales to Taiwan, states that “the two sides will maintain contact and hold appropriate consultations (Cuo Shang 43220794) on bilateral and international issues of common interests” (italics mine). *Xinhua* 17 August 1982.
- 53 Chang Chen-pang, “Peiping’s New Policy towards Tibet”, *Issues and Studies* (July 1980), p. 11.
- 54 *Beijing Review*, n. 47, to which the Tibetan(s) quickly responded. See “Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong”, *Tibetan Bulletin*, Vol. XIII, No. 1 (January–February 1982), pp. 7–9 and 27. President Chang reiterated the same position in *Free China Weekly*, 16 December 1982.
- 55 Dawa Norbu, “China’s Dialogue with the Dalai Lama, 1979–90: Prenegotiation Stage or Dead End?”, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Fall 1991), p. 355.
- 56 Herbert S. Yee, “Beijing–Taipei Reunification”, *Asia Pacific Community*, No. 15 (Winter 1982), p. 57.
- 57 The pattern of Chiang Kai-shek’s attempts at national unification and Japanese armed interventions is traced in my chapter on the Chinese revolution. See Dawa Norbu, “Marxism, Nationalism and Revolution: The Rise of Neonationalism in Communist Countries” (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, (May 1982) pp. 320–36.
- 58 This chapter is a revised and updated version of an article published in *China Report*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (January–March 1987), pp. 1–19.

## Chapter 18

- 1 See Dr Ngawang Rabgyal, “An Overview of the Tibet–Russia Relationship”, *Tibetan Review*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (March 1990), pp. 10–13; Israel Epstein, *Tibet Transformed* (Beijing: New World Press, 1983), pp. 51–2.
- 2 A. Tom Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 79–103 and 147–60.
- 3 Dawa Norbu, “The Future of Taiwan in the Tibetan Model (1951–58): Political Analogy and Policy Implications”, *China Report*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (January–March 1987), p. 9.
- 4 His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *Collected Statements, Interviews and Articles* (Dharamsala: The Information Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1982), 51.
- 5 The Dalai Lama, n. 4, p. 53.
- 6 The Dalai Lama, n. 4, p. 59.
- 7 “Gist of the Chinese Views Conveyed by Jiang Ping, Deputy Head of the Central Committee United Front, to the three representatives sent by the Dalai Lama

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- (October 28, 1984)” (Beijing: Transcript, 1984), p. 4. Hereafter referred to as “Gist of the Chinese Views”.
- 8 Interview with Tashi Wangdi, representative of His Holiness Dalai Lama, New Delhi, 29 May 1980.
  - 9 *Foreign Broadcast Information Service – PRC*, Vol. 1, No. 108, pp. Q3–6.
  - 10 Blo-mthun hu’u ya’o-pangis rgyal-lo-don-grub-la ta-la’t-bla-mar’zini-p’t byed-phyogs don-tsan ln’ skor bka’-mol gnan-wa (Beijing Nationalities Press, 1983), pp. 1–4. I have tried to summarize the entire document except a part of the third point regarding the Dalai Lama’s residence in Beijing, which was withdrawn in 1988.
  - 11 The Dalai Lama, *Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet* (New Delhi: Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1988), p. 4.
  - 12 The Dalai Lama, n. 11, pp. 5–9.
  - 13 The Dalai Lama, n. 11, p. 6.
  - 14 The Dalai Lama, “Address to Members of European Parliament”, *Tibetan Bulletin*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (May–July 1988), p. 2.
  - 15 It should be noted that the Dalai Lama’s Strasbourg Statement was sharply criticized by the younger generation of Tibetans in exile. See Phuntsog Wangyal, “Giving Up the Struggle”, *Tibetan Review*, Vol. 23, No. 9 (September 1988) 9–11; and Jamyang Norbu, “In Deng’s Grave New World, An Illusion Dies”, *Tibetan Review*, Vol. 24, No. 8 (August 1989), pp. 13–17. Both the authors maintain that their leader’s proposal was a “foreign-inspired” scheme in which Edward Heath, Lord Ennals, Jimmy Carter and Michael Van Walt Van Praag played prominent roles.
  - 16 The Dalai Lama, n. 14, p. 2.
  - 17 The Dalai Lama, n. 14, p. 3.
  - 18 The latest work in this field is Melvyn C. Goldstein’s 898-page book, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); see also the two reports (1959 and 1966) by the International Commission of Jurists, *The Question of Tibet and the Role of Law* (Geneva: ICJ, 1959); *Tibet and the People’s Republic of China* (Delhi: Sterling, 1966).
  - 19 Sha Zhou, “What is It Behind The Dalai Lama’s Plan?”, *Beijing Review* (19–25 February 1990), p. 22.
  - 20 Sha Zhou, n. 19, p. 23.
  - 21 Sha Zhou, n. 19, pp. 21–3.
  - 22 See *Xinhua* (Beijing) 30 September 1981.
  - 23 Dawa Norbu, “Chinese Communist Views on National Self-Determination, 1922–1956: Origins of China’s National Minorities Policy”, *International Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1988), p. 325.
  - 24 Tashi Wangdi, n. 8.
  - 25 “Gist of the Chinese Views”, n. 7, p. 3.
  - 26 “Gist of the Chinese Views”, n. 7, pp. 1–8.
  - 27 *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), 24 June 1988.
  - 28 *News From China*, No. 40 (New Delhi: Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, 28 September 1988).
  - 29 Chinese leaders have indicated that the Dalai Lama should appoint his elder brother Gyalo Thondup as his personal representative to negotiate with them.
  - 30 *Tibetan Review*, Vol. 23, No. 11 (November 1988), p. 4.
  - 31 *Wen Wei Po* (Hong Kong), 25 November 1988.
  - 32 “Ngapoi Reiterates China’s Policy Toward Dalai Lama”, *Xinhua* (Beijing) 31 March 1989.



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- 33 "Press Statement", 12 April 1989 (Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, New Delhi).
- 34 *The New York Times*, 28 June 1989.
- 35 *Hong Kong Standard*, 9 May 1990.
- 36 *Indian Post*, 12 July 1988; and *Beijing Review*, 19–25 February 1990, p. 23.
- 37 "Ngapoi Reiterates China's Policy Toward Dalai Lama", n. 32.
- 38 *Tibetan Review*, Vol. 21, No. 7 (July 1986), p. 6.
- 39 *News from China*, No. 40 (New Delhi: Embassy of the People's Republic of China, 28 September 1988).
- 40 The last visible Soviet interest was indicated in May 1980 by L. V. Scherbankov, an official of the Foreign Relations Department of the USSR Council for Religious Affairs. He stated at a press conference in New Delhi that the Soviet Union was willing to aid the Tibetan cause. Cf. *The Times of India*, 1 May 1980.
- 41 *Summary of World Broadcasts: Far East/8715/CI/17* (3 November 1987). Hereafter referred to as SWB.
- 42 SWB, n. 41, p. 16.
- 43 SWB, n. 41, p. 17.
- 44 SWB FE/8690 BII/3 (5 October 1987).
- 45 See SWB FE/8683/B II/1 (26 September 1987); FE/8689/B II/1 (3 October 1987); FE/8692/B II/3 (7 October 1987); FE/8694/B II/5 (9 October 1987); FE/8698/B II/1 2 (14 October 1987); FE/8700/B II/2-3 (16 October 1987), etc.
- 46 SWB FE/8694/B II/3 (9 October 1987).
- 47 A personal correspondence with the Dalai Lama, dated 12 July 1990.
- 48 *Newsweek*, 27 March 1989, p. 56.
- 49 Sha Zhou, "Dalai Lama's Plan", n. 19, p. 23.
- 50 PTI (Press Trust of India), Beijing, 11 July 1988.
- 51 "Press Release", Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, New Delhi, 9 July 1988.
- 52 This information and what follows in the next four paragraphs is based on an exclusive interview with a highly placed Tibetan refugee official who wishes to remain anonymous (22 November 1990).
- 53 *Bod-rgy dbar-gyi 'bral-lam* (Dharamsala: The Kashag, 1988), p. 16.
- 54 Kashag, n. 53, p. viii, and pp. 21–51.
- 55 These limitations specifically included the Panchen Lama's recognition that Tibet is part of China and that he functions within the Communist constitutional framework.
- 56 For a theoretical discussion, see Janice Gross Stein, "Getting to the Table: Processes of International Pre-negotiation", *International Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 1989), pp. 232–7.
- 57 The Nobel Peace Prize may be taken as an indicator of Western if not world public opinion. The Norwegian Nobel Committee chairman Egil Agavik stated on 10 December 1989, "It would be difficult to cite any historical example of a minority's struggle to secure its rights, in which a more conciliatory attitude to the adversary has been adopted than in the case of the Dalai Lama." Cf. *Nobel Peace Prize Award Ceremony* (Dharamsala: Office of Information and International Relations, 1989), p. 4.
- 58 The explanation for such a behaviour has to be sought in the trajectory of modern Chinese history when Western imperial powers went on encroaching upon Chinese sovereignty, "carving the Chinese melon". Hence one of the most powerful motive forces of the Chinese Revolution since the 1840s has been to make the Chinese people proudly "stand up" against such international bullying

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- and to protect Chinese sovereignty. This historical analogy seems to come easily whenever the PRC perceives any external intervention in its “internal affairs”.
- 59 *The Statesman* (New Delhi), 11 November 1998.
  - 60 Paljor Tsarong, “China–Tibet Dialogue: What should we expect?”, *Tibetan Review*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 11 (New Delhi, November 1998), p. 12.
  - 61 *People’s Daily* (Beijing), 10 November 1998.
  - 62 *International Herald Tribune*, 12 November 1998.
  - 63 *International Herald Tribune*, n. 62.
  - 64 *International Herald Tribune*, n. 62.
  - 65 *The Statesman*, n. 59.
  - 66 The Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People* (New York: Potala Corporation, 1977), pp. 115–19.
  - 67 Department of Information and International Relations, Dharamsala (India), 1994: *Dharamsala and Beijing: Initiatives and Correspondence 1981–1993*, p. 16.
  - 68 *Dharamsala and Beijing*, n. 67, p. 34.
  - 69 *Dharamsala and Beijing*, n. 67, p. 46.
  - 70 *Dharamsala and Beijing*, n. 67, p. 79.
  - 71 “Colonial” in two senses: Chinese gradual colonization of Amdo and Kham since nineteenth century; British colonial policy of dividing Tibet into “Inner Tibet” (Amdo and Kham) which they recognized as being part of the Chinese sphere of influence and Outer Tibet” as an autonomous buffer state.
  - 72 John Ackerly, *Nuclear Tibet* (Washington DC: International Campaign for Tibet, 1993).
  - 73 This is an updated and enlarged version of my article, “China’s Dialogue with the Dalai Lama 1978–90: Prenegotiation Stage or Dead End?”, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Fall 1991), pp. 351–72.

## Chapter 19

- 1 For a definition of “people” as used in this article, see *Report by Experts on Further Study of the Rights of Peoples* (Paris: UNESCO, 1990).
- 2 Ronald D. Schwartz, *Circle of Protest: Political Ritual in the Tibetan Uprising* (London, 1994), p. 1.
- 3 Ted Robert Gurr, “Introduction”, in Ted Robert Gurr (ed.), *Handbook of Political Conflict* (New York, 1980), p. 2.
- 4 This estimate is based on the 1982 *Census of China* (Beijing: China Statistics Archive, 1988).
- 5 The Dalai Lama has been making this claim for the past two decades. See the Dalai Lama’s *Five-Point Peace Plan for Tibet* (New Delhi, 1988), p. 4.
- 6 Our estimate is based on intelligent guesses made by certain Tibetan scholars living in the PRC today.
- 7 R. A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (London, 1972), p. 292. See also David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (Boston, MA, 1986).
- 8 Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern People: India–China, Tibet–Japan* (Delhi, 1964, 1991), p. 298.
- 9 Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibet: Land of Snows* (New Delhi, 1967), p. 12.
- 10 Fredrick Bath, *Process and Form in Social Life*, Vol. 1 (London, 1981), p. 200.
- 11 See *Report by Experts on Further Study of the Rights of Peoples*, n. 1.
- 12 Connor Walker, “Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying”, *World Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (April 1972), p. 2.

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- 13 Dennis L. Thompson and Dav Rohen (eds.), *Ethnicity, Politics and Development* (Boulder, Colorado, 1986), p. 1.
- 14 There is much controversy and confusion regarding the term “Tibet” – what it includes or excludes. To the PRC it means “Xizang” – the Tibet Autonomous Region. To the Dalai Lama it means Kham and Amdo besides the TAR. Since the problematic in this article is Han hegemony and Tibetan ethnicity, both of which are prevalent throughout the Tibetan plateau, we refer to both “ethnographic” and “political” Tibet, except in contexts where we have the TAR specifically in mind. For an historical account of the early controversy regarding “ethnographic” Tibet and “political” Tibet, see Melvyn C. Goldstein, “Change Conflict and Continuity among a Community of Nomadic Pastoralists: A Case Study from Western Tibet, 1950–1990”, in Robert Barnett and Shirin Akiner (eds.), *Resistance and Reform in Tibet* (London, 1994), pp. 76–87.
- 15 Chen Zhucai (trans.), *Life and Lifestyles* (Beijing, 1985), p. 25.
- 16 *Congressional Ceremony to Welcome His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1992), p. 83.
- 17 Minority Rights Group (ed.), *World Dictionary of Minorities* (London, 1990), p. 341.
- 18 T. N. Takla, “Notes on Some Early Tibetan Communists”, *Tibetan Review*, Vol. 2, Nos. 6–7 (June–July 1969), pp. 7–9.
- 19 Malcolm Lamb, *Directory of Officials in the People’s Republic of China, 1968–78* (Canberra, 1978).
- 20 Lamb, n. 19, pp. 3–136.
- 21 Barnett and Akiner, n. 14, pp. 296–9.
- 22 Barnett and Akiner, n. 14, pp. 298–9.
- 23 Dawa Norbu, *Culture and the Politics of Third World Nationalism* (London/ New York, 1992), pp. 181–209.
- 24 Minority representation in the State power structure in China and India may be compared. Lamb’s Directory (n. 19) shows clearly how there was little representation for the non-Han minorities in the crucial sectors of the Chinese State power structure during the period 1968–78, a period during which China rose to the heights of “revolutionary egalitarianism”. India during the period 1984–95 had a better record: thirteen people belonging to non-Hindu minorities were holding Cabinet Ministerial positions; two served as Foreign Secretaries in the Central Government. These include Abdul Gafoor (1984–89), Ghulam Nabi Azad (1984–89, 1991–95), Mohsina Kidwai (1984–89), Eduardo Faleiro (1985–89, 1991–95), Mufti Mohammed Sayeed (1989–91), C. K. Jafar Sharief (1991–95), Abid Hussain (1984–86), Salman Haider (1995–96), Salman Khursheed (1984–95), Buta Singh (1984–89, 1994–95), A. K. Antony (1984–89, 1991–95), Margaret Alva (1991–95), P. Namgyal (1984–89), P. K. Thungon from Arunachal Pradesh (1984–89), and C. Silvera, a Mizo (1995).
- 25 Dawa Norbu, “Strategic Development in Tibet: Implications for Its Neighbours”, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (March 1979), p. 248.
- 26 Feng-hwa Mah, “First Five-Year Plan and Its International Aspects”, in C. F. Remer (ed.), *Three Essays on International Economics of Communist China* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1959), p. 49 and George Moseley (trans.), *The Party and the National Question* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), p. 107.
- 27 Norbu, n. 25, p. 254.
- 28 Mao Zedong, “On the Policies for Our Work in Tibet”, *Selected Works*, Vol. 5 (Beijing, 1977), pp. 73–6. See also Dawa Norbu, “The 1959 Tibetan Rebellion”, *China Quarterly*, No. 77 (March 1979), p. 78.
- 29 Schwartz, n. 2, pp. 20–147 and 188–217.

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- 30 Kun-bstan Dpal-'byor, *Bsregs-kyn mi-btsigs-p'bod* (Dharamsala: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1971), pp. 131–42 and 286.
- 31 Alan Hamilton, "Why Pictures of the Dalai Lama Are Back on the Parlour Wall", *The Times* (London), 6 October 1980.
- 32 Phuntsog Wangyal, "Report from Tibet", *Tibet News Review* (London), Vol. 1, Nos. 3–4 (Winter 1980–81), p. 35, and Tenzin N. Tethong, "Report on the Second Delegation to Tibet", *News Tibet* (New York), Vol. 15, No. 3 (September–December 1980), p. 118.
- 33 Robert Barnett, "Symbols and Protest: The Iconography of Demonstrations in Tibet, 1987–1990", in Barnett and Akiner, n. 14, pp. 238–53.
- 34 See *Constitution of Tibet* (New Delhi: Bureau of H.H. The Dalai Lama, 1963); and The Dalai Lama, *Guidelines for Future: Tibet's Polity and the Basic Features of Its Constitution* (Dharamsala: Department of Information and International Relations, 1992).
- 35 Schwartz, n. 2, p. 1.
- 36 For a watered-down version of this event, see Rtson-Lha Lhamo Tsenrin, *Btsenrgol rgyal skyob* (Dharamsala: Amnye Machen Institute, 1992), pp. 115–19.
- 37 Tethong, n. 32.
- 38 Schwartz, n. 2, and Barnett and Akiner, n. 14.
- 39 *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of China* (proposed draft) (San Francisco, 31 January 1994).
- 40 Yan Jiaqi, 'Federal System, From Fantasy to Blueprint of a proposed Draft Constitution for Federal China', unpublished paper, 8 February 1994 (USA), p. 2.
- 41 Yan, n. 40, p. 4.
- 42 Yan, n. 40, p. 3.
- 43 *US Congressional Ceremony*, n. 16, p. 82.
- 44 *US Congressional Ceremony*, n. 16, p. 77.
- 45 Dawa Norbu, "China's Dialogue with the Dalai Lama 1978–90. Prenegotiation Stage or Dead End", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Fall 1991), pp. 351–72.
- 46 Dalai Lama, *Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet*, n. 5, p. 4.
- 47 *US Congressional Ceremony*, n. 16, p. 82.
- 48 *US Congressional Ceremony*, n. 16, pp. 82–3.
- 49 *US Congressional Ceremony*, n. 16, p. 78.
- 50 *US Congressional Ceremony*, n. 16, p. 77.
- 51 *US Congressional Ceremony*, n. 16, p. 77.
- 52 *Nobel Peace Prize Award Ceremony* (Dharamsala, India: Office of Information and International Relations, 1989), p. 4.
- 53 *US Congressional Ceremony*, n. 16, p. 9.
- 54 The Dalai Lama, n. 34, p. 10.
- 55 Dawa Norbu, "Chinese Strategic Thinking on Tibet and the Himalayan Religion", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XII, No. 4 (New Delhi, July 1988), pp. 374–5.
- 56 Norbu, n. 55, pp. 371–4.
- 57 Dawa Norbu, *Tibet: The Road Ahead* (London: Rider Books, 1999), p. 346.
- 58 Sunderlal Bahuguna, "We are striving to revive our Peace", a paper presented at the symposia in Celebration of the Dalai Lama's 60th Birthday held at Ashoka Hotel, New Delhi on 4–6 July 1995, p. 2.
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since the early 1970s five medium sized publishers specializing in Tibetan works have appeared in the West: Snow Lion Publications (New York), Shambala (Boston), Wisdom Publications (Boston), Dharma Publishing House (Berkeley), Tharpa Publications (London) and Serindia Publishers (London). And two well-known publishers have published a series on *Tibet: Wisdom of Tibet Series* by Allen and Unwin, and Library of Tibet series by Harper Publishers. Professional academic interest in Tibet is also considerable; nearly 250 Tibetologists from all over world participated in Tibetological seminars held by the International Association of Tibetan Studies in Denmark (1992) and in Austria (1995).

## Chapter 20

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