

HIDDEN TIBET

History of Independence and Occupation

S. L. Kuzmin

Hidden Tibet:

History of Independence and Occupation

by

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Introduction



Tibet is one of the most esoteric places on our planet. People from different civilizations have a hard time understanding its history, religions and customs. Some aspects of the history of Tibet are unknown to many – partly because of the country’s isolation that lasted for many centuries, and partly due to specifics of its political system and international relations. Propaganda became another such obstacle during the more recent decades. If Tibet was always an inherent part of China, then why is it not the same as China? What should we make of Tibetans’ regular declarations: is it separatism or a national liberation movement?

Following the October Revolution, the Soviet Union and Russia has gone through several stages in ways of covering the last half century of events in Tibet. The initial response was unconditional praise mounted on everything done there by the Communist Party of China (CPC) and explanation of all actions of its opponents as the machinations of imperialists.¹ Then, following the decline of Soviet–Chinese relations during the Khrushchev era, criticism came into vogue. Attention was directed at Maoists “perverting Marxism”. However, some works became a source of valuable historical information.²

Once the relationships between the USSR and PRC normalised again, a pluralism of views was established. Different perspectives started to coexist in Russia, ranging from worshipping Mao Zedong and/or the Chinese reforms to rejecting the latter altogether from the human rights perspective. Even during the most recent times, these trends continue to gather momentum with more impartial takes on the situation becoming progressively rarer. Publications from the “stagnation” period also became scarce. This coincided with PRC’s decision to step up the propaganda regarding Tibet, especially abroad.³ Specifically selected Tibetans and Tibetologists from PRC were sent out on organised tours, foreign journalists were invited into

1 E.g. Gurevich, 1958.

2 E.g. Bogoslovsky et al., 1975; Bogoslovsky, 1978.

3 Modern Politics of China in Tibet, 2000.

Tibet, exhibitions and publications were organised, internet sites were created, etc. Documents that were meant to support the position of the Chinese authorities started to be published. At the same time documents that have the opposite effect continued to be suppressed. The activity of foreign leftist propagandists has also increased.⁴

Chinese authorities as well as Tibetan emigrants have been producing a lot of materials in foreign languages (e.g. in English and Russian) for the past 50 years. It is clear that this way they voice those arguments that they themselves consider to be the strongest. It should be noted that information that comes from both sides may be verified in a very few cases. Accurate verification would only be possible with the help of independent expertise commissions, which at present are not allowed by the Chinese authorities.

As far as the history of Tibet is concerned, it has been portrayed on many occasions, and there are a number of good overviews which analyze publications, documents and research on the topic in great detail. The key writings are listed at the end of this book. There is no sense in repeating these works. It is more interesting to synthesise and juxtapose that information to answer the questions that seem banal: What is Tibet? Was it independent or part of other countries? Where are the foundations of the modern Chinese stance on the Tibetan issue? To what extent is the inclusion of Tibet into the PRC beyond controversy, and what did Chinese reforms bring to Tibetan people? What do Tibetans themselves think on this issue? This book strives to answer these questions by comparing different and sometimes opposing points of view. Historical facts are given in chapters 1–10, and their analysis in context of international relations at different periods in Chapter 11.

The aim of this book is not to conduct a detailed analysis of sources that used Chinese and Tibetan languages, but rather to provide a synthesis of research in different fields at this current point in time. Therefore, for the most part, overview publications were utilised in the creation of this book. These publications contain links to a multitude of sources that were listed and analysed in great detail. At the same time, this book contains little known and previously unpublished information. The text also contains footnotes to sources that are listed at the end of the book. For internet sites, references state the dates of their last checking. If a paragraph contains several phrases belonging to the same source, the footnote is given after the first but not last phrase. Quotations are included in commas, omissions within paragraphs by omission points, omissions of one or several phrases or paragraphs by one sign <...> irrespective of how many phrases or paragraphs were omitted.

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⁴ E.g. Parenti, M. Firendly feudalism; Ely, M. The true story...

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This English translation is based on first Russian edition published in 2010. It is almost identical to that, but contains some minor changes. First, some passages, which seem to be interesting almost exclusively for a Russian audience, have been shortened: discussions on propaganda in the Russian media and widespread views in Russia in regards to the current situation in Tibet; content of some popular books with some errors regarding Buddhism and Tibet; analysis of current relations between Russia and China. Second, some misprints and errors occurring in the Russian edition were corrected. And third, some English-language sources were quoted instead of their Russian translations used in the edition of 2010.

CHAPTER 1

Geography and Origin of the Tibetans



The Tibetan Plateau, located in the centre of Asia, is one of the largest and highest areas in the world. Its area is 2,200,000 square kilometres. Significant parts of Tibet are at altitudes of 3,000–4,000 meters above sea level while the height of the mountains reach 5,000–7,000 meters. The peaks of high mountains are covered with ice and snow. Therefore, Tibet is often called the Land of Snowy Mountains (Land of Snow). The highest mountain in the world, Jomo Langma (Everest), the height of which is 8,848 meters, sits on the border of Tibet and Nepal. Another high mountain, Kanchenjunga (8,598 meters) is situated on the border of Tibet, Nepal and the Indian state of Sikkim. Many other high mountains fringe Tibet like a precious necklace: Mount Kailash, Zari, Yarlha Shambo, Chomo Kenreg, Gangkar Shama, Nyenchen Thangla, Machen (Amnye Machen). A huge area is covered by glaciers, 105 thousand square kilometres.

The greatest rivers of Asia originate from Tibet, these include: Indus, Brahmaputra, Mekong, Sutlej, Salween, Yangtze, Huang He. The total area of these rivers' basins reaches 5,477,700 square kilometres, and 30% of China's fresh water comes from rivers originating from here.¹ Tibet is surrounded by several mountain ridges: Karakoram from the west, Kunlun and Nanshan from the north, the Himalayas to the south, the ridges of the Bayan-Khara-ula and the so-called Sichuan Alps. The plateau is crossed in the latitudinal direction by mountains of Kailash and Nyenchen Thangla. Approximately two thirds of the Tibetan Plateau is made up by the highlands of Jangthang, most of which are situated at an altitude of five thousand meters. This is mainly a rocky desert with a harsh climate. The north-east of Jangthang is adjacent to the Qinghai highland. Together they form the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Northern Tibet is covered with mountain meadows. It is a place of good grazing lands, many rivers and lakes. The climate of the region is continental and harsh. In the south the climate is temperate with greater precipitation. One can find dense wild forests, cultivated fertile fields and fruit trees there.

¹ Tibetan Plateau, 2009, p.7.

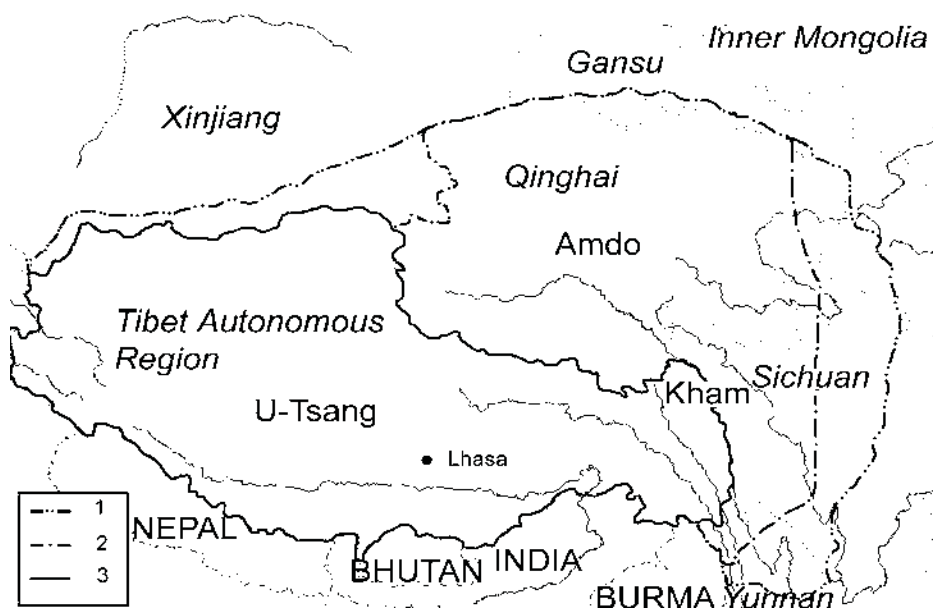
Historically, Tibet is divided into several areas. Its central part Bod, (Tibetan: *bod*, which is pronounced “bö”), extends from the Lake Manasarovar at the mountain Kailash along the river Tsangpo (Brahmaputra). Tibetans call their country Bod, and themselves Bodpa. The origin and time of the appearance of these names are unknown. Some speculate that the “*bod*” means “homeland” or “place of origin”. The name “Tibet” (“Töböt”) was first found in ancient Turkic Orkhon inscriptions in Mongolia. Apparently, from the ancient peoples who lived in Mongolia, it migrated to other languages: as “Tibet” to Thai, as “Tubbat” to Arabic etc. The modern Mongolian language utilises the word “Tuvd”. A possible source of this name is a clan Tufa, from which one of the Yarlung Dynasty kings has emerged (see below). This clan is linked with the old Chinese name of “Tufa”. The Tibetan language itself belongs to the Tibetan Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family (or, as now written in China, the Han-Tibetan). In this family, it is grouped with the languages of some peoples of Northern India and Southeast Asia, while the Chinese language forms a separate branch.² Various Tibetan tribes speak different dialects. After the introduction of written language it became common to all Tibetan tribes and played an important integrative role.

The geographical region of Bod is divided into two parts: Ü and Tsang. Tibetans often combine them into one: Ü-Tsang. It extends from Ngari-Korsum in the west to Sokla Kyawo.³ Tsang occupies the western part. The major cities of Shigatse and Gyantse are located here. Ü is to be found in the east. Lhasa is situated there. It stands on the river Kyichu, an inflow of Tsangpo. The climate is relatively mild and conducive to farming and raising stock. Barley, which is the favourite agricultural plant of Tibetans, gives good yields even at high altitudes (up to four thousand meters), where it is difficult to grow other crops. It is rich in iron which is good for preventing anaemia, oedema and problems with lungs. All this is important at high altitudes, where there is both little oxygen and variation of food. Barley is used to prepare the traditional Tibetan dish, *tsampa*: roasted flour, mixed up with butter and hot water or milk. Here, in the mountains, yaks are bred for meat, milk and wool. They are very hardy, undemanding in feeding as well as tolerant of mountainous conditions and winter frosts. Yaks are also used as pack animals.

The eastern part of Tibet is a historical region named Kham, while in the north-east lies the Amdo region. Kham extends from Sokla Kyao up to the turn of the Machu River (in the upper reaches of the River Huang He). The Amdo region lies from this turn to the White Stupa (Tibetan: Chöten Karpo). This makes the north-eastern border of Tibet. Both areas abound with grazing lands with agriculture being developed in the valleys, while mountain slopes are covered with forests. Ladakh (also known as Little Tibet) is situated to the south-west.

2 The Sino-Tibetan Etymological Dictionary...

3 Shakabpa, 1988.



Tibet (by <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/tibetmap/tibet21.jpg>, amended):
 1 – the historical borders, 2 – the borders from 1914 to 1950 3 – the modern administrative borders. Italics denote the modern provinces of China



The modern administrative-territorial division of Tibet

Thus, the historic Tibet is not made up purely of high mountains and lifeless plateaus. Its total area is much larger than the area of the Tibetan Plateau: 3,800,000 square kilometres. Tibetans say that the best religion is in Ü-Tsang, the best people in Kham, the best horses in Amdo.⁴ This is because the residents of Ü-Tsang are very religious, while inhabitants of Kham and Amdo are good warriors and businessmen respectively. The three historical regions: Ü-Tsang (including Ngari), Kham and Amdo are also referred to as the Three Provinces (Tibetan: Cholkha Sum) by the Tibetans. Yet another name for this area is Greater Tibet (although this term is not traditionally used by the Tibetans). All of it is included in the PRC, which adopted administrative divisions of Tibetan areas as follows: Ü-Tsang was mainly converted into the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR); Kham was divided between the TAR and Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan and Qinghai; Amdo was split between the provinces of Qinghai and Gansu. Chinese provinces have Tibetan autonomous units as follows: Qinghai Province—Mongolian and Tibetan prefecture Haisi (Tibetan: Tsonub), Tibetan prefectures Yushu, Hainan (Tsolho), Haibei (Tsojang), Huangnan (Malho) and Golo (Golok); Gansu Province—Tianzhu Tibetan county (Pari) and the prefecture Gannan (Kanlho); Sichuan Province—Tibetan and Qiang prefecture Aba (Ngawa), Tibetan prefecture Ganzi (Kardze) and the county Muli (Mili); Yunnan Province—Tibetan prefecture Diqing (Dechen).

Tibetan legends about their own origin are diverse. Like most people, they are tracing their origins to ancestors, with the latter concept being understood in a number of ways.⁵ The historical texts of the Bon, an ancient Tibetan religion, contain a popular depiction of appearance of the ancient world-container with its inherent creatures from the egg-space subsistence.⁶ Cosmogony is described as the formation of initial elements, which formed the “primordial eggs” that in turn gave birth to the world and living beings. According to ancient Tibetan ideas, the world is divided into the sky (Nam), earth (Sa), or “middle [world]” (Bar), and “bottom”, the underground world (Og). Deities Lha, Lu and Tsen (or Nyen) correspond to these spheres.⁷

According to meticulously developed views that are recognized in the Bon religion, people originated from the clan Nyen.⁸ One particular ancient Bon treatise proclaimed that from the eighteen eggs’ cartilages, eighteen large regions of space and its inhabitants have appeared, with one egg-shell alone giving rise to Menpey Miwo Lumlum, the great progenitor of the people of Tibet and Zhangzhung. Zhangzhung Country was located in Western and Northern Tibet. Its centre

4 Shakabpa, 1988.

5 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

6 Namkhai Norbu, 2008, p.16–20.

7 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

8 Namkhai Norbu, 2008, p.16–27, 104, 109–111.

is believed to be located at the mountain Tise (Kailash) and the Mapham Lake (Manasarovar). The progenitor was followed by many generations of people who were then replaced by the four great clans: Don, Dra, Dru and Ga (or five, if we include the Go clan), as well as two clans Val and Da. All of these are known as the six (or seven) human clans. These clans are the ancestors of all Tibetan families. Descendants of the Don and the Sen clans, gradually mixing with each other, have formed Zhangzhung-Tibetan ethnic group.

Another legend traces the origin of the Tibetans to a monkey, thereby immediately associating them with the theory of Charles Darwin. According to this legend, ancient Tibet was only inhabited by female and male demons.⁹ In order to populate the country with people and make it a mainstay of the teachings of the Buddha, Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (in another version, his disciple) took the shape of a monkey and became husband of one of the female demons. This marriage gave origin to the Tibetans. All this took place not far from Tsethang, in the center of Ü-Tsang region.¹⁰ It is possible that this legend is the result of Buddhist re-interpretation of an earlier myth. There is also a legend about the Tibetan king Nyatri Tsenpo which states that he came down from heaven.

These legends, when combined with traditional Tibetan views that their country is the centre of the world, indicate that the Tibetans are aware of themselves as the indigenous, and not migrant people of the Tibetan Plateau. Scientific data confirm this. Genetic data suggest that the ancestors of the Tibetans have a North Asian and Siberian origin; there is also evidence of the traces of human habitation on the Tibetan Plateau as far back as 18,000–22,000 years ago.¹¹ Human camps dating to Neolithic (New Stone Age) period number in dozens. More ancient sites were also found, some dated by Palaeolithic times.¹² Some camps were found in the highlands, more than four thousand meters above sea level. 3,000–5,000 years ago, the areas of modern cities of Qamdo and Lhasa were populated with highly developed Neolithic cultures, whose level is comparable to some of the Neolithic cultures of China. Ancient people of Tibet by the 1st century CE learnt to melt iron. Apparently, the peoples of these cultures were the ancestors of the Tibetan people, who originated and developed on the Tibetan Plateau.

Some Tibetan scholars believe that their nation has Indian roots.¹³ In their view, a king or military chief named Rupati participated in the famous war of the Pandavas with the Kauravas, as described in the Indian epos “Mahabharata”. He fought on the side of Kauravas and, after their defeat, fled to Tibet along with his supporters.

9 Namkhai Norbu, 2008, p.187–189.

10 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

11 Aldenderfer, 2003, p. 542–549.

12 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

13 Shakabpa, 1988.

Others suggest that the Tibetans are descended from the Iranians. Anthropological data refutes this. Tibetans are classified as the East Asian type of Mongoloid race, along with the Mongols, Japanese, Koreans, Hans etc.¹⁴ The divergence (splitting) of Tibetans and Han people away from their common ancestors, according to some reports, happened a very long time (5,000–6,000 years) ago. Some researchers believe that the Tibetans have a common genetic basis with the Mongols, although it is clear that there were other strong influences.¹⁵ Perhaps, those included Indian ones as well.

The theory of a very ancient divergence of the Han and the Tibetans is supported by unique adaptation of the latter to high-mountain conditions, where the low concentration of oxygen leads to mountain sickness in non-adapted people. These adaptations give Tibetans an advantage over Han people when living in high mountains. Tibetans have higher blood oxygen saturability than, for example, the Han people, with this difference being genetically fixed.¹⁶ Tibetans also avoid mountain sickness by the fact that they have higher breathing frequency, and wider arteries and capillaries that carry oxygen to the organs.¹⁷ The exhaled air of Tibetans contains a higher concentration of nitric oxide. This is associated with an increased enzymatic production of this substance in the body. The above is highly beneficial to the person living in the highlands because of extension of pulmonary blood vessels, increasing blood flow in the lungs, reducing pulmonary hypertension, and increased oxidation of haemoglobin.¹⁸ All of these contribute to oxygen enrichment of the organism and improves lung function.

A Tibetan tolerates the highland conditions much better than a Han who acclimatizes there. In the Tibetan highlands, the frequency of electrocardiogram abnormalities is higher in the Han migrants (even those who have migrated there at a young age) than in the Tibetans.¹⁹ The concentration of haemoglobin greatly increases with an increase in height above sea level in Han men relative to Han women, with this trend being absent in the Tibetans.²⁰ Han newborns are much more prone to mountain sickness than Tibetan newborns.²¹ Accordingly, the mortality rates differ as well. For respiratory characteristics associated with the highland, the offspring from mixed Han-Tibetan marriages occupies an intermediate position between the offspring from pure Han and pure Tibetan couples.²² Consequently,

14 Gelek. A Brief Description...

15 Jong, L. DNA profiles...

16 Beall, 2006, p.18–24.

17 Biello, 2007.

18 Beall et al., 2001, p. 411–412.

19 Halperin et al., 1998, p.237–437.

20 Wu et al., 2005, p.598–604.

21 Niermeyer et al., 1995, p.1248 – 1252; Wiley, 2004.

22 Gantenbein, 1993; Curran et al., 1997, p.2098–2104.

they are better adapted to these conditions than the Han people, but worse than the Tibetans. However, such mixed marriages are quite rare.

These peculiarities show the fact that Han people cannot successfully colonize the highlands of Tibet, while successfully colonizing Tibetan areas at low altitudes.

All this does not mean that Tibetans were living in total isolation since ancient times. According to archaeological data, ancient migrants to Tibet's north-east part were Qiang, the people of the Tibetan Burman group.²³ Other possible ancestors of the Tibetans are the Mon people (a group of ancient peoples of Indochina), as well as the tribes of Indo-European origin.²⁴ A certain influence may also have been provided by the Mongoloid tribes that could have been part of the Qiang. The Mon people had been assimilated with the Tibetans as well as the Chinese. Qiang were known as neighbours of the ancient Chinese Shang-Ying state from at least the second millennium BC. Qiang had trade and relations with the Ying people, they also cross married, waged wars etc. Qiang paid war tribute to Ying. The latter used Qiang people (along with others) for ritual sacrifice; further, Shang-Ying had a lot of Qiang slaves. On the other hand, the nobility of the two peoples became related to each other, and Jiang, one of the noble families of ancient China, had Qiang origin.

The genetic link between the Qiang and the Tibetans is not clear. Some think the former to be ancestors of Tibetans while others consider the opposite to be the case. Either way, it was at that time that Chinese written history began to contain information about of the first contacts of the Tibetan Burman ancestors with the ancestors of the Chinese. It is believed that Qiang domesticated yaks about five thousand years ago, yak becoming their totem animal, and went on to be associated with a number of legends and popular beliefs.²⁵

In the first century AD, the Qiang came under the dominion of the nomadic Xianbi tribes, who were the likely ancestors of the Mongols. This was near the Kokonor Lake²⁶ (modern Mongolian: Khukh Nuur, Blue Lake; Tibetan: Tso Ngonpo; Chinese: Qinghai Hu). This was one of the earliest contacts of the ancestors of Tibetans and Mongols, who later went on to form a common civilization.

Thus, in the ethnical sense, the Tibetans and Chinese separated a very long time ago. Whatever their relationship was initially, their further development took place in different conditions, and their cultural environment was different too.²⁷ From then, Tibet and China developed as two different civilizations, and neither of them became part of the other.

23 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

24 Smith, 1996.

25 Wu, K. and Wu, C., 2004.

26 Bichurin, 1833, p.74–123.

27 Smith, 1996.

CHAPTER 2

Antiquity and the Middle Ages



Like many other nations, the Tibetans are an ascending dynasty of their rulers to deities. Heaven is connected with the ancient clan Ja (birds).¹ Its residence, Yumbulakhang Palace, was built on the eastern bank of the Yarlung River. This is located to the south-east of Lhasa. According to legends, the ancestor of the Tibetans was born here from the marriage of a *bodhisattva* and a female demon.

Once the Ja line was interrupted, King Nyatri Tsenpo came to power in the Yarlung. He was considered to be the son of Lha (deity), who came down to earth to rule over the people. He founded the Yarlung royal dynasty (Chinese authors call it Tubo, Tibetan). It is believed that he was connected with the Ja clan: Jati, the terrestrial ancestor of the dynasty, came from the Jasa area, the area of the Ja clan. According to legend, Nyatri Tsenpo came down the stairs from the sky. He was very different from ordinary people: his eye lids looked like those of a bird, his eyebrows were made of turquoise, he had a moustache like a tiger, teeth like white shells, membranes between his fingers and toes like a waterfowl. According to another tradition that originated at the same time as Buddhism in Tibet, the ancient kings of that country were descended from people who lived in the territory of the modern Indian State of Bihar.²

It was believed that the king possessed a special charismatic force Chub-si, which was guarded by the servants of the Bon religion.³ When the king sat on the throne, he had a Bon priest to the right, while the minister was to his left. Both of them participated in running the government. The main task of the king on earth was to relieve people of strife and external enemies. It was believed that divine power allowed him to subdue the earth and the world of the dead, to protect them from those who were alive. Hence the title of king of Tibet, Tulku Lha Tsenpo, that is “Incarnate Deity-King”. There are indications that the king’s power was inherited by his younger son, then by his older son, and that the king had to die when his

1 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

2 Shakabpa, 1988.

3 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.



1



2



3

Yumbulakhang Palace:
1 – from 1938 to 1939. (Bundesarchiv, Bild 135–KB–06–088/Foto: Ernst Krause / License CC-BY-SA 3.0);
2 – after its destruction during the Cultural Revolution (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration);
3 – in 2005 (photo: Kyra / Creative Commons License)

eldest son reached maturity. The same should happen in the event of his illness. The first kings died very early. According to legends, the body of the deceased ruler was placed in a brass vessel and thrown into the river, where it was supposed to get power from the Lu deity and return him to his roots. Later, this ritual was replaced by a complex ritual of mummification and subsequent burial (this happened three years after death). In ancient times Tibetan people, like many other nations, killed and buried the king's horses and people together with the king: firstly closest dignitaries, then guards and slaves. Then, human sacrifices ceased. The slaves and the guards were to live at the tomb, guarding it and keeping it in order. But they were not allowed contact with other people. They were called "the living dead".

The Yarlung Dynasty ruled presumably from 95 BC to 846 AD on the south-east of the Tibetan Plateau, including areas of Yarlung, Nyangpo, Kongpo and Powo. The dynasty had forty-two kings.⁴ Their biographies include a number of details about supernatural events: communication with heaven, supernatural birth, etc. Some of these recorded details overlap with episodes of biographies of medieval Mongol khans and princes, probably not just because of mutual borrowing, but also due to similarity in mentality of people who later formed the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization. In Europe, the first mention of the state of the Yarlung Dynasty was in the "Geography" by Claudius Ptolemy (about 87–165 AD). The country was designated as "Batai" (from Tibetan "Bod").

Early history of the Yarlung Dynasty is largely known from ancient Tibetan folklore and includes many myths. The scientific community still debates the question of who among these kings was real, and who was mythical. But it is clear that the Yarlung Dynasty, probably dating back to the Bronze and Iron Ages, played a crucial role in the formation of the Tibetan people. According to Tibetan folklore, Nyatri Tsenpo and the six kings that followed returned to heaven by a "sky rope" after their death, so their graves are unknown. The tomb of the eighth king is located in Kongpo in Ü-Tsang. According to legend, he accidentally cut the "sky rope" and was unable to climb to heaven.⁵ This king was called Digum Tsenpo. Sagan Setsen, Mongolian chronicler, traced the line of great khans of Mongolia to the Yarlung Dynasty. He wrote that the youngest son of the king Jati Tsenpo, following his father's assassination by a minister, fled to the area of the Bede people, who lived near the Baikal Lake and the Burkhan Khaldun Mountain.

A highly developed civilization evolved during the Yarlung Dynasty, with its main foundations being agriculture and animal husbandry.⁶ The population was divided into two main groups: farmers and urban dwellers (*tonde*), and pastoralists and semi-nomads (*dogde*). The territory of the state expanded. Kings Tagri Nyensig

4 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

5 Shakabpa, 1988.

6 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

and Namri Songtsen (570–620) fought for the unification of Tibetans into a single state. The latter, according to legend, had a hundred thousand strong army, which reached north to the territory of the Turki and south into Central India. During his reign there were some revolts. Namri Songtsen moved the capital from the valley of the Yarlung to the Kyichu valley, forming the Rasa settlement. Subsequent rulers built a royal castle on the mountain Marpori and the settlement was renamed Lhasa (Land of Deities).

In the 7th century AD the Tibetan state came onto the world scene, briefly becoming one of the main powers operating in Central Asia. The great king Songtsen Gampo, the son



Songtsen Gampo (Chandra, 1999)

of Namri Songtsen, was born in year 613 (or 617). He was born shortly before the founding of the Tang State, which was created in 618 by Emperor Li Yuan (era name: U-de).⁷ By this time, the Tibetan state stretched to the Thangla Ridge in the north, to the Himalayas in the south, to Mount Kailash in the west, and to the Drichu River (upper Yangtze) in the east.⁸ Songtsen Gampo's goal was the strengthening of statehood. He supervised development of a system of land tenure and land use, creation of state funds for public lands, oversaw division of the country into six provinces that were led by set *khonpons* (governor-generals), conducted surveying and distributing of land, developed new legislation, created a new army, etc. (see Chapter 6).

Writing was introduced in Tibet during the reign of Songtsen Gampo. Actually, according to the conclusion of J.N. Roerich, there were five attempts to introduce writing in Tibet.⁹ But the conventional system was developed by Thönmi Sambhota. In 632, Songtsen Gampo sent him to India, where the Tibetan minister studied writing and grammar from the Indian pandits (scholars). Upon his return to Tibet, he reworked the fifty Indian letters into thirty Tibetan consonants and four Tibetan vowels. The basis of the alphabet was formed from the Indian scripts Brahmi and Gupta¹⁰ with the framework of the case system being based on the Sanskrit system.¹¹ The previously used Tibetan system of grammar, which arose from the system of

⁷ Shakabpa, 1988.

⁸ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

⁹ Roerich, 1958, p.109.

¹⁰ Shakabpa, 1988.

¹¹ Namkhai Norbu, 2008, p.170–171.

the Zhangzhung country, contained many awkward parts and forms of sentences. Thönmi greatly reduced their numbers and made grammar much more convenient. He developed a written language that became the same for all Tibetans, regardless of tribal differences in spoken language.

Songtsen Gampo combined the internal strengthening of the state with an active foreign policy aimed at the integration of the Tibetan and Tibetan Burman tribes, i.e. intending to unite them within natural national boundaries. Military force was used to induce obedience amongst the Dokpa people (ancestors of modern Goloks) inhabiting the Machu River valley and to the south, the Panaca tribes that lived near the Kokonor Lake (area of Amdo) and in east Tsaidam, and the Horpa people that lived north of the Thangla Ridge.¹² Integration of Qiang, Sumpa, Asha and other Tibetan tribes from the north-east began in the first half of the 7th century.

In 634, the Tibetans attacked the Dangsyang¹³ (ancestors of the Tangut) for the first time, when the latter were dependent on Tuguhun, a tribal State of Xianbi, who were the probable ancestors of the Mongols.¹⁴ This state occupied part of the modern Chinese provinces of Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region. Seven years before that event took place, recently formed Chinese Tang State (618) sent ambassadors to Tuguhun in order to secure the Tang border area from attacks. However, the Khan of Tuguhun did not trust the Chinese. He proposed a contract “*he qin*” (“for peace and kinship”): to arrange for a Tang princess to be sent for his son to marry. In the year of attacks on the Dangsyang, Tibetans also sent an embassy to the Tang State. The Chinese embassy, headed by Feng Deji arrived to Lhasa in response. Tibetans, knowing the relationships between Tuguhun and Tang, also asked for a Tang princess for their monarch. However, the Chinese fought with the Xianbi and the Turkic people, but not with the Tibetans, thus saw no point to concluding a peace treaty. Hence, the princesses had been sent to Tuguhun and the Turki, and not to Tibet. According to the “Red Annals” chronicles, the Tibetan king’s response was a promise to send an army to take the princess by force, and to capture the Tang State. On the 12th September 638, Tibetan troops invaded a village in the Xuizhou District that was inhabited by the Dangsyang (in modern Sichuan). At the same time, a Tibetan ambassador arrived at Chang’an (the capital of the Tang State) and threatened to attack the Chinese land.

Now a reason for the treaty emerged. In December 640, the Tibetan dignitary Tontsen Yulsung brought five thousand liangs of silver and hundreds of gold objects to Chang’an. In March of the next year, he went to Lhasa, accompanied

12 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

13 The names of many ancient tribes, cities, states, names of people, etc. have only reached us in the Chinese form: from Chinese chronicles. Non-Chinese (i.e. titles and names in original language) of these forms are unknown, because written sources have not been preserved, languages did not have script, and so on.

14 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

by the Chinese princess Wencheng. The journey to Lhasa took several years and Wencheng became wife of Songtsen Gampo only in 646. For about five years, the king did not rule the country; instead the ruler was Gungsong Guntsen, the son of Songtsen Gampo from his Tibetan wife Mongsal Tricham (he had no other sons). According to custom, he ascended the throne after having reached thirteen years of age. But at eighteen, he died, and Songtsen Gampo was again obliged to take the throne. It is believed that Songtsen Gampo temporarily lost power in the fight with his influential adviser, but managed to defeat him in the end.

Wencheng brought a statue of the Buddha (Shakyamuni Jowo) with her, as well as more than ten thousand bales of embroidered brocade, lots of boxes of Chinese classics, various utensils and books on different technologies. She helped Buddhist monks from Yutian (Hotan) and other places to come to Tibet for the construction of Buddhist monasteries and also for the translation of the Canon.¹⁵ But the first wife of the king was the Nepalese princess Bhrikuti, and she brought with her images of Maitreya, Tara, and a statue of the Buddha at the age of eight years old.¹⁶

Songtsen Gampo congratulated the Tang Emperor Li Shimin (era name: Zhen-guan) with a victory in the east of Liaoning Province. Following the etiquette of his time, he pointed out that the emperor had won all sides of the Middle Kingdom, and expressed a desire to help suppress any riots when they arose against him. This message speaks of allied relations between the two monarchs. But some historians use this to make a strange conclusion: "These facts prove that Songtsen Gampo himself regarded Tibet as being under the local administration of the Tang Dynasty".¹⁷

The marriage of the Tibetan king to the Chinese and Nepalese princesses was an important political act. However, most important was the spiritual contribution of the two princesses towards the development of Buddhism in Tibet. In addition, it significantly strengthened the connection of Tibet with the two countries. This does not mean that Tibet became subordinate to China or Nepal, but rather thanks to China, Tibetans came across paper and ink, perhaps also a millstone, a few other crafts, and they adopted certain features of the Chinese administrative system. However, it is wrong to link this with the beginning of Tibetan agriculture, as some Chinese authors do.¹⁸

In those same years, Tibetans won the upper part of Burma, and in 640 Nepal, where they remained for several years.¹⁹ In Nepal, a column was erected, on which the inscription tribute to the Tibetan king was engraved. Tibetan migrants settled in

15 Briefly on Tibet...

16 King Songtsen Gampo...

17 Tiang, J. The Administrative System...

18 See in: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

19 Shakabpa, 1988.

Nepal and gave rise to the Nepalese tribes Tsang, Lama, Sherpa and Tamang. In 643, the king of Zhangzhung became the vassal of the king of Tibet. In 645, the Chinese emperor sent a mission to the court of King Harsha in one of the states of North India. By the time the mission arrived, the king had died, and his minister Arjuna (who was intolerant of Buddhism) took the throne. The Chinese who arrived were killed on his orders. Only a few people along with the head of the mission managed to survive. They fled to Nepal and asked Songtsen Gampo for help, and in response he sent an army of Nepalese and Tibetans into India. The Chinese emperor was so grateful to Songtsen Gampo that he bequeathed to place a statue of the Tibetan king by his grave. That was an honour, but with a trick: usually statues at the tomb of the Emperor were those of his high officials and ministers.

In 649, Songtsen Gampo died of an infectious disease that caused a fever.²⁰ According to legend, he dissolved into a small wooden statue of the Buddha that was brought from Nepal and placed inside the statue of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara installed in Jokhang, the main temple of Tibet in Lhasa.

After Songtsen Gampo's death, the throne passed to his grandson Mangsong Mangtsen. However, the actual power belonged to Tontsen Yulsung, the member of an ancient Ghar clan. The clan held onto this power up until 698. In 655, shortly after the death of Songtsen Gampo, Tontsen Yulsun put in a claim to the Tughun state as an ancient frontier of the land of Tibet. Tughun began to ask for help from the Tang emperor, but was turned down.²¹ The Tughun dignitary named Tohegui, who was a relative of the ruling dynasty, fled to the Tibetans, and informed them about this. Then in 663, the Tibetans took Tughun, defeating the army of the country. In the years 667–670, the Tibetans began to destroy *chimi*. These counties were vassals, but not part of the Tang state. They were created by the Chinese on the lands of the Qiang who became their subordinates. In 670, the Tibetans forged an alliance with the Turkis and invaded the Tarim River valley. The Chinese response was to send a hundred thousand strong army under the command of Xue Zhengui in August 670, which invaded the Kokonor area. The Tibetan army under the command of Tidin Ghar defeated the Chinese at the Bukhain Gol River.

At the same time, the Tibetans developed an offensive in the west. In 656, they captured Wahan and placed Bolor under their control. Before 670, Hotan and Kashgar were recaptured from the Chinese, and by the end of the 670s Tibet had control of almost the entire Tarim basin and the mountains to the south-west of it. The Chinese lost their outposts in East Turkestan. This forced them to move their attention to Tibet despite the fact that the Tibetans defeated the Chinese

²⁰ Shakabpa, 1988.

²¹ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

army at Kokonor in the summer of 678. After that, the war between Tibet and the Tang State temporarily halted in connection with the death of the rulers of both countries and subsequent domestic events.

In 687, the Tibetans attacked the city of Kucha (in modern Xinjiang). The Chinese sent an army to the aid of their vassals, which was defeated by the Tibetans in the summer of 689. In 692, a new Tang army marched out, led by Wang Xiaoze. Soon the Tibetans left Kashgaria. It is not known, whether it was caused by the Chinese victory or the Tibetan king Duisong Mangje who ordered to withdraw.²² The latter could have been useful to him to fight the Ghar clan, which held power through external victories. Now the king blamed Ghar for the defeat in the war. In the next two years, Tibetans suffered further defeats from the Chinese at the north-eastern and western borders, where the Chinese had allied with the Turkis.

However, in 695, the Tibetans struck the Chinese with a serious blow in the direction of Lanzhou, and then they went on to offer a peace treaty, threatening to cut off the Chinese connection with the Western boundary if not accepted. Knowing about the internal political struggle in Tibet, the Chinese began to drag out the negotiations, hoping for the fall of the Ghar clan that was so successful in fighting them. Indeed, in 698 Dusong Mangje attacked the Ghar, captured about 2,000 people from their clan, and executed them. Tidin Tsendo Ghar tried to resist, but was defeated and ended up committing suicide, while his brother and his sons fled to China. However, restoring the power of the real king did not change Tibet's foreign policy. In the years 700 and 701, Tibetans resumed hostilities in Lanzhou and in the north-east. During the next few years fighting was interspersed with negotiations. In 703, an uprising against the Tibetans flared up in Nepal and India. Dusong Mangje died during their suppression in 704, soon followed by the Tang Empress Wu Hou, who ruled China for a long time.

New negotiations in 706 were completed with a “vow to unite for many years under the era name of Shen-long,” and border demarcation drawn between the two states,—the Tibetan Kingdom and the Tang Empire. In 707, the Chinese agreed to a treaty “*he qin*” (“on peace and kinship”), and in 710, Princess Jincheng was sent to Tibet.²³ Tang Emperor personally accompanied her for some part of the way. The monarch of Tibet had been given the Hesi juqu lands (to the east of the Kokonor Lake and on both banks of the upper reaches of the Yellow River) as the dowry. In 713, Jincheng became the wife of King Tride Tsugten (nicknamed Me Agtsom).

In 714, the Tibetans advanced towards Lintao and Lanzhou, and in 716 and 717 they moved towards the borders of Tang in the modern provinces of Sichuan and Gansu. In the west they were acting in alliance with the Arab commander

22 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

23 Shakabpa, 1988.

Kuteiba ibn Muslim. While introducing Islam in Central Asia, Kuteiba's warriors barbarically destroyed "pagan" cultures. However, the Tibetans did not understand the threat of the expansion of the Arab Caliphate. The Arabs were considered to be one of the weaker nations, which could have either been allies or adversaries. Tibetan support did not matter much, and in 715, Tang forces, staffed by Western Turkic people, defeated the Arabs in Ferghana. Later, in 736–737, Tibetans together with the Turkic people (Turgesh Khanate) fought with their former Arab allies, who sought to capture Tashkent and Ferghana. The Arabs tried to establish contacts with the Chinese, but were unable to come to an agreement.

As well as fighting, Tride Tsugten tried to make peace with the Tang State in 716, 718 and 719. However, these attempts were unsuccessful. In 724, the resumption of the war, which lasted until 729, and the alternation of victories and defeats led to a situation which the Chinese public figure Zhang Yue determined "as the existence of approximate equality in the number of victories and defeats".²⁴ Both sides accused their border chiefs of aggressive actions and assured their own peaceful intentions. In 730, after 60 years of war between the Tang Empire and Tibet, peace was eventually established. An important role in this was played by a Tibetan ambassador, who spoke fluent Chinese, and also by the Chinese wife of the Tibetan king. The parties agreed that the border between both countries would be the Chilin Ridge (identified with the mountains of Ulan-Shara-Dava to the east of Xining, modern Qinghai Province) and the Gansunlin Ridge (Sunpan County, Sichuan Province). It is believed that the border demarcation was not completed due to the fact that war resumed again after seven years.

In 736, the Tibetans attacked Gilgit in Kashmir. In 737, the Chinese attacked the Tibetans in the Kokonor area. After that, clashes began to expand, and the border guide-posts on the Chilin ridge were destroyed. Jincheng died in 741. Tibetans resumed their raids on border areas of Tang, seizing bread which was made by the Chinese. They captured the Chinese town of Xipa and held it until 748.²⁵ In 747–750, the Chinese sent a large army to the west and were able to knock the Tibetans out of Gilgit, Xipa, the principalities of the Tarim Basin. In 751, Arabs defeated the Chinese army at the Talas River.²⁶ In 751–752, the Tibetans conquered the Nanzhao State in the south-east (modern Yunnan Province). In 750, they entered an agreement with the Thai. The Thai ruler was called the "younger brother" of the king of Tibet.

Tride Tsugten died soon after, and at the same time, An Lushan's rebellion broke out in China. The new Tibetan king Trisong Deutsen used the temporary weakening of his neighbours and conquered large territories in the modern

²⁴ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.52.

²⁵ Shakabpa, 1988.

²⁶ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

Chinese provinces of Gansu and Sichuan. He also restored the influence of Tibet in the Western region. Together with the Uighurs, Tibetans offered Chinese assistance in quelling the rebellion, demanding the treaty “on peace and kinship” in return. The Chinese agreed to meet the demands of the Uighurs, but not the Tibetans. The king of Tibet used this refusal as a pretext for war with the Tang Empire. Two armies were sent to the Chinese capital. They were under the command of generals Shanchim Gyeltseg Shulteng and Taktra Lukong. There was a great battle. Tang forces were defeated with the emperor fleeing. On the 18th November 763, Tibetan troops occupied the Tang capital, city of Chang’an, and the Tibetans put Li Chenhung (grandson of Li Zhi) on the Chinese throne. The Li Chenhung government announced his rule with a new era name, Da-shu. The Tibetan king rewarded both generals in the form of being released from criminal penalties (including death) for any misconduct, except for treason to the king.



Trisong Deutsen

A stele was erected to commemorate the victory. Amongst other engravings, there was an inscription stating that Trisong Deutsen conquered many Tang fortresses, and the Tang Emperor and his subjects were asked to pay tribute to the Tibetan king with 50,000 pieces of silk, but the next emperor refused to pay tribute, so the Tibetans sent an army, defeated the Chinese Emperor and caused him to flee from the capital.²⁷

After fifteen days the Tibetan troops left the capital of Tang, but they furthered their military success in subsequent years. By 781, Hami, Dunhuang District, Lanzhou City, Ganzhou, Suzhou were all in Tibetan hands. The Tang Empire had lost its most important road to the west. In 783, a peace treaty was signed between Tibet and Tang in Qingshui. This treaty clearly delineated the new boundaries between the two countries, with the Chinese having made major territorial concessions. According to current Chinese estimates, the “Helanshan area north of the Yellow River stood out as a neutral land. The border line was stretched to the south of the Yellow River along the mountains Liupanshan, in Longyou, along the rivers of Minjiang and Daduhe and south to the Moso and all Man’ (modern district of Lijiang, Yunnan Province). Everything to the east of this border line was

²⁷ Ngabo, 1988.

owned by Tang, to the west by Tibet”.²⁸ Thus, the Tang Empire recognized the de facto domination of Tibetans over the area of Helong and the lost control of the Western region.

After signing the treaty, Tibetans helped the Chinese to suppress revolt led by the dignitary Zhu Zi. For this the Chinese promised to give the Tibetans control over districts Anxi and Beiting, but they did not keep their promise. In response, the Tibetans attacked the Tang fortress in Ordos, and in 787 they approached Chang'an. In subsequent years, the Tibetans also fought with the Uighurs and Arabs, and consequently, in 791, the Tibetans captured a significant part of East Turkestan.

At the end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th century the Tibetan Kingdom was at the peak of its power. It is believed that the Shah of Kabul became its vassal, and the Tibetans controlled part of the Pamirs and Kashmir.²⁹ In the north, the Tibetan army reached the Amu Darya River.³⁰ It was also during this period that Tibetan documents started to utilise the term of Bod Chenpo (“Great Tibet”). The Tang historical chronicle “Ju Tang shu”, Chapter 196B, reads as follows: “The Tibetans established their kingdom on our western border many years ago; as silkworms, they bit into [the lands] of their barbarian neighbours so as to enlarge their territory. During Gao-zong their territory was ten thousand li, and they competed with us in superiority: in more recent times, there is nobody stronger than them”.³¹

But by the end of the 8th century, the power of Tibet began to show cracks. In 794, the ruler of the Nanzhao State refused to obey Tibet and became a vassal of the Tang Emperor. In the north Tibetans were pressed by Uighur Khanate, whose ruler signed a treaty “on peace and kinship” with the Tang Dynasty.

After the death of Trisong Deutsen the throne was taken by his second son Mune Tsenpo. Seeing the inequality between his subjects and the poverty among his peasants, Mune Tsenpo decided to eliminate the division between rich and poor, so a decree was issued on equalising land use. After some time the king asked about the results of the reform. He learned that the poor had become poorer and the rich richer. Frustrated, he turned for advice to the Buddhist preacher Padmasambhava, who advised him that the king could not forcibly remove the inequality between rich and poor.³² Having reigned for only a year, Mune Tsenpo was poisoned, and died, thus ending the attempt of egalitarian redistribution, the only one in the history of independent Tibet.

28 Xizang Jianshi, 1993 — in: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.56.

29 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

30 Shakabpa, 1988.

31 In: Van Walt, 1987, p.2.

32 Shakabpa, 1988.

Political instability pushed the Tibetan king, Tri Ralpachen, to enter into negotiations with the Tang Empire. The Treaty was signed in 821 in the suburbs of Chang'an and, in 822, in the suburbs of Lhasa. The text was engraved on four columns, which were then erected in Lhasa, Chang'an and at the border on both sides.³³ Both monarchs were called *zhu* ("sovereign") in the Chinese text. The Chinese monarch was named as senior (*ju*, maternal uncle), and the Tibetan junior (*sheng*, nephew).



Tri Ralpachen

During this time, both states were considered to be independent and equal: "The great king of Tibet, the Divine Manifestation, the bTsan-po [Tsenpo], and the great king of China, the Chinese ruler Hwang Te, Nephew and Uncle, having consulted about the alliance of their dominions have made the great treaty and ratified the agreement... Both Tibet and China shall keep the country and frontiers of which they now are in possession. The whole region to the east of that being the country of Great China and the whole region to the west being assuredly the country of Great Tibet, from either side of the frontier there shall be no warfare, no hostile invasions and no seizure of territory... Now that the dominions are allied and a great treaty of peace has been made in this way, since it is necessary also to continue communication of pleasant messages between Nephew and Uncle, envoys setting out of either side shall follow the old established route... According to close and friendly relationship between Nephew and Uncle the customary courtesy and respect shall be practiced. Between the two countries, no smoke or dust shall appear. Nor even a word of sudden alarm or of enmity shall be spoken, and from those who guard the frontier upwards, all shall live at ease without suspicion or fear, their land being their land and their bed their bed... And in order that this agreement – establishing a great era when Tibetans shall be happy in Tibet and Chinese shall be happy in China – shall never be changed, the Three Jewels, the body of saints, the sun and the moon, planets and stars have been invoked as witnesses".³⁴

The website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC summed up the above as follows: "Both sides of the agreement officially declared their historical

³³ Shakabpa, 1988.

³⁴ In: Van Walt, 1987, p.1–2.

kinship and agreed that in future they will consider themselves as nationals of one country".³⁵

The years following this treaty were marked by the strengthening of Buddhism in Tibet, however it was briefly interrupted by an attempt to eradicate the religion by king Darma (see Chapter 5). After his assassination in 842, the princes Ngadak Yumden and Ngadak Ösung began to fight for power. Yumden's stronghold was in the Yarlung, Ösung's in Lhasa. Ösung's great-grandson (great-great-grandson of Darma) fled to Western Tibet (Purang), where he founded the Ngari Dynasty, which was to rule the Guge Kingdom for many centuries after. Ösung's second grandson strengthened his position in Tsang. Warlords and major officials sided with this or that ruler, or declared their independence. In 851, Dunhuang broke away from Tibet with a Tibetan governor of Chinese nationality, adopting Tang citizenship. However, this was merely a formality. In fact, Dunhuang came under the authority of Beijing only under the Mongols. In 860, a commander of Tibetan nationality in Sichuan deserted to Tang. Another Tibetan warlord was captured by the ruler of closely related people, the Tangut. This ruler was beheaded and his head was sent to the Tang capital. Remaining Tibetan troops that were stationed outside from Tibet partly assimilated, and partly formed compact enclaves. Thus, at the end of the 10th century, Tibetans were in control of a large area with its center in Lanzhou, whereas in the 11th century the Tibetan state was in the area of Kokonor, with small enclaves in the upper reaches of the Yellow River.³⁶

Some authors believe that the collapse of the great State of Tibet was facilitated by Buddhism, which led to internal strife. The dynasty's charisma was covered by Bon, which was partly superseded, but Buddhism had not yet taken its place fully. However, there is no direct evidence of this. Different groups have used one or the other religion for political purposes. A significant contribution towards the collapse of the country was likely the result of the high costs of running the military, and the lack of necessary resources to control a large area.

Small enclaves in northern Tibet forged an alliance with the Chinese and fought with the Tangut Empire (Chinese: Hsi Hsia), as well as fighting among themselves. Gradually, these Tibetan territories came under Chinese rule, then under the authority of Tangut. The Tibetans occupied an important place in the Tangut Empire. Their language was the recognized language of Buddhism, they had their own Buddhist community, and Tibetans themselves were one of the major nations of the empire, together with the Tangut, Chinese and the Uighur.

In the 10th century, spiritual and public powers of Tibet began to fuse. Political life was flowing quietly, and Buddhism was developing and consolidating the

³⁵ Briefly on Tibet: a historical sketch...

³⁶ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

country. This led to the final formation of the Tibetan nation. Relations with Chinese states, that entered the arena of history after the Tang Empire, were weak. There was next to no exchange between the Tibetan and the Chinese governments. During the time of the Five Dynasties (907–960) and during the Song Dynasty (960–1279) relations of Tibet and China were limited to border skirmishes, trade and formal politeness. This included the sending and receiving of gifts and titles, which has sometimes been incorrectly interpreted as subordination to the central Chinese Government or being part of China.

By 1206 Genghis Khan united the Mongol tribes under his rule and led an active policy of conquest. He forced the Uighurs and the Turkic Karluks, with whom Tibetans had long-standing relationships, to obey, and so the Mongol Empire expanded rapidly. In 1206 or 1207 the Tibetans sent a mission to Genghis Khan. The mission included secular and religious representatives, who expressed submissiveness, and presented him with rich gifts.³⁷ Like other subjugated people, they began to pay tribute. This saved Tibet from a Mongol invasion. In 1227, the Mongols conquered the Tangut Empire, with its khan being executed. Genghis Khan died at the capture of the capital city of Tangut. After that, Tibetans ceased to pay tribute, and relations with the Mongols became strained.³⁸

In 1240, Central Tibet was invaded by a thirty-thousand strong Mongol army, under the command of Leje and Dorda Darkhan. The army was sent by Prince Godan, who was the second son of Ugedei Khan, and the grandson of Genghis Khan. The Mongols ended up reaching Phenyül, north of Lhasa, where a fight broke out and two monasteries were burned, killing the priest-ruler and five hundred monks.³⁹ The Mongols did not go any further. Godan, however, did not forget about Tibet. He sent an invitation to Kunga Gyaltzen (Mongolian: Gunga Jaltsan), the head of the Buddhist Sakya sect, whose great scholarly knowledge led to him being called Sakya Pandita. There are several versions of the reason for this invitation. The most plausible and generally accepted one states that Godan wanted to adopt the Buddhist religion from a great



Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltzen (Chandra, 1999)

37 Ssanang Ssetsen, 1829.

38 Shakabpa, 1988.

39 Shakabpa, 1988.

Lama, which he knew about from fighting with countries bordering with Tibet. There were several reasons for choosing this particular religious sect.⁴⁰ Mongolian society and pre-Buddhist faith were similar to Tibetan, they were attracted to Tantric Buddhism, the sect of Sakya followed old Buddhist traditions, and its Lamas were actively developing contacts with the political rulers. Such were the features of the emerging Tibetan-Mongolian civilization.

Godan wrote:⁴¹ “I, the most powerful and prosperous Prince Godan, wish to inform the Sakya Pandita, Kunga Gyaltsen, that we need a lama to advise my ignorant people on how to conduct themselves morally and spiritually. I need someone to pray for the welfare of my deceased parents, to whom I am deeply grateful.

I have been pondering this problem for some time, and after much consideration, have decided that you are the only person suitable for the task. As you are the only lama I have chosen, I will not accept any excuse on account of your age or the rigors of the journey.

The Lord Buddha gave his life for all living beings. Would you not, therefore, be denying your faith if you tried to avoid this duty of yours? It would, of course, be easy for me to send a large body of troops to bring you here; but in so doing, harm and unhappiness might be brought to many innocent living beings. In the interest of the Buddhist faith and the welfare of all living creatures, I suggest that you come to us immediately. As a favor to you, I shall be very kind to those monks who are now living on the west side of the sun.

I send you presents of five shoes (ingots), a silken gown set with six thousand and two hundred pearls, vestments and shoes of silk, and twenty silken rolls of five different colors. They are brought to you by my messengers, Dho Segon and Un Jho Kharma.

(Dated) The 30th day of the eighth month of the Dragon year (1244)”.

Sakya Pandita went to Godan along with his two nephews, Lodö Gyaltsen, who was ten years old, and Chagna, who was six. They arrived at Godan’s headquarters in 1245, but did not find him there, as the prince was at the grand *khuraldai* in Mongolia. The meeting took place in 1247 near the city of Lanzhou. Godan built the Tulpe De monastery (which still exists) for Sakya Pandita. The Lama healed him from an unknown illness. Godan gifted Sakya Pandita with authority over entire Tibet.

However, this did not mean that the Tibetan tribes were attached to the Mongol Empire and were now obliged to obey all of its administrative decrees. Being empowered by Godan, Kunga Gyaltsen told the Tibetan rulers that he saw the spreading of Buddhism outside of Tibet as the main goal, and that this would

40 Bira, 1999 — in: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

41 In: Shakabpa, 1988, p.61–62.

help his country.⁴² He wrote that the prince was counting on the Tibetans for help in matters of religion, and that Mongols would help the Tibetans in worldly affairs.

Such were the foundations of the relations between the theocratic rulers of Tibet and the Mongol (later Manchu) khans, built on the principle of “spiritual priest – secular patron” (in Tibetan *chos–yon*, *Chos* stands for Dharma, the teachings of the Buddha; *Yon* for charity or reward). That is, one teaches Dharma, and the other one responds with rewards of gifts. The origins of this principle (in the form of “Lama—charity donator”) come from ancient India, where communities of Buddhist monks lived off charity, and where showing respect and feeding the monks was seen as a way of collecting spiritual merit for the layperson. From the middle of the 9th century to the beginning of the 13th century, this formula was used in relation to monasteries and the local Tibetan population.⁴³

Godan was a vassal of the Great Khan of the Mongols. Therefore, when Munke took the throne in 1251, he sent officials into Tibet in order to verify the census and to approve the property ownership of local secular and religious rulers.⁴⁴ However, neither the imperial administration, nor the troops were ever sent to Tibet.

Kunga Gyaltsen died in 1251, and Godan also died very soon after. That same year, Kublai, grandson of Genghis Khan, led a campaign against Southern China as ordered by Munke, the Mongolian Great Khan. The older nephew of Kunga Gyaltsen, Phagpa Lama, converted Kublai to Buddhism in 1253. The conditions of this conversion were described in different ways. Some reported that Phagpa gave Kublai Buddhist initiations on the condition that he would consult with him on issues of Tibet and would not interfere in the affairs of Mongolia. In addition, Kublai had agreed to perform ritual bows to his Lama during meditations, although not in public. According to other sources, Kublai agreed to sit below Phagpa during meditation, exercise and taking vows, whereas both would sit on one level when



Phagpa Lama (<http://library.conlang.org/web/phagpa.html>)

42 Shakabpa, 1988.

43 Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.57.

44 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

managing public affairs. After this, Kublai Khan and twenty-five members of his entourage received Phagpa Lama's initiation into Hevajra Tantra, the most important tantra of the Sakya sect.⁴⁵

Kublai had given Phagpa Lama a document to confirm the latter's supreme authority over Tibet:⁴⁶ "As a true believer in the Great Lord Buddha, the all-merciful and invincible ruler of the world, whose presence, like the sun, lights up every dark place, I have always shown special favor to the monks and monasteries in your country. Having faith in the Lord Buddha, I studied the teachings of your uncle, Sakya Pandita, and in the year of the Water-Ox (1253), I received your own teachings.

After studying under you, I have been encouraged to continue helping your monks and monasteries, and in return for what I have learned from your teachings, I must make you a gift. This letter, then, is my present. It grants you authority over all Tibet, enabling you to protect the religious institutions and faith of your people and to propagate Lord Buddha's teachings.

In addition, my respected tutor, I am presenting you with garments, a hat, and a gown, all studded with gold and pearls; a gold chair, umbrella, and cup; a sword with the hilt embedded with precious stones, four bars of silver and a bar of gold; and a camel and two horses, complete with saddles. In this year of the Tiger, I will also present you with fifty-six bars of silver, two hundred cases of brick tea, and a hundred and fifty rolls of silk, to enable you to build images of the deities.

The monks and people in Tibet should be informed of what I am doing for them. I hope they will not look for any other leader than you. The person who holds this letter of credentials should, in no way, exploit his people. Monks should refrain from quarreling among themselves and from indulging in violence. They should live peacefully and happily together. Those who know the teachings of the Lord Buddha should endeavor to spread them; those who do not know his teachings should try to learn all they can. <...> As I have elected to be your patron, you must make it your duty to carry out the teachings of the Lord Buddha. By this letter, I have taken upon myself the sponsorship of your religion.

(Dated) The ninth day of the middle month of summer of the Wood-Tiger year (1254)".

With this document, Kublai confirmed his relationship with the highest members of Sakya hierarchy to be of the principle of "priest – patron". In addition, he allowed all other sects to practice Buddhism in accordance with their traditions, and Phagpa Lama did not interfere in them. Sometimes this has been reported in an amusing way: "In the thirteenth century, Emperor Kublai Khan created the first Grand Lama, who was to preside over all the other lamas as might a pope over his

⁴⁵ The Mongols, 2009, p.17.

⁴⁶ In: Shakabpa, 1988, p.65–66.

bishops”.⁴⁷ Or even funnier: “In the 13th century, Genghis Khan’s grandson Kublai Khan gave one of the prominent Buddhist teachers the title of Emperor’s teacher, or the Dalai Lama, and instructed him to control the Tibetan land”.⁴⁸

In 1258, by order of Munke Khan, Kublai headquarters held a dispute between Buddhists and Taoists, and the latter lost. This strengthened the position of Buddhism in the Mongol Empire. Munke Khan perished in August 1259. The throne of the Great Khan was then claimed by several descendants of Genghis: brothers Hulagu, Kublai and Ariq Böke. Hulagu lived in the Middle East, and was occupied with strengthening his authority there. Kublai was in China, which was not yet fully conquered. Ariq Böke was elected as the Great Khan of Mongolia. But the real contenders were Kublai and Ariq Böke. Kublai convened a congress of princes, who proclaimed him as the Great Khan. He won in the ensuing civil war. Phagpa Lama announced Kublai to be the reincarnation of Manjushri, Bodhisattva of Wisdom. Kublai Khan was a very gifted man indeed. Even in his youth, he was called “Setsen” (Mongolian: “Wise Man”).⁴⁹ Later, he was titled in this way in Mongolian chronicles.

In 1265, for the first time after his departure from his homeland, Phagpa Lama arrived in Tibet. Then in 1267, he received a letter from Kublai Khan with an invitation to return to his court. In Mongolia, he was met by the Khan’s wife and the eldest son, to oversee his travel to the capital. Upon his arrival to the Khan’s capital Khanbalik in 1268, Phagpa Lama brought to Kublai’s attention an alphabet developed by him for the Mongols, which was based on the Tibetan alphabet (so-called square script). This script allowed him to transmit the phonetics of the Mongolian and Chinese languages. Kublai Khan was very pleased as he understood the importance of language in the preservation of ethnicity. Kublai Khan then gave Phagpa Lama the title of “Prince of Indian Deities, Miraculous Divine Lord under the Sky and Above the Earth, Creator of the Script, Messenger of Peace throughout the World, Possessor of the Five Higher Sciences, Phagpa, the Imperial Preceptor”.⁵⁰

In 1271, Kublai Khan followed the Chinese tradition and proclaimed a dynasty, the Yuan, which became his empire’s name. China (Southern Song State) at that time had not yet been conquered completely. Phagpa Lama bestowed titles of Chakravartin (ideal world ruler that turns the Wheel of Dharma, i.e. helping Buddhism), and Dharmaraja (King of Dharma) to Kublai, the title of Universal Monarch to Kublai’s grandfather, Genghis Khan. Phagpa Lama received the title of Master of the State, a jasper seal of ruler of Tibet and the Buddhist ruler of the empire. Thus, the old relationships of “priest – patron” were confirmed. Lama was gifted with of a thousand

⁴⁷ Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

⁴⁸ Ovchinnikov, 2007, 2009.

⁴⁹ Dalai Ch., 1977, p.324.

⁵⁰ Shakabpa, 1988, p.68-69.

ingots of silver and fifty-nine thousand bales of silk. In 1274 he decided to return to Tibet. Stimulated by deference towards his teacher, the Great Khan accompanied him on the road for a few months until they reached the bend of the Machu River (upper part of the Yellow River) in Amdo. Then in 1276 Phagpa Lama returned to Sakya under the protection of the Mongolian detachment.

When the Mongols finally seized China in 1279, Phagpa Lama greeted Kublai Khan with gifts and a congratulatory letter. Then in 1280 Phagpa Lama died at the age of 46 years. It was said that he was poisoned by his entourage. In order to investigate, Kublai sent to his two commanders along with a military detachment. The commanders beheaded Ponchen Künga Sangpo, who was the main suspect in the poisoning. But the latter was apparently “framed” by the real perpetrator. After finding out about the unfair verdict, Kublai Khan executed both commanders, and Phagpa Lama’s position was taken by his nephew Dharmapala. But, after five years, Dharmapala died while travelling from Khanbalyk (Beijing) to Tibet. This provoked public unrest, which was then crushed by the Mongols. Following that, each Yuan Emperor had a lama⁵¹, and hierarchs of the Sakya Khon family were appropriated the title of “baylan wang” and were given Mongol princesses for marriage by the Mongols.⁵²

It was reported that around 1286 Kublai Khan was going to attack India and Nepal via Tibet⁵³, and that a Tibetan yogi Ugyen Senge, who was living in India at the time, sent a long religious poem to the Khan, asking him to abandon the campaign. As it turns out Kublai Khan did not end up going against India and Nepal. Also during the same period, a local ruler rebelled against the central authorities of Tibet, and mutiny was suppressed without the participation of the Mongols.

Thus, China became an integral part of Yuan, which, in turn was part of the Great Mongol Empire — the biggest country that ever existed in the world, which stretched from the Pacific Ocean to Europe. Tibet, however, never became a part of the Empire, as it was not conquered, and never gave the oath of vassal fealty. It was also not on the official list of territories of the Yuan Empire⁵⁴, and therefore did not fall under the Empire’s territorial administrative system.

The Yuan emperors’ relationship with religion was different than that of Chinese emperors, and the model of such a relationship was described in the Mongolian chronicle “Ten Laudable Laws”, in which a theory of “two orders” was cited, that obviously reflected the views of Phagpa Lama on secular power.⁵⁵ The theory was based on the views that all worldly creatures strive for secular and spiritual salvation,

51 Uspensky, 1996, p.40–51.

52 *The Mongols*, 2009, p.31.

53 Shakabpa, 1988.

54 Yuan shi, 1935 — in: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.88.

55 Franke, 1981, p.186–328.

and that spiritual salvation can be found in the complete liberation from the suffering, while its secular counterpart's salvation in the well-being. Both depended on the two orders, the religious and secular. The religious was based on the Sutras and Tantra, while the secular was based on peace and tranquillity. The Lama was responsible for the religious order, Ruler of the secular. Thus, religion and the state depended on each other. Heads of state and religion were equal, but each had its own functions. The Lama corresponded to Buddha, the Ruler to Chakravartin. These virtues appeared only once every period in history. In the 13th century these were Phagpa Lama and Kublai Khan. Obviously, this order was not observed exactly. Nevertheless, the Yuan emperors tried to follow it.

According to the theory developed by Phagpa Lama, the Mongolian emperors were regarded as heirs of the world's Buddhist emperors, and not as heirs of any Chinese dynasty. Both Genghis Khan and Kublai Khan were equated with Chakravartins of India and the holy Tibetan kings. Meanwhile, Chinese scholars were developing a scheme allowing Kublai and his descendants to fit into a sequence of legitimate dynasties that ruled China (for details, see Chapter 11).

During Kublai Khan's rule, a system of administrative management was developed, which went on to change very little until the last days of the Yuan Empire.⁵⁶ Administrative agencies that ran the main country (Mongolia) were particularly well developed, while the agencies governing other areas were less effective, with their functions often duplicated, etc. Due to the fact that the management of the Empire was weakly centralized, local authorities in distant lands were controlled only "ex post".⁵⁷ The Bureau of Imperial Cults was in charge of the religions, and it oversaw most of the religious institutions. Five provinces had their own administrative centres, and a special Zongzhiyuan Office was established for Tibet, with Phagpa Lama becoming its first head.⁵⁸ In 1284 the Office was renamed Xyuanzhongyuan (Bureau of Buddhist Affairs). It had been equalled to the highest authorities in the Empire: civil affairs, the army and the controlling power. Half of the commissioners of the Bureau were laymen, and the other half were monks. The Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs was created in 1329 as the result of a merger between two different bodies, Tibet (in the hands of Sakya) and the Buddhist Affairs Commission of Southern China.⁵⁹

Work on the administrative division of the Yuan Empire was started when Kublai was still in power, but it was not completed until much later, in 1321. According to the "New History of the Yuan" chronicle, the Empire was divided into twelve provinces.⁶⁰ Apart from China and the Jin State, provinces included lands in

56 Farquhar, 1981, p.25–55.

57 Franke, 1981.

58 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

59 Farquhar, 1981.

60 The Mongols, 2009, p.21–22.

Mongolia (two provinces), the Tangut Empire, Amdo, part of Southern Siberia, as well as the whole of Korea.

Although Tibet was not included in them, it was previously divided into several “roads” (regions). The head of Sakya had the supreme power over the area. He also employed an assistant clerk, the *ponchen*, who was in charge of civil and military affairs. This official was also under control of the Mongolian Bureau of Pacification. According to Tibetan data, “he rules on the order of the Lama and the mandate of the Emperor. He protects the two laws (religious and civil) and is responsible for peace (of the country) and prosperity (of religion).”⁶¹

In 1264, Kham and Amdo (where the Mongol population was on the increase) were withdrawn from under the administration of Central Tibet.⁶² These lands were poorly controlled, and their unruly tribes often had to be “pacified”, which the Mongols did most effectively. They sent troops there twenty-one times during the period from 1256 to 1355. Ü, Tsang and Ngari-Korsum were still directly subordinated to Phagpa Lama, but the Mongols formed administration agencies of lower rank there, with the task being not so much the administration, but rather supervision.⁶³ The lands of Sakya were divided into thirteen districts which were mainly led by the monasteries. Nevertheless, authority of the head of Sakya (in context of the framework of relations “priest – patron”) was recognized by all Tibetans.

The assumptions of some authors that Kublai Khan established his “sovereignty” or “central administration” in Tibet are unfounded. The control of the Mongols, which was implemented through the Bureau of Pacification, only represented help in maintaining peace in the country. Tibet was a country dependent on the Mongol Empire, but not of China. The duties of the Mongol Emperor (the patron) to the Tibetan Lama (the priest) included protecting the territory, sending officials when their aid was necessary, the development of laws, post service, etc. Neither of these implied a Chinese rule.

In 1267, the Mongols had a census of the Tibetan population (during the Yuan there were another two censuses in 1287 and 1334). To do this, special emissaries were sent; these had a “mandate”, a golden *paiza*. The result was the division of all tax-paying people in *lha-de* (tributaries of the Tibetan Buddhist Church) and *mi-de* (the feudal lords). Later, there was a trend of gradual increase in the number of *lha-de* at the expense of *mi-de*. A system of taxation was established, as was military and administrative division by 10,000 and 1,000 households. As was the case in the Empire, a *yam* (postal station) system was established and stretched from the current province of Gansu to the region of Sakya. For its time, this postal system

61 Petech, 1989 — in: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.92.

62 Smith, 1996, p.91–92.

63 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

was the most advanced in the world. The messenger rode up to a postal station, changed to a fresh horse, galloped up to the next station, etc. Yams also provided horses for Tibetan and Mongolian officials. When sending long-distance mail, the rider “passed the baton” to the next messenger after reaching the station. This transport service (*ula*) continued to exist in Tibet until 1956.⁶⁴ The fact that this service was weakly controlled by the Mongols was supported by findings about the unauthorized use of state-owned horses by monks.⁶⁵ In 1311, the Empire had even issued a law that directly prohibited this.

At the beginning of the 14th century, imperial authorities often released prisoners to honour the holidays of Tibetan Buddhism, with this custom soon spreading to the Chinese New Year as well. However, after some time the imperial authorities had to intervene again as amnesty had become too common. There is evidence that the Tibetan Buddhist monks had advantages over Chinese Buddhist monks not only in Tibet, but also outside of its borders. On the other hand, Chinese Buddhism was supported as well. For example, many places of worship, which were given to laymen or Taoists in the Chinese State of Song, were handed back after its fall, and some Taoists had been made Buddhist monks.

More and more Tibetan words came into the Mongolian language which made both nations closer. The Mongols began to use Tibetan and even Indian first names (including religious ones) that were received from the Tibetan lamas who gave Buddhist initiations. Several of the great Mongol khans were named in such a manner as well: Ayurbaribada, Suddhibala, Khosala, Rinchinbal, Ayushiridara. Later, as the spread of Buddhism among the Mongolian people continued, this name borrowing became increasingly widespread. Now the Mongolian versions of the common Tibetan names are perhaps no less frequent than the actual Mongolian names. Other words such as the names for the days of the week, some numbers, and the traditional calendar were also taken from the Tibetan language. In turn, the Tibetan language itself also acquired a number of Mongolian words, mostly related to feudal titles and posts.

When Daknyi Sangpo Pel, the head of the Sakya, died in 1327, an internecine power struggle started amongst his sons, which he had from his seven wives. Meanwhile conflicts in Khanbalyk occurred, and there the power changed hands eight times between the periods of ruling by Khaisan (1308) and Togon Temur (1333), with six khans changing between 1328 to 1333 alone.⁶⁶ All these quick changes weakened the State of Yuan, and in the last few years of its existence the Great Khan was completely removed from ruling, with the throne being the object of a fierce struggle among dignitaries, feudals, and large numbers of the Khan’s relatives.

64 Shakabpa, 1988.

65 Franke, 1981.

66 Dalai, Ch., 1977, p.330–331.

Prince Togon Temur invited the 3rd Karmapa Rangjung Dorje in 1331, who was the head of the Karma Kagyu sect. Karmapa conducted the enthronement of Togon Temur, who became the last Yuan emperor that ruled in Beijing. At that same time, Tibet was amidst a power struggle between the followers of Sakya and Kagyu. Jangchub Gyaltzen, a Kagyu follower, seized power in 1354, and the Yuan Emperor acknowledged his status in 1357. Jangchub conducted redistribution of land between the landowners, introduced a single rate of land tax of 1/6 of the gathered crop, began to build roads and ferries, installed police and patrol services, and tightened the monastic discipline.

Meanwhile the Mongolian Dynasty was falling into decline and was no longer in a position to influence affairs in Tibet. In 1351, the Red Turban Rebellion started in China, a widespread revolt of peasants against the Mongol rule. This movement expanded with leaders of various factions being often at odds with each other, while forging alliances with the Mongol commanders who were warring among themselves. Zhu Yuanzhang, a Chinese monk, came out as the winner from that struggle, and Togon Temur fled from Beijing in 1368. Artistic arrangements of Tongon's lamentations on this subject were preserved in chronicles: "Oh, my Dadu, full of different kinds of jewellery! <...> Oh my Dadu, who supported all the Mongolian people! <...> My palace that was built by the Khutuktu, the cane palace, Kibung-Shandu, in which the Khubilgan Setsen Khan spent their summer — all seized by the Chinese! As for me, the Ukhatu Khan, I have only my bad name left: coquetted with the Chinese...", etc.⁶⁷

It is stated in the "Ming Shi" chronicle that the first Ming Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, being mindful of past raids into the state of Tan by the Tibetans, decided to send a message with the news of the power change in China.⁶⁸ The governor of Shaanxi was sent to Tibet, so as those who worked in offices in the Yuan Empire, would come to the Chinese court for confirmation of their posts. "Ming Shi" states that on 23rd August 1374, the official Wei Zhen was promoted from the post of commander of the Heychzhou Guard to the district military commissioner, becoming the highest official in the Heizhou and overseeing Heizhou, Do-Kham and Ü-Tsang, that is all of Tibet.⁶⁹ However, this official is not mentioned in Tibetan historical literature, as bureaus of management were not located in Tibet, but in the border areas near Heizhou and Xining. They did not represent a real political structure in Tibet, and Ming never had political power in Tibet, as there were no Chinese laws, taxes, etc. This indicates that Tibet was an independent state at that time.⁷⁰

67 Gorokhova and Tsendina, 2005, p.39.

68 Van Walt, 1987.

69 Sperling, 2004.

70 Kitaev, S. Tibet's independence...

The first emperors of the Ming State apparently looked at the Chinese Tang Empire as a model of foreign and domestic policy.⁷¹ However, they were Buddhists and believed Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism to be equal. Tibetan style Buddhist statues were produced in Beijing, the text of the Buddhist canon “Kangyur” was printed.⁷² Karma Kagyu followers lived in Beijing. In 1407 their head, the 4th Karmapa Deshin Shegpa was invited to Nanjing, where he performed the ceremony in memory of Emperor Zhu Di’s father and mother (era name: Yong-le). The Chinese emperor and his wife then became disciples of the 4th Karmapa. Zhu Di bestowed Karmapa with the title of “Precious Religious King, Great Loving one of the West, Mighty Buddha of Peace”.⁷³ He offered him power over Tibet and the position of head of Buddhism in China. Karmapa did not accept the offer, citing his unwillingness to crack down on other sects of Tibetan Buddhism.

Zhu Di also invited Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelug sect, but he declined the offer. It is unlikely that he would have been able to decline, if Tibet was a part of the Ming Empire. After receiving another invitation, Tsongkhapa sent a representative, his student named Jamchen Chöje Shakya Yeshe, who became the Emperor’s personal Lama. He was also bestowed with the title of “All-knowing, Understanding and Benevolent Peacemaker of the World, Great Loving One, Worshipped by All, Great Prince and Lama from Happy Steadfast Kingdom of the West, Jamchen Choje, the Great Lama of the Emperor”.⁷⁴ Having received many gifts, Lama Jamchen Chöje returned to Tibet. The “Ming Shi” chronicle adds to this story that from that time onwards, Western countries have acknowledged their obedience to him.⁷⁵ In fact, this lama did not have any political power. Titles assigned to Tibetans by the Ming State carried prestige and recognition, but not power.

There is no information about Tibetan religious leaders entering into a “priest – patron” relationship with other Ming emperors. China and Tibet also did not sign any international treaties. Peaceful coexistence was beneficial to both countries. Tibet was busy with internal problems, such as its clans fighting for power, and the Ming Empire was in a long war with the Mongols. In the second half of the 14th century, the Chinese authorities established boundary patrols on the border of the Ming State and Tibet. Barter markets sprung up on this border, where Chinese tea and Tibetan horses were up for sale. Horses were bought there for the war with the Mongols. Then in the years 1407 and 1414 Emperor Zhu Di expressed a desire to restore the mail service to Tibet.

71 Smith, 1996, p.101.

72 Uspensky, 1996.

73 Shakabpa, 1988, p.84.

74 Shakabpa, 1988, p.84.

75 Van Walt, 1987.

Both countries exchanged envoys, and the Tibetans willingly went to the Ming Empire for trade, titles, awards, etc. The Ming Empire's legislation meticulously regulated market trade, in particular the exchange of tea to the Tibetans in return for horses.⁷⁶ Smuggling tea through the border of Tibet was subject to severe penalties for the Chinese, with punishments ranging all the way to quartering. People who secretly settled in the border areas to sell tea to the Tibetans were arrested and punished with hard labour. Hence, trade with the Tibetans was regarded as trade with another country. Golden paizes, handed out by Ming authorities that allowed their Tibetan bearer to trade, were often "lost" – or rather resold, expanding the number of eligible people who could trade.

By the mid-15th century as many as 3,000–4,000 Tibetans brought a yearly "tribute" to Beijing.⁷⁷ They brought horses, woollen fabrics, felts and other local products, with the Chinese court also showing great generosity in response. Ming emperors built a relationship with Tibet in the same way as with other independent states.⁷⁸ Apparently, this exchange became burdensome for local governments, and in 1569, an imperial decree was issued stating that "tributaries" should come only once every three years. Their numbers were also limited and their routes into the country clearly defined.⁷⁹

Internal fighting in Tibet at the end of 15th to 16th century took place under religious banners. Following the victory of one sect or another, losers were often forced to "change hats" – that is to convert to the winner's sect. The troops of the Ü region, where the Gelug sect was dominant, fought with the Tsang troops, which belonged to the sect of Kagyu. As is always the case with religious conflicts, victims of fighters' brutality were as often members of the laity as members of the clergy. The battle was waged with varying success.

Although the Yuan Empire collapsed, the Mongols were still powerful. Undoubtedly, the Tibetans knew that of all of their powerful neighbours, the Mongols' civilization was closer to them than the Chinese. The most active contacts were in the Kokonor area where the tribal composition of a mixed Tibetan, Mongol and Turkic population changed as a result of continuous wars. Among the Kokonor nations, and the Mongols and Tibetans especially, Buddhism spread faster than among the northern Mongolian tribes. Lamas of different sects of Tibetan Buddhism often visited the Mongols.

Sonam Gyatso, soon to be the 3rd Dalai Lama, was born in Tölung (which is not far from Lhasa) in 1543.⁸⁰ He was recognized as the reincarnation of Gedun

76 Decrees on Salt and Tea, 1975.

77 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959. See Chapter 11 for more detail regarding such "tribute".

78 Shakabpa, 1988.

79 Kolmas, 1967.

80 Shakabpa, 1988. See Chapter 5 for more detail on religion.

Gyatso, the former abbot of Drepung Monastery. He enrolled into this monastery, and later showed himself to be a brilliant teacher and scholar. He became the abbot of Drepung, and gained popularity. He was often asked to mediate. He prevented much bloodshed and violence. For example, in 1559 he averted a clash of Kagyu and Gelug followers. In 1562, the Kyichu River broke through the dam and flooded Lhasa. Sonam Gyatso and his supporters greatly assisted the victims, and helped to repair the dam.

In the 30's of the 16th century a part of Western Mongols, or the Oirats, went to Kokonor following their defeats in wars with Moghulistan, near Hami region. In the 1550s, Anda (1507–1582) the Tumet ruler appeared there, and went on to take the title of the Altan Khan (this translates from Mongolian as “Golden King”). At that time the Tumet tribe was a part of the Oirats, and Altan Khan had the rank of “Small Khan”. By adopting Buddhism, he wanted to strengthen his power and help the spread of religion. Of course, he was lead by examples of Godan and Kublai Khan. In 1576, Altan Khan was asked by his followers: “There are rumours, that the true embodiment of the All-Seeing and Merciful [deity] lives in the Land of Snows <...> Would it not be great to invite him and establish (union) of religion and government, as was the case during Holy Kublai Setsen Khan and Holy Phagpa Lama in the past”.⁸¹

The Mongols sent a large delegation with an invitation to Sonam Gyatso, and in 1577, Sonam Gyatso left Drepung.⁸² In order to greet him, a special temple in Tsbachiyal at Kokonor was specially built. In 1578, Sonam Gyatso and his companions arrived to Mongolia. They were met by envoys of Altan Khan. A few days later, Sonam Gyatso was welcomed by the Khan himself along with his thousand horsemen. Then, they went to his capital city of Kuku Hoto (modern Mongolian: Hohhot). Altan Khan and his men adopted Buddhism under Sonam Gyatso's directives. He told the Khan that in the past he was Kublai Khan, and he himself – Phagpa Lama.

After the celebrations and religious services, Altan Khan unveiled the manifesto, which stated:⁸³ “We Mongols are powerful because our ancestral race originally



*The 3rd Dalai Lama Sonam Gyatso
(Chandra, 1999)*

81 Erdeni-zu history, 1999 — in: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.107.

82 Shakabpa, 1988.

83 In: Shakabpa, 1988, p.94. These 10 principles are listed below, in Chapter 5.

descended from the sky, and (Genghis Khan) extended its empire even to China and Tibet. The Buddhist religion first came to our country in earlier times, when we gave our patronage to Sakya Pandita. Later, we had an Emperor named Temur, during whose reign our people had no religion and our country degenerated, so that it seemed as though an ocean of blood had flooded the land. Your visit to us now helped the Buddhist religion to revive. Our relationship of patron and priest can be likened to that of the sun and the moon. The ocean of blood has become an ocean of milk. The Tibetans, Chinese, and Mongols now living in this country should practice the Ten Virtues of the Lord Buddha". In the manifesto, Altan Khan established rules "for all the Mongolian people", revoking practices that existed among Shamanists. These included the sacrificial killing of wife, personal servants, horses and cattle that belonged to the newly dead, and the Ongon worship. The latter were instructed to be destroyed and be replaced with an image of Mahakala that was to be kept at home. Sacrificial killings of people warranted the death penalty, sacrifice of cattle — a tenfold penalty, whereas Ongon possession warranted the destruction of the offender's home. People were instructed to respect their neighbours and not to steal from them.

Altan Khan bestowed the title of the Dalai Lama to Sonam Gyatso. "*Dalai*" is translated from the Mongolian as "ocean", "great". Altan Khan gave this title on the basis of the translation of Tibetan word "*gyatso*": in Tibetan, it also means "ocean". Two reincarnated predecessors of the latter received the title posthumously. Hence, Sonam Gyatso was the 3rd Dalai Lama. He received the seal with inscription: "Dorjechang, the Dalai Lama", i.e. "Holder of the Vajra, Great Lama". In his turn, Sonam Gyatso bestowed Altan Khan with the title of "Religious King, Brahma, the Head of Gods" and predicted that within eighty years, his heirs would rule the whole of Mongolia and China.⁸⁴

An amusing interpretation of this event has been circulating on the internet: "Emperor of China sent an army into Tibet to support the Grand Lama, an ambitious twenty-five year-old man, who then gave himself the title of Dalai (Ocean) Lama, ruler of all Tibet. Here is a historical irony: the first Dalai Lama was installed by a Chinese army".⁸⁵ The reader can assess the irony himself, not so much in terms of history, but rather in terms of quality of education and propaganda...

Coming back from Altan Khan, the Dalai Lama stopped in the city of Lanzhou which belonged to the Ming Empire. The Chinese welcomed him with respect and asked him to use his influence on Altan Khan and reduce Mongol raids on their country. In PRC this was described in the following way: "The Central Government of the Ming Dynasty had kindly allowed him [the Dalai Lama] to pay tribute".⁸⁶

84 Shakabpa, 1988.

85 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

86 China, Tibet...

The Chinese authorities, represented by the Deputy Military Minister approved activities of Altan Khan in the following terms:⁸⁷ “Let the Lama of Tibet succeed in conversion of the barbaric tribes and turn savages into good people. <...> Every monk envoy to Altan Khan must be given an official title in the main Buddhist governance and supplied with monastic robes... so as to appeal to the barbarians... then an agreement on the tribute will be observed much better and the borders will always be peaceful”. This text once again shows the lack of continuity of between the Yuan and Ming.

When Altan Khan died, Sonam Gyatso once again went to the headquarters of the Khan of Mongols in 1582. He went back to Lhasa after only six years, but died on the way. He was reincarnated in Mongolia as the great-grandson of Altan Khan. This is how a Mongol became the 4th Dalai Lama named Yonten Gyatso (1589–1617). His parents refused to give him to the Tibetan delegation before he was grown up, so the Tibetan monks taught him in Mongolia at first.⁸⁸ In 1601, accompanied by the Mongols, he was brought to Lhasa, where he was educated, enthroned, and lived. He studied at Drepung. His teacher was Lobsang Chögyen (Lobsang Chökyi Gyaltzen) from the Tashilhunpo Monastery. Yonten Gyatso gave his teacher the title of Panchen Lama, “Great Scholar Guru”. In the Chinese tradition, borrowed from the Tashilhunpo Monastery, Lobsang Chögyen was regarded as the 4th Panchen Lama, because his incarnation predecessors received the title posthumously. However, other Tibetans regard him as the 1st Panchen Lama, hence the difference in the numbering of the Panchen Lamas between Chinese and most Tibetan sources.

In 1615 the Chinese Emperor Zhu Yijun (era name: Wan-li) sent an envoy to the Dalai Lama, asking him to come for the consecration of a Buddhist temple in the city of Nanjing. The Dalai Lama refused, but agreed to bless the temple from his own monastery, which he did, turning to China, reading a prayer and throwing grain into the wind.⁸⁹ In 1617, the 4th Dalai Lama died at Drepung at the age of twenty-eight. His body was cremated and half of his ashes were put into an urn in Tibet, and the other half were taken to Mongolia, where they were further split between his father and the secular patron — a prince with the Tumet Taiji title.

His new reincarnation was found in Central Tibet in 1619, but it was concealed for some time because Phuntsok Namgyal, the ruler of the Tsang region, follower of the Karma Kagyu sect, was dissatisfied with the fact that in his time he was denied an audience with the 4th Dalai Lama by the latter’s entourage.⁹⁰ In 1618, Phuntsok Namgyal and his supporters attacked the Mongols and captured Lhasa.

87 Martynov, 1978.

88 Shakabpa, 1988

89 Shakabpa, 1988.

90 Shakabpa, 1988.

A lot of laymen and monks were killed in Drepung and Sera. A number of Gelug monasteries were converted into Karma Kagyu monasteries. Gelug was imposed with local restrictions. A detachment of Mongols arrived in Tibet the following year. Those who accompanied and protected the 4th Dalai Lama were amongst those who returned. The Mongols attacked Tsang, but neither party could claim a victory. So the Mongols put their camp near Lhasa, where the Panchen Lama acted as mediator in peace negotiations. It was agreed that Lhasa would not be claimed by either party, and all of the seized monasteries would be returned to the Gelug sect.⁹¹ After Phuntsog Namgyal's death in 1621, the struggle with Karma Kagyu and Gelug supporters entered into a latent phase.

In 1635, the union of Oirat tribes announced the formation of Dzungarian Khanate in Western Mongolia. In 1634–1635, Kokonor witnessed an emergence of the Khalkha Mongol Prince Tsogtu Taiji, supporter of Karma Kagyu. Together with his son, he decided to destroy the Gelug sect. Knowing of the war between Khalkha Mongols and Oirats (or Dzungars), Gelug envoys sought support from the latter. As a result, the Oirats from the Khoshut tribe expeditionary detachment entered Tibet under the command of Gushi Khan and Batur Khuntaiji. A ten-thousand warrior strong detachment headed by Arslan, the son of Tsogtu Taiji, had already entered Tibet just before. Gushi Khan and Arslan carried out negotiations. As a result, the latter came to Tsang only with personal protection, leaving his army at the Tengri Nur Lake (Jang Namtso). Seeing this, the Karmapa fled from Lhasa. Arslan came to Lhasa as a pilgrim, met with the 5th Dalai Lama Lobsang Gyatso, bowed before him, then went to Drepung, listened to the Gelug teachings and, against the orders of his father, gave his word not to contradict these teachings. The ruler of Tsang advised Tsogtu Taiji of Arslan's "treason", gathered his troops and went to Lhasa. The Dalai Lama managed to reconcile the adversaries, but later, Arslan was killed for disobeying his father.

Gushi Khan also came to Lhasa as a pilgrim. There he met with the 5th Dalai Lama and the 4th Panchen Lama. They developed a plan by which his army initially was to go to Kokonor, smash Tsogtu Taiji, and then go to the Kham, banish the Donyö Dorje ruler (an adherent of Bon,



*The 5th Dalai Lama Lobsang Gyatso
(Chandra, 1999)*

91 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

who persecuted all Buddhists) from Beri and then enter Ü-Tsang. Putting this plan into practice, Oirats defeated and killed Tsogtu Taiji. After that, Batur Khuntaiji returned to Dzungaria, and Gushi Khan became ruler of Kokonor, and went to Tibet.

In 1638 Gushi Khan once again made a pilgrimage to Lhasa. The Dalai Lama gave him advice, the seal and the title of Tenzin Chökyi Gyalpo (“Religious King and Keeper of the Buddhist Faith”), and Gushi Khan gave Dalai Lama’s officials the titles: dzasak, taiji, da lama and dayan.⁹² At this time Gushi Khan intercepted a letter from which it emerged that Tsang and Kham decided to unite in order to destroy the Gelug sect and give freedom to other faiths (including Bon). Gushi Khan decided to go to war with Kham and received the relevant consent from the Dalai Lama. Khoshut Mongols were joined by Tibetans from Amdo in their conquest of Kham. It was conquered after some bloody fighting. Then Gushi Khan decided to take Tsang. Mediation between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama did not change this decision — the initiative was on the side of the Mongols. In 1642, aided by the troops of the Dalai Lama, the Mongols achieved success, and the Dalai Lama was directed to Shigatse.

Two days’ journey away from the city, the Dalai Lama was met by a large procession, headed by Gushi Khan and Sonam Chöphel, dignitary of the Dalai Lama, who helped the Mongols seize Central Tibet.⁹³ Near Shigatse, they were met by about six hundred Mongolian horsemen and senior officials of Tö, Ü and Tsang. The city’s streets were lined with monks, and people performed national dances. In 1642, the formal inauguration was held. The 5th Dalai Lama sat on the throne, at his side and below him were Gushi Khan and Sonam Chöphel. Gushi Khan offered gifts to the 5th Dalai Lama, and formally announced the transfer of all authority over Tibet, from Dartsedo to Ladakh. Political governance was left for Sonam Chöphel. He was bestowed with the title of Desi, the regent or prime minister. The Dalai Lama then formed a government and returned to Lhasa. While in the Drepung monastery, he officially declared Lhasa to be the capital of Tibet. He established laws, appointed administrators of districts and put ministers into government. Thus, for the first time, the Dalai Lama became the spiritual and secular ruler of Tibet. The 5th Dalai Lama and his supporters were interested in keeping the Khoshut Mongols in Tibet, as a kind of war caste that was not to interfere in political affairs.⁹⁴

Some supporters of the Karma Kagyu rebelled against the new government, but were defeated. In subsequent years, the power of the Dalai Lama in Tibet

92 Shakabpa, 1988.

93 Shakabpa, 1988.

94 Besprozvannykh, 2001.

was acknowledged by Nepal and Sikkim. Supported by the Mongols, Tibetans themselves interfered with the affairs of Bhutan, a Tibetan state on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, although this had no effect. The following year, the Tibetans and Bhutanese entered into a treaty in which the relationships were put back to what they were before the conflict. But the next year the war began again, and the Tibetans took Paro, but were repelled by the Bhutanese.

In 1645 Gushi Khan bestowed Panchen Lama with the title of Panchen Bogdo (Mongolian: “Great Panchen”). In the same year Lhasa saw the beginning of the construction of the Potala Palace that was founded on the ruins of the royal palace of 638. The 5th Dalai Lama, pursuing a policy of centralization of the country, used administrative measures to raise the Gelug sect above all others. For example, he forbade the Jonang sect,⁹⁵ and handed its monasteries as well as a few Kagyu monasteries to the Gelug sect. The population of Kham was taxed in favour of the government in Lhasa.

In ancient and medieval times Tibet was never part of any other states. But individual territories inhabited by the Tibetans were part of medieval Chinese and Mongolian states. Close contacts were developed with the Chinese Tang Empire—it competed with Tibet, sometimes forming an equal terms relationship, sometimes suffering military defeats, but at no point did it have Tibet under its power. The Ming Empire had minor contacts with Tibet which were largely confined to personal relations of the rulers with individual lamas, distribution of titles, exchange of gifts and border trade. The other Chinese states had almost no contact with Tibet. Moreover, the medieval Chinese states, in contrast to the Mongolian states, were not the “centre of gravity” for the Tibetans.

On the other hand, there was a process of integration of the Tibetans and Mongols into a single civilization. This was helped by not only their ethnic ties and similarities between their views on the world, but also due to religious tolerance. For example, Munke Khan said: “As God gave different fingers of the hand, so He gave people different ways”.⁹⁶ Despite occasional excesses, Tibetan Bon and Mongolian Shamanism continued to exist after the adoption of Buddhism, the most tolerant of all world’s principal religions. The famous Indian Emperor Ashoka (3rd century AD), who practiced Buddhism, wrote in one of the edicts:⁹⁷ “Any alien faith must be respected... and he who reveres his faith and blames for someone else’s out of

95 Nevertheless, the Jonang sect is preserved to our time, and its monasteries were found in remote places in Tibet. Recently, the revival of this sect was blessed by the 14th Dalai Lama.

96 Rubruc, 1957, p.174.

97 In: Androsoy, 2006a, p.594.

devotion to his faith... harms his own faith. And the reason why consent is useful is that people hear the law of one and the law of another and that they liked to listen to them". Catholic missionaries came to preach to Tibet in the 17th century. Although their activities were not successful, the Tibetan Government helped them to travel safely to India, supplied all that was necessary, and even provided them with guards. It is difficult to imagine similar religious tolerance in Europe or the Arab East at that time.

The Mongols repeatedly helped the Tibetans to unite their country under a single authority. Their actions not only aided the centralization of Tibet and the rise of the Sakya sect, followed by the Gelug sect, but also furthered the development of the common Tibetan-Mongolian civilization. Nevertheless, some authors still write:⁹⁸ "In the 13th century Emperor Kublai Khan annexed Tibet to China... Wanting to gain a foothold in Tibet, the Chinese Emperor tried to find support among the abbots of monasteries. These governors subsequently received titles of Dalai Lama". This is all wrong. Tibet was not part of the Yuan Empire, which in any case was a Mongolian but not a Chinese state.

Sometimes the events in Tibet in the first half of 17th century are cited as an example of religious wars and intolerance of Buddhism.⁹⁹ This is not quite true. Wars were fought between the different powers that attempted to claim authority over Central Tibet with religion serving as ideological justification. These wars never resulted in complete destruction of supporters of "defeated confessions". Layman followers of the "defeated" faith were not exterminated and were not subjected to reprisals on the grounds of ideology. Bloodshed would probably still have happened in Tibet, even if war was not conducted in the name of religion.

It is likely that the concept of the compassionate ruler, the *bodhisattva* (i.e. the Dalai Lama, the embodiment of Avalokiteshvara) was the only possible way to unite Tibet.¹⁰⁰ The same can be said of the Mongols. The reincarnations of high lamas played an increasingly big role in their political life after the adoption of Buddhism. By the beginning of the 20th century, the authority of one of these lamas, Jetsundampa Khutuktu, ensured the emergence of the statehood of new Mongolia.

⁹⁸ Ovchinnikov, 2006, p.41–42.

⁹⁹ For example, Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

¹⁰⁰ Elikhina, 2006.

CHAPTER 3

Epoch of the Qing Empire



In the 17th century, a new great empire emerged in Central Asia, the Manchu Qing State. Manchu rulers were initially shamanists but they tolerated all other religions. Lamas even lived at their court. In 1639, a Manchu Khan received a letter from Tibet that was sent by the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, Gushi Khan and Tsanpa Khan.¹ They expressed a desire to establish good relations with Manchuria. In his reply to “the Tibetan Khan and the High Lama” the Manchu Emperor insisted that he wanted to spread Buddhism, and hinted at himself being suzerain (if one uses the European term) of the Tibetan Khan. In 1642, the Tibetans sent a mission to Mukden with Ilagusan Khutuktu at its head. In response, the Emperor wrote that he had not yet figured out who had won in Tibet, and that he would provide protection to all Buddhist sects. Manchu Abakhai Khan’s (Hongtaiji) letters to Tibetan hierarchs have been preserved.² They do not actually show the fact of establishing any kind of formal relationship, but do show the Emperor’s wishes to protect Buddhism.

In 1644 the Manchus took Beijing and moved their capital there. Gushi Khan sent a letter to the Manchu Emperor Fulin (era name: Shun-zhi),³ in which he asked for the 5th Dalai Lama to be received in the hope of establishing a “priest – patron” relationship between the Lama and the Emperor.⁴ In 1647 the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama sent golden statues of Buddha to Beijing, thus congratulating the Emperor on his victory. The Tibetan hierarchs’ initiative did not remain unanswered. The Emperor sent Lama Shenrab who invited them both to Beijing. The visit did not take place, but between 1649 and 1651, Fulin sent several emissaries with repeated invitations to the 5th Dalai Lama.⁵

1 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

2 Martynov, 1978.

3 The Manchu emperors, having adopted the Chinese system, had several names: personal (given at birth, and kept in secret), the era name and the temple name (given after death).

4 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

5 Shakabpa, 1988.

Finally, the 5th Dalai Lama went to Beijing along with three thousand people.⁶ He was accompanied by Gushi Khan and Desi for one full day, and was greeted with great respect by all Tibetans and Mongols. Starting from Xining, the Manchus began to take active care of the procession. They wanted their young emperor to meet the hierarch on the border of the Empire. But Chinese dignitaries advised him to send princes with gifts to the border instead. They wanted to show that the relations that were in place at the time of the Yuan Empire were no more relevant. The Dalai Lama was met by the court Minister on the border and continued his travels in a yellow palanquin, the highest honour in the Qing Empire. According to the 5th Dalai Lama's autobiography, the Emperor met him (allegedly) by accident while hunting.⁷ According to another source, a minister came to the Dalai Lama and advised him that the Manchu Emperor would soon meet him. Before long, the imperial commander with three hundred horsemen came. He said that the Emperor would arrive the following day and began to conduct a rehearsal of the meeting. The meeting took place in the town of Kotor. There, in the palace, the Emperor shook hands with the Dalai Lama, and after mutual greetings a conversation was started. In any case, thorough preparations of imperial officials suggest that the meeting had been planned in advance.

The Huangsi Monastery was built for the Dalai Lama in Beijing. It is noteworthy that the Confucian court historiography has ignored this event.^{7a} The Hierarch was visited daily by officials of different ranks. Manchu ministers brought the Dalai Lama lavish imperial gifts such as gold and silver mandalas, cups, and plates with dragon patterns, etc. In the spring of 1653, the monastery of the Dalai Lama held a reception in honour of the Tibetan New Year. In the summer he wanted to return to Tibet stating the heat as the main reason, but received a gentle refusal. The Manchus were hoping for his participation in the congress of Mongolian princes, and for his help in further subduing the Mongols.

At the official reception the Dalai Lama sat on the throne to the right of the Emperor.⁸ The Emperor gifted him a golden plate, which was engraved with the title "Dalai Lama, Holder of the Vajra" in Manchu, Tibetan and Chinese languages. The Dalai Lama gave the emperor a golden dish and the title of "Heavenly Bodhisattva Manjushri, the Great Lord". Subsequently, it became one of the reasons for the Tibetans and Mongols' deference towards the Qing emperors.

The Tibetan relating to the Manchu khan as emanation of the Bodhisattva Manjushri was obviously politically motivated, roughly the same as the time when the Russian Empress and the Emperor were declared to be emanations of White Tara,

6 Shakabpa, 1988; Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

7 Dukula'i Gozang — in: Tibet and Manchu, 2008, p.8.

7a Uspensky, 1996.

8 Shakabpa, 1988, p.116.

Genghis Khan and his descendants as emanations of Vajrapani, Queen Victoria as Palden Lhamo.⁹ The Tibetans understood bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri and Vajrapani to be patrons of Tibet, Manchuria and Mongolia respectively, hence the legitimate rulers of these countries had to be emanations of these deities. Perhaps the situation with other foreign monarchs was similar. However, images of these rulers were not used in tantric practice of Buddhism.

Fulin bestowed Gushi Khan with the title of “Respectful in actions, enlightened, faithful to duty and wise Gushi Khan”.¹⁰ The following was said in the diploma that was issued to Gushi Khan along with the title: “Try to show even more sincerity and faithfulness, spread (our imperial influence) widely through honour and advice, become my assistant and protector (at the borders) so that peace reigns in the appendages and in the centre of the Empire”.¹¹ The Emperor ignored the fact that at that time neither Tibet nor Kokonor were even subordinate to him and thus could not be regarded as a “frontier” of his state. Tibetan Mongol Khoshuts thought that received titles and diplomas were a simple exchange of diplomatic courtesies, and not an investiture (the act of introducing a vassal by a lord into possession of the title and lands).

In the spring of 1653, the 5th Dalai Lama departed from Beijing, without having visited the congress of the Mongolian princes. At the farewell ceremony, the Emperor bestowed on him the title of “Preceptor of the Lord Buddha’s Doctrine, Keeper of Peace in the West, Uniter of the Buddhist Faith beneath the Sky, Dalai Lama, Holder of the Vajra”.¹² The diploma itself in which the title was written, was composed in the Confucian style, and makes no mention of the establishment and nature of the relationship between the Lama and the Emperor.¹³ Subsequently, the courtier Confucian scholar Ning Wanwo, while at the Huansi monastery, created an inscription (by order of the Emperor), the translation of which allows for a different interpretation. This includes the suggestion that the Dalai Lama came to “ensure the well-being of the state and bring bliss to the people”. However, the exchange of honorary titles formalized the “priest – patron” relationship between the Lama and the Emperor.

Gushi Khan died in 1655. His children took the rule over the Khoshut Mongols in Kokonor and Central Tibet. The relationship between the Tibetan khans and the Qing emperor was regarded as a relationship of nominal vassalage.¹⁴ However, the supreme power belonged to the Dalai Lama. Khoshut feudals were divided into two groups: in Kokonor and in Tibet. However, complete separation did not happen.

9 Berzin, 2000.

10 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

11 Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.148.

12 Shakabpa, 1988, p.117.

13 Martynov, 1978.

14 Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.147.

Tibetan Khoshuts continued to count on Kokonor for military support when the need arose, and Khoshuts, who were bound by “priest – patron” relations with the Tibetan hierarchy, interfered in Tibetan affairs. But gradually their power was weakened. At the same time centralization and the power of the Dalai Lama was reinforced. Even the ruler of a distant Bengal State Shah Hojah sent his envoy to him. Tibet had sent its troops to Bhutan, interfering in the local conflicts, and in 1659, the Dalai Lama sent a representative to Mongolia, asking the princes to stop the infighting and preserve the unity of the country.¹⁵ In response the Mongol princes sent him letters with sacramental vows, authenticated by their seals. The Dalai Lama had repeatedly resolved conflicts between the Mongols and the Manchus.

Meanwhile, the Manchus were completing the adjoining of China to their empire. In 1658–1659, Chinese General Wu Sangui, who was one of the initiators of the invitation of the Manchus to the Ming State, took the territory of modern provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan, which was still ruled by the emperors of the Zhu clan. In 1662, Wu Sangui executed the last Ming Emperor together with the Emperor’s son. Fulin died in the same year. Xuanye (era name: Kang-xi) became Emperor of Manchu. His grandmother came from the bloodline of Genghis Khan.¹⁶ In 1673, he issued a decree, dissolving the troops subordinate to the three governors of the southern provinces. This caused Wu Sangui to revolt. In 1678, in Hangzhou, he proclaimed himself to be an emperor (era name: Zhao-wu), thereby restoring the independence of the Chinese State. During his reign he maintained contact with the Dalai Lama. The latter wrote to Xuanye, asking the Qing Monarch leave the lands and make peace if Wu Sangui continued to persist.¹⁷ At the same time the Tibetan troops occupied two small cities in Yunnan (previously they were Tibetan and were managed by followers of Karma Kagyu). Xuanye invited the Tibetans to participate in the suppression of the rebellion, but he received a mild refusal on the pretext that Tibetans and Mongols were unaccustomed to Yunnan’s hot climate, with the people and the horses both starving. It seems Xuanye could not make Tibet follow his orders, as the latter was out of his control and interests.

In 1663, Emperor Xuanye invited the spiritual head of Amdo to Beijing and gave him the title of Changkya Khutuktu.¹⁸ Following that, Manchu and the Chinese authorities tried to enlist his support in order to establish their dominance over the Kokonor Mongols.

In 1680 a conflict between Tibet and Ladakh sparked up. Ladakh decided to assist Bhutan, which was threatened by Tibet. In reply, the Tibetan-Mongolian troops captured Ladakh and the Western Tibet regions of Guge, Purang and Rutok. Then in 1684, Tibet and Ladakh signed an agreement in which three of these areas

15 Shakabpa, 1988.

16 Spiritual Culture of China, 2009.

17 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

18 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

became Tibetan. In 1681 the Manchus took Guizhou and Yunnan, defeating the troops of Wu Shifan, grandson of Wu Sangui, who was leading the fight against the Manchus after the death of his grandfather, and proclaimed the era name Honghua.¹⁹ The other last pockets of the Chinese resistance were suppressed in 1683. Thus, an independent Chinese State existed for only a few years.

The 5th Dalai Lama, whose acts made him known as the “Great Fifth”, died in 1682 at the age of 68 years. Sangye Gyatso, the head of the Tibetan Government, had concealed his death and announced that the hierarch went into recluse for deep contemplation for an indefinite period. For those who could not avoid meeting with the Dalai Lama, he employed a double, who participated in all of the conversations, wearing a big hat which covered almost all of his face. It is believed that Sangye Gyatso sought to rule alone. But another explanation is more likely, which he later gave to the Panchen Lama, which is that there was an order from the Great Fifth, who feared that his life’s work would be destroyed. Another reason could have been the young age of Sangye Gyatso (he was thirty years old), the disagreements in the search for the new Dalai Lama’s reincarnation, the uncertainty about into whose hands he would fall, the young age of the Panchen Lama, the confusion in the Mongol world, and a discontented Xuanye due to the fact that Tibet did not pacify the rebellious Chinese general.²⁰ It is probable, however, that the Manchu Emperor also knew about the death of the 5th Dalai Lama, but said nothing. He needed secrecy in order to invoke the authority of the hierarch in his relations with the Mongols.

Indeed, Xuanye used this diplomacy tactic to subordinate the Mongols, who were torn by civil war. In his letters he asked the 5th Dalai Lama to help the Dzungars reconcile with the people of Khalkha (Central and Northern Mongolia). This led to negotiations, but peace was not achieved. The Dzungars continued to attack Khalkha. The Dzungarian Galdan Khan explained the expansion to the east as his desire to unite the Mongols, to bring back China and to displace the Qing Dynasty — the Manchus were descended from the Jurchen, and the latter were once conquered by the Mongols.²¹ One can hardly blame the Dzungars for their aggressiveness as the Manchus conducted an aggressive policy themselves. It was clear that sooner or later they would enter into conflict with Dzungaria.

Meanwhile, the princes of Khalkha were asking Manchus for protection from the Dzungars. In 1691, near the Dolonnor Lake, a congress of princes of Khalkha took place, with the outcome being the acknowledged recognition of the Manchu Khan as the ruler. Xuanye notified the 5th Dalai Lama (i.e. Sangye Gyatso), and expressed his wish that Galdan Khan should retreat to Tibet. At the same time, he asked that Galdan be informed of the letters he received from Tibet.

19 Levkin, G.G. China or Manchuria...

20 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

21 Smith, 1996, p.117.

In 1694, Xuanye defeated Galdan Khan, promulgated the death of the 5th Dalai Lama, and demanded that the Panchen Lama be allowed to govern. In the spring of 1695, Sangye Gyatso asked Xuanye not to deprive Galdan Khan of his title. He also demanded that the Qing troops be withdrawn from Kokonor's border with Tibet. In response, Xuanye told the Tibetan ruler that he had long known about the death of the Dalai Lama, and that Sangye Gyatso was the vassal of the Qing, and so could not ask for the withdrawal of troops.²² At the same time, the Emperor sent letters to the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and Sangye Gyatso. In the letter to the Panchen Lama, Xuanye blamed the ruler for assisting Galdan Khan and for talking the Panchen Lama out of visiting Beijing. Then in 1696, Sangye Gyatso announced the death of the 5th Dalai Lama, and that his reincarnation was already thirteen years old. Also, Sangye Gyatso was forced to officially inform Beijing about it. The messenger, who arrived there in 1697, was greeted personally by the Emperor at the second gates to the palace.²³ In the same year, Galdan Khan committed suicide, and Tseven Ravdan (Tsewang Rabten) became the new ruler of the Dzungars.

European authors usually write that the Manchu emperors sought to use Tibetan Buddhism for “pacification” of the Mongols from the outset. That's not quite true. After establishing their rule over China, the Qing emperors became Buddhists themselves, but they still respected other religions and continued to adhere to Confucian ethics. They continued their “priest – patron” relationship with the senior Buddhist hierarchy, and the “golden age” of Tibetan Buddhism blossomed during their time.²⁴ In 1882, in Central Tibet alone, there were 2,500 monasteries and 760 thousand monks. Thousands of monasteries were located in other places. One of the emperors built a large replica of the Potala in his summer capital in the Province of Rehe, and turned his Yonghegong palace in Beijing into a Buddhist temple (half of which was already given to the Tibetans as a monastery by his predecessor). Since the end of the 18th century, Manchu emperors used it to annually hold a ceremony of remembrance of their ancestors.

The Manchus tried to expand their empire. Some territories, such as China, became its integral parts, while others, such as Mongolia and Tibet, found themselves in greater or lesser dependence. The Tibetans were run by the Lifanyuan, Office for External Relations. In the jurisdiction of this chamber were the peoples considered to be “external” to Manchuria and China: Mongols, Tibetans, the people of East Turkestan and the Russians. Lifanyuan's functions with respect to Tibet were as follows: to supervise the payment of tribute; to recommend the local aristocracy for awarding them with titles and to determine how much they would have to pay for it; to organize imperial audiences for the Tibetans; and to oversee trade with

22 Ya Hanzhang, 1994, p. 73 — in: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

23 Shakabpa, 1988.

24 Uspensky, 1996.

Tibet.²⁵ The Manchus developed Buddhism for religious purposes, and not as a tool for subjugation of other peoples. At the same time they tried to cooperate with the church to strengthen their imperial power in roughly the same way that the Russian Orthodoxy and autocracy supported each other.

In 1697–1698, Xuanye sent several invitations to the Panchen Lama. The letters noted the importance of the development of Buddhism as well as friendship between the Chinese and the Tibetans. The Panchen Lama rejected the invitations, and in response, Tibetan authorities were threatened with punishment. The 6th Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso, did not receive any invitations, as he was still too young. It is said that he was not very inclined to religious pursuits as he said that he did not want to participate in religious disputes, and he did not want to be a monk. In 1701, Xuanye, the Mongol rulers Tseven Ravdan and Lhavsan (Lhabsang) Khan (grandson of Gushi Khan) notified Tsangyang Gyatso that they did not recognize him as the reincarnation of the 5th Dalai Lama. In 1702, Tsangyang Gyatso was supposed to take monastic vows of *gelong* (fully ordained monk), but he refused again. Instead, he went to Tashilhunpo and resigned from the previously taken *getsul* (novice monk) vows.²⁶ He practiced archery, had contact with women, and composed songs that made the famous book “Songs Pleasant for Hearing”. In order to be able to continue this life, he did not want to abide by the vows.

Meanwhile, the ruler of the Tibetan Khoshut Mongols, Lhavsan Khan’s hostility towards Sangye Gyatso intensified, and he refused to recognize Tsangyang Gyatso as the true Dalai Lama. Sangye Gyatso managed to put the Khan under arrest, but the Panchen Lama interposed and organized talks, which involved some of the highest Tibetan officials and representatives. Lhavsan Khan promised to move to Kokonor. Instead, however, upon reaching Nagchu, he began assembling a Khoshut army. Sangye Gyatso declared a war against him, but was defeated and later captured and executed. Khoshuts, who were supported by some of the Tibetan officials, entered Lhasa. Beijing issued an order to arrest the “fake” Dalai Lama and to deport him to China. However, the highest Tibetan hierarchs did not consider Tsangyang Gyatso to be the “false” 6th Dalai Lama. But they acknowledged his decrease in *bodhi* (enlightened state) and did not oppose his extradition to Beijing.²⁷

On the 11th of June 1706, Lhavsan Khan summoned Tsangyang Gyatso, listed his misdeeds and sins, and then ordered him to be transferred to the Mongolian military camp near Lhasa. A declaration stating Tsangyang Gyatso’s deposition and forced exile was made on the 27th of June.²⁸ This led to public unrest. The monks of Drepung attacked the Khoshuts who escorted the Dalai Lama, and took him

25 Kolmas, 1967.

26 Shakabpa, 1988.

27 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

28 Shakabpa, 1988.

to their monastery. The authenticity of the rebirth of the Dalai Lama was then reiterated by the oracle, who also said that the Dalai Lama came under the influence of evil forces. Nevertheless, Khoshuts besieged the monastery, and Tsangyang Gyatso gave himself up in order to avoid bloodshed. Nevertheless, Lhavas Khan still went on to capture and partially destroy the Drepung Monastery. Tsangyang Gyatso, as well as the wife and children of Sangye Gyatso, were all forced to go into exile. Tsangyang Gyatso died (was possibly killed) at the age of twenty-four years. This happened in the region of the Kokonor Lake. Xuanye ordered to deprive him of a decent burial. Lack of reliable information on the burial gave rise to rumours of Tsangyang Gyatso's miraculous escape. According to the Tibetans, the 6th Dalai Lama was a high-level yogi, whose poems had hidden meanings, some of them indirectly indicating his depth of knowledge in the Tantric practice.²⁹

Having gotten rid of Tsangyang Gyatso, Lhavas Khan normalized his relations with the Panchen Lama, with whose participation a "new reincarnation" of the Dalai Lama was found in Lhasa. The new 6th Dalai Lama (monastic name Yeshe Gyatso Palden) was recognized by the Panchen Lama, Lhavas Khan and the Manchu government.³⁰ In an effort to strengthen their influence in Tibet, the Manchus sent a "Manager of the affairs of Tibet" to Lhasa in 1710, but he returned the following year. In 1713, the Manchu Emperor bestowed the 5th Panchen Lama with the title of "Panchen Ertni" (or "Panchen Erdeni"), a golden seal and a diploma. The title of "Erdeni" is a Mongolian translation of the Tibetan word "Rinpoche" ("Jewel"), which stands for title of lama who constantly reincarnates for continuation of spiritual work. Thus, "Panchen Erdeni" means "Great Scholar, Jewel". Amusingly, the website of the PRC Foreign Ministry translated this title as "dalai's deputy on church affairs".³¹

Yeshe Gyatso received no support from the Tibetans or the Mongols. Some monks found another reincarnation of the 6th Dalai Lama in Lithang, a boy named Kelsang Gyatso. The authenticity of this finding was confirmed by statements of oracles and past prophecies of Tsangyang Gyatso.³² In 1715, the Manchus recognized him as the Dalai Lama and the following year he was placed in the Kumbum Monastery in Amdo (since the Dalai Lama recognized by Lhavas Khan resided in Lhasa).

Lhavas Khan, feeling the hostility of the Manchu, started to seek support in Dzungaria by sending his son to court the daughter of Tseven Ravdan. But the latter secretly had him executed. Under the pretext of escorting the son of Lhavas Khan and his wife, the Dzungarian army of six to seven thousand people headed back to Tibet. Assuming Lhavas Khan to be the puppet of Beijing, Tseven Ravdan secretly ordered to deprive him of power. The latter found out about this, and so

29 See, for example: *The rebel Dalai Lama...*

30 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

31 Briefly on Tibet: a historical sketch....

32 *Tibet and Manchu*, 2008, p.19–20.

war began. Aided by some local Tibetan rulers, the Dzungars took Lhasa. Lhavsan Khan perished. The Dzungar commander Tseren Dondov (Tsering Dhondup), brother of Tseven Ravdan, replaced the government and arrested Yeshe Gyatso, who was apparently sent to the Qing Empire, where he died in 1725.

One of the sons of Lhavsan Khan was in the Dzungars' captivity. His wife fled to Kokonor and asked Xuanye to free Tibet from the Dzungars. The request for military assistance was granted, and so the Qing army led by the Manchu commander Erentei entered Tibet in 1718. The Dzungar–Tibetan army defeated him. Almost all of the Qing soldiers and commanders perished.

The Khoshut influence on Tibet was replaced by Dzungarian influence. However the Dzungars were not popular in Tibet, as to gain power they executed four of high lamas of the Nyingma sect and destroyed two of its best monasteries.³³ At the request of the Tibetans, Dzungars tried to convince the Manchus to bring Kelsang Gyatso to Tibet, but to no avail. So the Dzungars became more unpopular still. Then Desi and three Tibetan officials secretly sent a letter to Kumbum, stating the official recognition of Kelsang Gyatso as the 7th Dalai Lama. In response, in 1719, the Qing troops marched into Tibet again, with one of the generals being Yungdi, the son of the Emperor. At some point along the way, he returned home, transferring the command to General Yang Sin. The alleged reason was the delivery of the 7th Dalai Lama to Lhasa, where a rebellion against Dzungars had broken out. The latter, with no hope for victory, looted Lhasa and left for the north-west.

Qing General Yang Sin brought the 7th Dalai Lama to Lhasa. On 27th April 1720, the first son of the Emperor presented the new Dalai Lama with a diploma and a golden seal of "The Dalai Lama, the Lord of all sentient beings, the distributor of Teaching".³⁴ The inscription was in the Manchu, Mongolian and Tibetan languages (no Chinese inscription was present). The Manchu Emperor still did not recognize Tsangyang Gyatso or Yeshe Gyatso as the Dalai Lama. Xuanye wrote a letter to the new Dalai Lama and his supporters in which he declared that he and Gushi Khan's descendants were patrons of the Dalai Lama, and that they would oblige and bear all expenses for his assistants and monks for three years. Xuanye also asked the Dalai Lama to convince the Kokonor Mongols to keep unity and stay loyal to the Emperor.³⁵

The 7th Dalai Lama was enthroned in the Potala in 1720. A provisional government was established under the authority of the Qing commander; this included two Tibetans and four Mongolian Princes, two Khalkhas and two Khoshuts.³⁶ In the spring of 1721, a new government made up from three *kalons* (ministers) was formed. Kangchen-ne, the ruler of Western Tibet, was appointed

33 Shakabpa, 1988.

34 Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.168.

35 Shakabpa, 1988.

36 Smith, 1996, p.126.

as their head. He received the title of Daitsin Batur (“The Great Qing Hero”). Walls around Lhasa were demolished, and the Qing garrison was placed in the city under the command of Tseven Norov (Tsewang Norbu), a Mongol, who reported to General Yang Sin. Qing troops were also deployed in the cities of Lithang and Chamdo. The lands east of Lithang and Bathang were taken from Tibet and incorporated into the Qing Sichuan Province.

Xuanye died in 1723 and Yinzhen became the new emperor (era name: Yongzheng). He took the Qing troops from Lhasa, and sent an official named Orai there.³⁷ The reason for withdrawal was lack of funds caused by the long war with Dzungar Khanate.³⁸ Orai represented Lifanyuan.

In 1722–1725, Kokonor became a stage for an anti-Manchu uprising of Khoshuts, which were joined by two hundred thousand Tanguts.³⁹ The alleged reason was the abusive behaviour of Qing officials during the inauguration of the 7th Dalai Lama—they were lighting up pipes from sacred lamps. According to other sources, the real reason was the taking of land by the Chinese settlers and installation of a line of boundary poles that stretched from the Nanshan Mountains to the Jiayuguan, to designate the fact that these lands were ceded to the Qing. As a result, the local Chinese population was killed and local authority was restored. Yinzhen sent a castigatory army and government officials. The Qing troops took a hundred thousand prisoners, burned a number of monasteries (including three major ones) and burnt down seven thousand houses and seventeen villages. Kokonor was incorporated into the Qing Empire. The boundaries between Amdo and Kham were restored to what they had been during the Yuan period.⁴⁰ The head of the uprising was a relative of one of the *kalons* and he fled to Dzungaria. The Manchus were afraid of unrest in Tibet, so they sent a two-thousand strong soldier Qing detachment from Kokonor into Tibet. The troops left Tibet following the expulsion of the former leader of the uprising from Dzungaria.

The kalons developed a discord that led to a civil war. As a result, power was seized by the minister Miwang Pholha-ne, who was supported by the Manchus. The latter sent an eleven thousand strong army into Tibet, and following their arrival to Lhasa, they staged a court with trials of Pholha-ne’s enemies. The three kalons who opposed Pholha-ne were subjected to the death penalty by *linchi*: small pieces of flesh slowly cut from a body, until death occurred.⁴¹ The 7th Dalai Lama and his father were sent to the Gartar monastery near Lithang.

Areas east of Lithang and Bathang, a significant part of Kham, were included in the Sichuan Province, Gyalthang into Yunnan, and forty groups of nomadic

37 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

38 Besprozvannykh, 2001.

39 Namsaraeva, 2003.

40 Smith, 1996, p.126.

41 Outside of Tibet, the Manchus have utilised this death penalty until the 20th century.

Tibetans in the north were subordinated to the Governor of Xining.⁴² Thus, in 1724 the region of Amdo (Kokonor or Qinghai), that was mainly inhabited by the Tibetans and Mongols, went into the jurisdiction of Xining. Twenty-seven districts were formed on the land that was annexed from Kham. The Manchu court gave Tsang and Ngari to the Panchen Lama, and the direct authority of the Tibetan Government only covered Ü and Chamdo. Despite the annexation of the Tibetan lands by the Manchus, Tibetan hierarchs retained their authority there.

An amban, a Manchu resident, was appointed in Tibet. His functions included contact with the Tibetan authorities and the implementation of Beijing's influence. Initially, the appointed ambans were not Chinese but Manchu, and rarely Mongols. Chinese (Han) ambans only appeared in the late 19th century.⁴³ If prior to the ambans appointment in Lhasa, the Qing government officials were only sent instructions to deal with specific cases, then now there would be a permanent imperial presence installed. The beginning of the ambans permanent presence in Tibet and the formation of the Ambans Institute happened during the years 1727–1750. Their functions were limited to overseeing the overall situation, monitoring the activities of the Tibetan Government and the Dalai Lama, and organising the defence of Tibet.⁴⁴

In 1728, the Qing garrison of fifteen hundred people was stationed in Lhasa. It was under the amban's supervision. Fourteen districts of Kham were transferred to fall under Lhasa's management, with thirteen remaining in Sichuan. Later, the borders of Kham territories, which were subordinate to Lhasa, were often changed. Small Qing garrisons were placed into the outskirts of cities to provide security. Regular sending of gifts to Beijing was instilled. Imperial decrees, which were sent to Tibet, were to be put to life by the officials (although they did not always do this). The official Qing historiography followed the Chinese tradition and saw the whole world as subordinate to the Emperor. Therefore, the role of the ambans and the Dalai Lamas was described as a joint "supervision" by higher Tibetan officials, who received "credentials to manage the affairs of Tibet"⁴⁵ from Lifanyuan, with all gifts to the Emperor counting as a "tribute".

Tibet started to live in peace. The new government supported Buddhism. This was in complete accord with the Qing authorities. Beijing granted five thousand liang of silver to the Tibetan monasteries each year, and plates for printing the multi-volume Buddhist canon "Kangyur" were cut on the initiative of the Tibetan Government under Pholha-ne.

Despite the presence of the amban and Manchu garrison, Tibet continued to be governed by its own Government and it had its own army, which was not

42 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

43 Namsaraeva, 2003.

44 Namsaraeva, 2003.

45 Lu, 1828, p.114.

part of the Qing armed forces. In 1730–1731, Tibet once again intervened in the civil war in Bhutan. An agreement was reached by which Bhutan was obliged to send a representative with a tribute to the Tibetan Government. This custom was maintained until 1950. In 1732, the authority of the Tibetan Government was recognized by Ladakh.

In 1734 the Manchu Emperor sent his younger brother to visit the Dalai Lama, who was still in Gartar.⁴⁶ He offered to finance the construction of a monastery near the border, to sponsor its upkeep and provide funds to pay for brick tea for all of the monasteries of Tibet. In 1735, the Dalai Lama was allowed to return to Lhasa, which was fully controlled by Pholha-ne. He arrived there in September. Yinzen died in October, and Hongli (era name: Qian-long) became the new Manchu Emperor.

In 1740, the Bhutanese invaded Sikkim. Since Sikkim's ruler was a teenager, his servant went to Lhasa to ask Pholha-ne to send someone to help him govern the country. Sikkim's regent was appointed from there. Once the ruler was no longer a minor, he took the throne of Sikkim in the presence of the official, which was sent from Tibet. In 1740, Hongli awarded Pholha-ne with the title of Junwang, one of the highest in the Qing Empire. In 1747, Pholha-ne died from a disease. His reign was preserved in the memory of Tibetans as a peaceful time, and he himself as a strong ruler. But his cooperation with the Manchus formed the basis for their claims of authority over Tibet.

Dalai Batur Gyurme Namgyal, Pholha-ne's youngest son lived in Lhasa and received the title of Junwang by inheritance. He decided to expel the Manchu troops from Tibet. He sent a letter to Beijing proclaiming that the Tibetan garrison would be able to serve no worse than the Manchu, and the benefits would be such that the abduction of women and horses would stop.⁴⁷ The letter ended with words about the Manchu ambans meddling in the affairs of Tibet. Hongli agreed and reduced the Lhasa garrison that was guarding the ambans to a hundred people and he forbade the latter to interfere in Tibetan affairs. However, he did not allow the Tibetan garrison to be put into Lhasa.

Gyurme Namgyal wrote a letter to Dzungaria and invited the Dzungars to enter Tibet. And this was at a time when Hongli was preparing for a major war with the Dzungar Khanate. The letter was intercepted by people who were bribed by the ambans. In November 1750, the latter invited Gyurme Namgyal to their castle, supposedly to give him imperial gifts, and went on to treacherously murder him, together with all of his accompanying Tibetans. Only one lama managed to escape. He then gathered more Tibetans and attacked the castle. The ambans were killed, as were most of the Chinese and Manchus who lived in Lhasa. Only a few

⁴⁶ Shakabpa, 1988.

⁴⁷ Shakabpa, 1988.

found refuge in the Dalai Lama's Potala. In January 1751, the Qing troops were hastily transferred from Sichuan, and quickly crushed the revolt. Seven of its leaders were executed in the most brutal way by *linchi*, the other prisoners were executed in a humane way: beheaded or strangled, some aristocrats were allowed to commit suicide, some were put into prison. The Manchu Emperor ordered the commander to choose "good, capable people" and then again distribute power among four kalons.⁴⁸ They were supposed to follow the directives of the ambans and the Dalai Lama. The Qing garrison was again placed in Lhasa.

However, the establishment of the Tibetan army was still legal. Each family that owned some land was to put forward one person in the event of mobilization. Tibetan garrisons were put into Ü and Tsang, consisting of 1,000 and 2,000 people respectively. Once again, power was reorganised. Kashag, the Council of Ministers, became the Government. According to Chinese sources, the 7th Dalai Lama and two ambans stood at its head, all three were considered to be equal in status.⁴⁹ The "Tibetan Code" of 1752, reflected the entrance of troops and the change in the nature of governance.⁵⁰ According to the "Code", the Dalai Lama became the head of Tibet, both spiritual and secular. The influence of the ambans was expanded. They controlled the Manchu garrison, provided security to the postal service between Chengdu and Lhasa, and acquired the right to participate in the governance of the country as advisers of the Kashag.⁵¹

According to Tibetan sources, the country was ruled by kalons who gave the Dalai Lama a pledge of allegiance, with the First Hierarch assuming full spiritual and secular authority over the country.⁵² Kalons did not have a clear division of responsibilities. Therefore, officials of lower rank who were not willing to take up the responsibility could pass the case to the kalons. This led to confusion, a delay in processing cases, and the reluctance to take initiative. Such a system lasted for two hundred years and hampered the country's progress.

The Manchu Government feared consolidation of the Mongols amongst themselves and with the Tibetans. They were particularly worried by Dzungar Khanate, which became the main force to oppose the Qing Empire, so the imperial authorities banned Tibet from liaising with this state. Measures were also developed to deal with the possible entry of Dzungars into Tibet. Then in 1754–1757, Dzungar Khanate was conquered by the Manchus. In 1755, Hongli advised the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama of the defeat and the near destruction of that country.

48 Tsybikov, 1981, p.13.

49 Xizang jiangshi, 1993 — quoted in KH.: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005. According to the PRC Foreign Office, "the Dalai Lama and a representative of the Central Government have governed simultaneously" (Briefly on Tibet: a historical sketch...).

50 Namsaraeva, 2003.

51 Namsaraeva, 2003.

52 Shakabpa, 1988.

In October 1755, Hongli proclaimed:⁵³ “People from different Dzungar tribes kill each other. People have lost peace. I am uniting the whole of the Celestial Empire and cannot merely passively observe [this]. Therefore, I specially send a large force by two roads for subjugation of [them]”. Based on the doctrine of the Emperor’s global power, the Qing leadership viewed the Dzungarian and Yarkand khanates as its legitimate possessions, and their rulers as its vassals. As these rulers were unwilling to recognize themselves as vassals of the Son of Heaven, they were accused of ignorance, misunderstanding of the “celestial laws” and their duty to obey the Manchu Emperor, and act in accordance with his instructions. The resistance of inhabitants of those countries against the Qing was regarded by the Emperor as robbery and burglary, and Qing’s aggression as a necessary castigatory action.

As a result, 70% of the Dzungar Khanate population was exterminated by Qing troops and epidemics.⁵⁴ The total death toll ranged from a few hundred thousand to a million people, and only a few tens of thousands remained alive, many of whom fled to Russia.

This was the way Hongli orders to carry out Dzungars omnicide and the annexation of their land to the Qing Empire were carried out. By today’s standards, it would have been genocide and a war crime. But not so according to archaic notions of “unruly barbarians”. Ideologist of Han chauvinism, Wang Chuanshan, who lived at the turn of the Ming and Qing epochs, voiced these views:⁵⁵ “The Middle Kingdom should not term all fights against the barbarians as war, because their extermination is not cruelty, deceiving them is not treachery, the occupation of their territory and confiscation of their property is not unjust”.

A great strategic talent was not necessary to defeat the “barbarians”. Dzungar Khanate, once renowned for its military power, by that time was mired in civil war and had practically fallen apart. Unlike the Dzungars, the Manchus were armed with a big amount of firearms like muskets and cannons. Having seized the foreign territory, the Manchus again dramatically expanded their “living space”. In 1760, the Xinjiang (New Territory, or New Frontier) Qing “Vice-regency” was created from East Turkestan and Dzungaria. Other peoples began to populate the “vacated” lands of Dzungaria. The indigenous population had almost disappeared. As of the year 2000, less than 1% of Xinjiang’s population were Mongols with more than 30% being Chinese (more than 6 million people).

Tibet could no longer follow the old tradition or rely on the Mongols. It had to establish relations with the Qing Empire, especially considering that the Manchu Dynasty supported Buddhism and did not renounce “priest – patron” relations with senior Buddhist hierarchs. Emperor Hongli received many Sutra and Tantra teachings from two Tibetan lamas, Changkya Rolpe Dorje and Panchen Palden

53 Materialy, 1994.

54 New history of China, 1972 — in: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

55 In: Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.40.

Yeshe. He also built a monastery in Beijing which housed five hundred monks, built three and four storey temples in close proximity to his palace (these temples depicted Potala and Tashilhunpo), organized the translation of the Buddhist canon “Kangyur” into the Manchu language and “Tengyur” into Mongolian, etc.⁵⁶

The 7th Dalai Lama died in March 1757. During the 8th Dalai Lama’s infancy the country was ruled by the regent Demo Khutuktu. The Qing emperor, fulfilling his obligations of a patron, issued decrees on the enthronement and proper education of the young Dalai Lama.⁵⁷ During this period, a conflict between Bhutan and Bengal developed. The head of the Buddhist Church of Bhutan asked the Panchen Lama for mediation. J. Bogle, a representative of the British administration in India, arrived at Tashilhunpo, together with the Bhutanese envoy, as he was asked to sign a trade treaty with Tibet. Four months later, Bogle returned to India, without having achieved anything.

In 1778, a group of bandits from Sa-ngen (Kham) looted villages and a tea caravan of the Tibetan Government.⁵⁸ A detachment under the supervision of Kalon Dhoring Gung arrived from Tibet with the Qing troops coming from Sichuan in an attempt to restore order. Once the task was completed, the Qing general received an order from Hongli: “You were victorious and punished people who robbed the tea caravan of the Dalai Lama. Now that the mission is accomplished, the troops should return home. If you stay there long, it will only create difficulties for the Dalai Lama’s subjects”.

In 1779, following an invitation from Hongli, the 6th Panchen Lama travelled to Chengde (Rehe Province), the summer residence of the Manchu emperors. The Emperor informed him that he was learning the Tibetan language for direct communication and wanted to conduct a similar reception ceremony to what was held by his father when meeting the 5th Dalai Lama. When sending his portrait to the Panchen Lama, he pointed out that the Living Buddha must not bow to the portrait. In the summer of 1780, the Panchen Lama arrived in Rehe, where he was met by Hongli at the gate of his residence. The Emperor did not allow Lama to kneel and started the conversation in Tibetan. He assured that this visit would promote the development of Buddhism. Next, the Panchen Lama departed for Beijing, where he was granted the Huansi monastery. But in the fall of that year, the hierarch died from smallpox. His body was taken to Tashilhunpo.

S. Turner, the new envoy from England, travelled to Tibet from India, and tried to sign a trade agreement once,⁵⁹ and then again, unsuccessfully. The 8th Dalai Lama assumed the ruling power over Tibet, but the new regent Ngawang Tsultim was limiting his power as well as the power of the ambans. He was

56 Tibet and Manchu, 2008, p.45.

57 A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

58 Tibet and Manchu, 2009, p.59.

59 Ran, 1991.

summoned to Beijing and detained there so that the ambans could restore their influence in Lhasa.

In 1775, Gurkhas, who unified Nepal shortly before, invaded Sikkim. The Tibetans helped Sikkim by supplying food, which caused discontent amongst the Gurkhas.⁶⁰ A pretext for war with Tibet was soon found. Shamar Tulku, one of the highest lamas of the Karma Kagyu sect, fled to Nepal. He hoped to use the Gurkhas to assert his claims to the property of the Panchen Lama in the Tashilhunpo Monastery. Gurkhas tried to use that. Nepal minted Tibetan coins from Tibetan silver. After some time, more and more copper was added during the process. Eventually the Nepalese again released a coin made of pure silver, and demanded the “bad” Tibetan coins be withdrawn from circulation. This was meant to be profitable to the Nepalese and to cause a loss to Tibet. In addition, the Gurkhas demanded that the Tibetans sell their better quality salt there. The Kashag proposed that the Nepalese mint both coins at the same time, and for Tibetan and Nepalese officials to monitor the quality of salt at the customs posts.

Gurkhas rejected these proposals and attacked Tibet in 1788. They went on to seize Nyanang, Rongshar, Kyidrong and Dzongkha. Ambans immediately advised the Emperor about the attack, and the Qing army was sent to Tibet. Troops arrived in instalments and were joined by the Tibetans. The Qing commander was in no hurry to fight, despite the exhortations of the Tibetans.⁶¹ Finally, his troops advanced towards the Gurkhas, drove them out and spent the winter in Shekar. A Tibetan detachment drove the Gurkhas out from Sikkim. Tripartite negotiations were then staged in Kyidrong. Tibetans had to make concessions. They recognized the Nepalese extraterritoriality, pledged to pay an annual contribution, and allowed the presence of their representatives in Shigatse and Gyantse. Nepal pledged to release the captured areas after receiving the first payment. The cost of the old coins was reduced, and the cost of rice and salt was now set by the market, with the quality of salt being raised. Tibetan traders were banned from visiting Nepal but Nepalese traders could travel freely in Tibet, choose hotels and fuel.

Thus, the reluctance of the Qing military commander to advance further allowed the Nepalese to sign an advantageous agreement. The Tibetans said that there was very little difference between the Gurkhas and the Chinese. The Gurkhas robbed and killed, because they came as enemies, and then Chinese because they came as friends.⁶² Apparently, the inept Qing commander displeased his Government, and on his return he was forced to commit suicide. At the insistence of the Qing officials, both Tibetans and Nepalis sent missions to express their gratitude to the Manchu Emperor.

60 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

61 Shakabpa, 1988.

62 Shakabpa, 1988.

The Nepalese left Tibet in 1789, after having received their first payment. The Rajah of Nepal received a title of wang from the Manchu Emperor. Then, the representative of Nepal requested the amban to ask the Qing Emperor to grant Rajah some monetary premium or some land, since he became his vassal. The amban explained that this was not possible as there were too many vassals and there was not enough for everybody.

The Tibetans decided to reduce their payments, and then, ceased to pay tribute altogether. The reason for this was the return of the Regent Ngawang Tsultim to Lhasa from Beijing, whose political experience was urgently needed by the Dalai Lama and the Kashag.⁶³ The Regent accused Kashag of wanting to unite with the Chinese to please the Gurkha and banished those who signed the disadvantageous agreement. In 1791, he died from a heart attack. In the same year two delegations were sent for talks with the Nepalese, but some of them ended up being killed and some were arrested. After that, Gurkhas again attacked Tibet and occupied Shigatse. Lhasa was in panic. The Manchurian Amban began to ask the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama to move to Kham. But the Dalai Lama and the abbots of the “Great Monasteries” convinced people not to panic. The Tibetan army attacked the Gurkhas in Shigatse and cut off their supply routes. An epidemic broke out among the Gurkhas and in the following spring a thirteen thousand-strong Qing army entered Tibet under the command of a relative of Hongli. The Gurkhas were defeated, Tibetan and Manchu troops invaded Nepal and reached its capital Kathmandu.⁶⁴ Shamar Tulku committed suicide. He was proclaimed to have been responsible for the military action so he fled to Nepal in the hope of gaining the Gurkhas’ support to try and solve Tibet’s internal problems. During the war he participated in the negotiations on the Nepal side, and his servant brought Gurkha troops to Tibet (which went on to take Nyanang, Rongshar and Kyidrong).⁶⁵

Now Nepal pledged to return the seized property, to send tribute to the Manchu Emperor once every five years, to release all Tibetan prisoners, and to expel the followers of Shamar Tulku. A column with an inscription in Tibetan, Manchu and Chinese was erected at the base of the Potala in order to commemorate this victory.⁶⁶ At the same time, the population of Lhasa was distributing posters and pamphlets suggesting that the Qing army was not welcome, that the Tibetans themselves could have coped with the Gurkhas, and that ambans interfered with Tibetan affairs. As a result, both ambans were recalled to Beijing. Supporters of Shamar Tulku were released, but his monastery was confiscated by the government of Tibet, and searches for his reincarnations were banned. Only in the late 20th

63 Shakabpa, 1988.

64 Namsaraeva, 2003.

65 Shakabpa, 1988.

66 Shakabpa, 1988.

century, the 14th Dalai Lama and the 16th Karmapa formally restored the institution of the Shamarpas.

An important role of Qing troops in the victory over Nepal strengthened the position of the Manchu Emperor in Tibet. In connection with the Nepalese conflict, Chinese documents of that time employ formulations to the effect that Tibet was part of China, and was subordinated by the Celestial Dynasty.⁶⁷ However, the Manchu commander relied on offers and not orders in his talks with the Dalai Lama: “The Emperor has given me, the great General, detailed instructions to discuss all the provisions in order... There is no doubt that the Dalai Lama, expressing his gratitude to the Emperor, will take all these deliberate and coordinated proposals. However, if the Tibetans would insist on the established customs of the ancient times, the Emperor would withdraw ambans and the garrison after the troops will have been withdrawn. However, if such conflicts occur in the future, the emperor will not be able to help. That is why Tibetans can decide for themselves what is in their favour, and what is not, what is hard and what is easy, and make their choice themselves”.⁶⁸ This style of the message reflected that the type of relationships between the Dalai Lama and the Emperor was of a “priest – patron” kind.

In 1792, “Tibetan Code” rules were developed (and were subsequently integrated into the “Resolutions on Tibet” in “The Codes” of Lifanyuan in 1818). The main provisions of these “Regulations” were as follows.⁶⁹ Two ambans are appointed to Tibet and are replaced time by time; their power and status are equal to those of the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas; they are to be obeyed by all civil and military officials; their mandate includes regulating relations with the principalities of Nepal; all members of the missions are passed through the border strictly in accordance with name lists, and admitted to the Dalai Lama only after a meeting with ambans; ambans put Tibet’s finances in order; they make sure that relatives of the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas are not evading taxes and are not occupying bureaucratic positions so as to minimise abuses of power; ambans can cut spending on the upkeep of the courts of the Dalai Lamas and the Panchen Lamas in order to increase spending on the Tibetan army; the appointment of Khenpo Lamas (Gelug abbots) are made with their consent and advice; ambans control the transfer of criminals’ assets to the treasury; ambans control garrisons in Lhasa, Shigatse, Chamdo, Gyantse, Dingri; they are responsible for the postal service, transportation of grain from China, and grain provision of the garrisons. These regulations were meant to stabilise the situation in Tibet. Such a role was often played by foreign ambassadors and counsellors in the dependent countries in different periods. In addition, Lifanyuan’s “Codes” represented ambans’ power in a rather idealised manner. In fact, the ambans were powerless to change the traditional

67 Martynov, 1978.

68 Ya Han Chang, 1991 — in: *Tibet: the Truth*, 1993.

69 Namsaraeva, 2003.

status quo and the local character.⁷⁰ Of the twenty-nine regulations the Tibetans only adopted a few.⁷¹

In 1793, Hongli sent a Golden Urn to Lhasa which was meant to be used when drawing lots for identification of reincarnations of the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, the Jetsundampa Khutuktu and other supreme lamas. This rule was applied in situations where no agreement on identification of a reincarnation could be reached. The 1792 “Tibetan Code” stated that the Golden Urn symbolized the Emperor’s patronage over the Yellow teachings, i.e. the teachings of the Gelug sect.⁷² There was no demand (even from the Qing side) for the vase to take the leading role in the identifications, even the “Code” states that it would only be used for confirmation of already discovered reincarnations.

The vase was installed in Jokhang, the main temple of Tibet. When drawing lots, the vase was placed in the Potala in front of a portrait of the Manchu Emperor. The Qing Amban then used two chopsticks to pull out lots from the vase. However, this was only the final stage. It was preceded by a long process of searching. This was defined by religious rules and traditions, in which the Qing representatives could not interfere. Rituals included fortune telling, oracles’ prophecies, interpretation of prophetic dreams, observations of the sacred lake, asking candidates to identify items that belonged to a deceased hierarch, etc. Consequently, the draw of the Golden Urn was not inevitable. According to archival data of Lifanyuan, during the hundred years before 1903, the Golden Urn draw was used to identify thirty-nine Khutuktus of the Ü and Tsang provinces.⁷³ This draw was also used in five out of nine identifications of the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas (in 1822, 1841, 1857, 1858 and 1887). The sixth case occurred in 1995 during the “election” of the 11th Panchen Lama in the PRC (see Chapter 10). The vase was not used, for example, during identification of the 9th Dalai Lama, 13th Dalai Lama, 14th Dalai Lama and 9th Jetsundampa Khutuktu and other hierarchs.

The position of the ambans in Lhasa strengthened. Now the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and Kashag had to file their petitions through them, rather than go directly to the Emperor. The Qing garrisons were placed in Lhasa, Shigatse and Dingri. Just like the Tibetan army, they were under control by the ambans. Tibetan soldiers received a small cash salary from the Qing Emperor, and ration of barley from the Tibetan Government. The functions of the ambans now included defence, border control, granting permission for foreigners to visit Tibet, and making decisions on the most important issues of finance and the judiciary.

The influence of the Manchus in Tibet reached a historic maximum. Depending on the political situation in the Empire and the personal qualities of the ambans,

70 Namsaraeva, 2003.

71 Ya Han Chang, 1991 — in: *Tibet: the Truth*, 1993.

72 Namsaraeva, 2003, p.119.

73 Namsaraeva, 2003, p.121–122.

their influence sometimes increased and decreased at other times. However, the real power was exercised, as before, by the Tibetan leaders. Although appointments of senior positions were often done after consulting with the Qing officials or the Emperor, this was not a case of administrative rule, but rather a case of helping Tibet within the traditional “priest – patron” framework. High positions were still occupied by Tibetans, their nominations being shaped by changes in the internal situation in Tibet.

The Manchus ability to intervene in the internal affairs of Tibet were quite limited. For example, in 1796, one landowner proclaimed that the Qing commander expressed gratitude for his help in the war with the Gurkhas and discharged him from paying taxes.⁷⁴ Kashag replied that the Manchu general was only an ally, and had no right to be exempt from paying taxes. The landowner was ordered to pay arrears.

Around the same time, people began to spread posters and pamphlets against the Manchus and the Chinese in Lhasa and to accuse Tibetan governmental officials in collaboration with them.⁷⁵ They demanded the removal of the ambans and garrisons. The Qing officials who travelled between Central Tibet and Kham were attacked. The new Manchu Emperor Yongyan (era name: Jia-qing) sent two emissaries to Lhasa in order to investigate the situation. As a result, several Qing officials were recalled, and the garrison was reduced to about two hundred and fifty people. In return, the Tibetan Government arrested the leaders of protesters as a gesture of good will. But the protests continued. And the protesters said that if the need arose it would be better to turn to the Gurkhas. Manchu emissaries did not know what to do. As a result, two more officials were sent to Lhasa in 1805. As a result of their investigation, one of the ambans was sent to China in chains, the other was banished to Urumqi. The Manchus began to lose their influence on Tibetan politics because of poorly trained officials and the ambans’ incompetence.

In 1808, a new reincarnation of the Dalai Lama was revealed. Tibetan officials refused to draw lots from the Golden Urn, and made the decision without it.⁷⁶ Representatives of the Qing, Mongolia, Nepal and Bhutan attended the ceremony that was organized by them. The new Dalai Lama soon died of pneumonia, so three new candidates were identified and one of them was recognized as the new Dalai Lama. However, the ambans did everything in their power to force the Golden Urn draw. The regent also died at the same time, and the new regent announced that the previously selected candidate was the confirmed 10th Dalai Lama. He also said that the Golden Urn draw was used, although this was not so. Thus he went in the wake of the ambans.

Territories that the Qing Government had previously annexed from Tibet had different statuses. Those that were attached to the Xining governor area became

74 Shakabpa, 1988.

75 Shakabpa, 1988.

76 Shakabpa, 1988.

more dependent on Beijing, when compared to the ones that were detached from Kham. In Eastern Kham, as well as in Mongolia, the Manchu Government did not interfere in the internal management of local principalities, but pursued a policy for their gradual fragmentation. Kham and Amdo's subordination to the central Qing and Tibetan authorities were nominal, and the control was very weak. Formally, in order for one to inherit a principality, this required an approval from Beijing. In reality, the princes or chiefs enjoyed an almost complete self-dependence. Of the many leaders of "the thousands of households" of the Tibetan Golok tribe in Amdo, only one received the Qing seal and investiture, and even that was not earlier than 1814.⁷⁷ These regions also suffered from occasional internal strife, which did not interest either Lhasa or Beijing. In 1807, two leaders of the Golok started an uprising.⁷⁸ Revolt was suppressed by the Tibetan and Manchu troops. The troubled region received special representatives with small escorts to guard against outlaws. Documents that were drawn up by those officials indicate that Tibetan laws were in force and that the Tibetan Government controlled the border regions between Danag Kosum, Tsolomo, Shandi and Gormo.

In 1832, there were clashes over land between the Tibetans and the Mongols in the area of Kokonor. Tibetan troops arrived and suppressed the strife in 1834. A year later, the Tibetan Government used force to make the population of the Powo District in North-western Kham pay taxes to Lhasa and to abide by Tibetan legislation.

In the first half of the 19th century Tibet was almost completely closed to foreigners. Kashag ordered local authorities to prevent foreigners from entering the country by all means. Most researchers believe that this was done under the influence of the Manchu government.⁷⁹ In reality, this was a coincidence of the interests of the Manchu and Tibetan ruling circles. The Manchus feared commercial competition and political expansion of the West, and the Tibetans religious and political expansion. This is exacerbated by the aggressive policy of British colonialists which was well-known to the Tibetans and the Manchus, due to the close proximity of India. The British gradually subordinated all of the Himalayan countries by a series of wars, annexations and agreements.⁸⁰ Most of these countries were connected with Lhasa.

British expansion stimulated the decline of the Qing Empire. In the first half of 19th century, the British East India Company, which operated under the patronage of its state, started to import huge quantities of opium into China. Sales grew. The British were joined by the Americans. All of the efforts of the Manchu Government to stop the spread of narcotics among the population were in vain. Finally, in 1839 the Emperor ordered his representative to stop the importation of the drug, with the order being carried out immediately. Britain reacted by announcing that this

77 Yeh, 2003, p.499–523.

78 Shakabpa, 1988; Smith, 1995, p.137–138.

79 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

80 Van Walt, 1987.

was a violation of the rights of its merchants and started a military intervention. With help of their overwhelming technological superiority, the British won, having incidentally captured and looted several Chinese cities. As a result, the Qing Government was forced to sign an unequal treaty. According to that treaty, Britain obtained trade preferences, perpetual possession of Xianggang (Hong Kong), and the right of extraterritoriality for its citizens. The Qing State had to pay tribute not only to the British but also to the Americans.

Taking advantage of the weakening of the Qing Empire in 1841, the commander Zoravar Singh invaded Western Tibet. He came from Ladakh (which was meant to be subordinated) at the head of a five thousand–people strong Dogra tribe army. Then he went on to capture Rutok, Gartok, Tsapharang and Purang. However, the Tibetans defeated the Dogras, and Zoravar Singh was killed in battle. The Dogras were well equipped with firearms, and the Tibetans were mainly armed with swords, spears, and bows, with only a small number of primitive muskets.⁸¹ Victory was helped by a harsh snowy winter, which was tolerated poorly by the Dogras. The Tibetans treated the fallen enemy with respect. They erected a huge red monument over the remains of Zoravar Singh, which was reminiscent of the stupas erected to commemorate saints.⁸²

The Tibetans entered Ladakh and stopped there. In 1842, a reinforcement of Dogras arrived to Ladakh and the Tibetans were defeated, their commanders captured. The prisoners were sent to Leh, the capital of Ladakh, where they were met by a representative of the Tibetan Government. Then the peace treaty was signed under which the parties pledged not to attack each other. Later a treaty with Ladakh was signed which confirmed their relationship as an eternal friendship. The treaty also confirmed the border between Central Tibet and Ladakh to be along the Lhari River, that gifts to the Dalai Lama from Ladakh were to be sent on a regular basis, and that Tibetan traders in Ladakh were to receive free housing and transportation. Prisoners from both sides were released. A third of the captive Dogras and Ladakhi preferred to stay in Southern Tibet. They married Tibetan women and engaged in cultivation of apples, apricots, peaches and grapes. The Qing Amban sent a message from Lhasa to Beijing informing Qing Government about the war with the Dogras and the signed treaty. However, the Qing Government, was engaged in war with Britain, so they did not respond.

In 1844, the Amban Qi Shan came to Lhasa. Having accused the Regent in a number of transgressions, he arrested him, and sent a twenty-eight-article memorandum to Beijing in which he demanded himself the same authority as the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama.⁸³ In response, the monks of the Sera monastery rebelled and were able to release the Regent. The Amban managed to escape, and

81 Shakabpa, 1988.

82 Tucci, 2004.

83 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

the following day, the rebels surrendered with the Regent being arrested again and then taken to China. But the expansion of European powers and the Taiping rebellion prevented the Qing Government from paying much attention to Tibet. In 1847, Qi Shan handed over power for military and financial matters into the hands of the Tibetan administration.

In 1814, 1840, 1842 and 1846, Nepal asked the Qing Government for help against the British expansion. But it was to no avail as the forces were much too unequal. Then in 1852, a new Nepalese mission arrived in Beijing. It stayed there until 1853, with Gurkhas witnessing first hand the internal instability of the Empire, which was caused by the intervention of Western powers and their unequal treaties with Beijing. Taking this into account, they attacked Tibet and captured the districts Nyanang, Rongshar, Dzungkha and Purang in 1855. The following year, a peace treaty was signed between Nepal and Tibet, after which the Nepalese received freedom of trade and the right of extraterritoriality in Tibet, and Lhasa was to receive a Nepalese resident who would administer the affairs of his fellow countrymen. The Tibetans were obliged to pay compensation. The Nepalese agreed to return to Tibet all of its four captured districts, as well as all of seized yaks and weapons. They also agreed to resolve future disputes together. It was stated in Art. 2 that the Gurkhas and the Tibetans expressed obeisance to the Great Emperor, and the Gurkha Government agreed to provide as much help and protection to Tibet (in the event of an attack by a foreign country) as it could.⁸⁴ This agreement was beneficial to Nepal, which also was assigned a role of protector, a function that was previously carried out by the Qing Empire.

In 1858, a new reincarnation of the deceased Dalai Lama was found. The Golden Urn draw was made, with three boys as candidates. Four years later, a conflict arose between the Regent and one of the kalons, so the Regent was deposed. An assembly of officials and monks from the Ganden and Drepung monasteries was convened. It approved the choice made in the Golden Urn draw, but accused the Regent of organizing the draw purely to please the Manchu Emperor.⁸⁵ The Regent fled to China, and his property was confiscated. The Regent then asked the Emperor to help him regain power. The aid amounted to the Emperor asking for return of the property and to allow the Regent back. However, the Assembly decided that the request could be ignored. The Regent died on his way to Lhasa.

In November 1861, there was a palace coup in Beijing that led the clique of the Dowager Empress Cixi to power. This former concubine, whose greatest talent was her ability to hold on to personal power, is remembered for her cruelty and depravity.⁸⁶ In 1898, she put a stop to the initiative of the Emperor Zaitian (era name: Guang-xu), who tried to save the Empire by conducting reforms modelled

⁸⁴ Tibet and Manchu, 2008, p.65.

⁸⁵ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

⁸⁶ E.g. see Sidikhmenov, 1985.

on Japan's Meiji Restoration. The chance was lost. Cixi, who was possessed by the thirst for power, illegally announced Zaitian (her nephew and adopted son) "unworthy of the title", and she placed him under house arrest for the rest of his life and forced him into a drug addiction. The Emperor was poisoned with arsenic on her order shortly before Cixi herself died.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, poor governance deepened the crisis, and bad manners of the court discredited the dynasty in the eyes of the people. Controlled by Cixi and her clique, the Empire was lead into ruin.

From 1862 to 1871, the real power in Tibet belonged to the Assembly of Ganden and Drepung, and from 1871 to 1873 to the National Assembly. The change of power was linked to fighting internal factions while the new 12th Dalai Lama was still a minor. After coming to power, he only lived for two years before dying in 1875. The rumours about his violent death were very persistent. In the middle of the 19th century, a European observer missionary E.R. Huc reported that the amban had no real power, while the kalons refused to tolerate any interference of the Manchus in Tibetan affairs.⁸⁸

A number of Muslim states were formed in East Turkestan (Tibet's neighbour), which separated from the Qing Empire. In 1863–1877, using internal Qing and Kham's disorders to their advantage, the Tibetan Government extended its authority to the east up to the Yangtze River. Tibetan principalities of Derge and Hor were now under Tibetan Government. By the end of 19th century, Northern Kham was still under the rule of Lhasa, while Lithang and Ba located in Southern Kham were under the weak supervision of a Sichuan governor.⁸⁹ After Lhasa troops left Derge, this principality became practically independent from Lhasa and Beijing.⁹⁰ At that the influence of the Manchu Emperor on Tibet was seriously weakened. The Amban's functions were reduced to presence at ceremonies and reporting of appointments in the Tibetan Government to the Emperor. The garrison consisted of a hundred soldiers, most of who were born from mixed marriages of Chinese soldiers with Tibetan women. These soldiers were very poor, and would go from house to house performing lion and dragon dances to earn some money during New Year celebrations.⁹¹

Because of its important strategic position, Tibet attracted special interest from the United Kingdom. The British used their India colony to send agents into Tibet, which were usually naturalized Indians and Tibetans. A special training academy was built by the British in Darjeeling in northern India for the purpose of their preparation.⁹² The scouts collected topographic and descriptive data of

87 The cause of Guang-xu's death was determined...

88 Van Walt, 1987.

89 Smith, 1996, p.141.

90 Rockhill, 1901; Waddell, 1906.

91 Shakabpa, 1988.

92 Leontiev, 1956.

military importance, and their reports were processed in Calcutta and subsequently classified. In 1887, the Tibetans executed Senchen Lama, the regent of the Panchen Lama, who secretly helped a major tibetologist S.C. Das to stay in Tibet and gather important information for the British. In the 1860s, Sikkim became a protectorate of the British Empire with Bhutan also being forced to give up a part of its territory to the latter. Britons now included Darjeeling and another six counties into their Empire.⁹³ Both Sikkim and Bhutan were previously dependent on Tibet. Therefore, the Qing Empire claimed to rule over them. But the British expansion did not cause any reaction. Therefore, these “vassals” were not subordinate to the Manchus. By agreement with the Rajah of Sikkim, the Tibetans sent a detachment of a thousand men and built fortifications near the village of Lintu, which was twenty kilometres south of the Tibetan border. The British troops captured that stronghold. But the Tibetans continued to block the road, and the Britons were forced to return to India.

In 1876, the British forced the Qing official Li Hongzhang to sign a convention in Chefoo. One of its articles allowed them to send a mission to Tibet. The article on Tibet in that convention was not related to the convention itself.⁹⁴ The article stated that for the British to visit Tibet they would need special passports. Hence, neither Britain nor the Manchus considered Tibet as part of the Empire as such, since according to the 1858 Tianjin treaty, the British had already agreed to travel throughout the Emperor’s country with passports signed by local authorities. However, Tibet refused to accept the mission, as members of the National Assembly were determined that the Manchu Emperor had no right to allow the British to enter Tibet.⁹⁵ The Manchus were unable to force them to change the decision and, as compensation, recognized the annexation of Burma by the British.

The “Convention Relating to Sikkim and Tibet” was signed in Calcutta in 1890, and the Qing Government accepted the British protectorate over Sikkim. The Tibet-Sikkim border was established and British talks about their trade with Tibet were scheduled. It was signed by the Viceroy of India on the British side and by one of Lhasa’s ambans on the side for the Qing. Tibetans did not acknowledge this convention and demolished the poles installed at the border.⁹⁶ In 1893, the Qing and British representatives signed the “Regulations Regarding Trade, Communication, and Pasturage (To be appended to the Sikkim-Tibet Convention of 1890)”. Tibet refused to acknowledge these regulations too, as both agreements were signed without its participation. Tibetan authorities banned Tibetans from settling in Yatung, which was the place where the planned trade with the British was meant

93 Shakabpa, 1988.

94 Van Walt, 1987.

95 Kuleshov, 1992; Shakabpa, 1988.

96 Waddell, 1906.

to take place, and a military post was installed in Pari. C. White, the British Representative in Sikkim, recalled that the Chinese had no power over Tibet and that China was only a nominal suzerain of Tibet.⁹⁷ The concept of “suzerainty of China over Tibet” was created by the British, who believed the Manchu Empire to be China and wrongly interpreted the relations between the Emperor and Tibet since 1720.⁹⁸

In 1895, the 13th Dalai Lama Thupten Gyatso (1876–1933) came to power in Tibet. He was an energetic and talented politician. He managed to arrest the Regent Demo Khutuktu and take power into his own hands. After that he got rid of the ambans from the administration.⁹⁹ The latter reported this to Beijing and received an imperial edict which instructed that the power of the Regent was to be restored. But the Regent died while in custody, and the new amban did not dare to promulgate the edict.

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom continued to develop their Tibetan policy. The plan of the Viceroy of British India, Lord J. N. Curzon, was to end the isolation of Tibet, to create privileges for the British there, and to “fix the suzerainty” of the Manchu Dynasty over it.¹⁰⁰ Great Britain considered Russia to be its main rival in Central Asia,¹⁰¹ and they considered China to be an important trading partner and a bulwark for containment of Russia in Asia.¹⁰² So the British decided to use Tibet as a “bargaining chip” in the rivalry with Russia, not thinking about the long-term consequences.

In 19th – 20th centuries, Russia sought to expand its contacts with Tibet and Mongolia. This logically followed from its geopolitical position, historical traditions and ethnic composition. As an integral part of the Eurasian commonality, and having a large area of contact with Central Asian states, Russia long had contacts with the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization. These contacts had always been a natural part of life in the Russian Empire, mainly because of the fact that Tibetan Buddhism was the traditional religion not only of the Tibetans, but also of their Mongolian relatives, the Buryats and the Kalmyks. The inclusion of the



The 13th Dalai Lama Thubten Gyatso

97 Shakabpa, 1988.

98 See, for example, Waddell, 1906.

99 Waddell, 1906.

100 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

101 E.g. Younghusband, 1893, p.183–215.

102 Van Walt, 1987.

Mongolian peoples into the Russian Empire did not largely take the form of conquest, with the Russians considering them not to be inferior. This has always distinguished Russia from the UK. The British pointed out that “the Russian conquest of Central Asia was the conquest of one Eastern nation by another. The similarity of the characters makes integration easier. On the contrary, it is common knowledge that the British officials have never tried to soften the barriers that separate them from the Hindu tribe”.¹⁰³

The Tsar’s administration, although imposed with some restrictions, was generally trying not to interfere in the public life of “small nations” and sought to protect them from exploitation and assimilation (although there were many abuses “at the local level”). The Tsar’s Government conducted a similar policy with respect to the weaker states of Central Asia, and provided patronage to them in the international arena. Understanding and respecting Russian Tsars as the heirs of the Golden Horde, as well as their goodwill towards Buddhism, came into play as well. Therefore, the Mongolian people revered the “White Tsar” and trusted Russia. Undoubtedly, this was known in Tibet.

The Russian Empire began to establish political contacts with it in the late 19th century. A special role was played in this by the Buryat Tsanyi-Khenpo Agvan Dorjiev (1854–1938), who became the Dalai Lama’s representative in Russia.¹⁰⁴ There is widespread opinion that over the years he was one of the teachers of the 13th Dalai Lama. Really, he was a *tsenshap*, a partner of the Dalai Lama in philosophical debates, which formed an important part of Buddhist education. The British admitted: “That Power [Russia] was far away indeed, but its prestige stood higher in Tibet and Mongolia than that of any other country”.¹⁰⁵ This caused discontent among the British. Without themselves being linked to Central Asia either historically or ethnically, they saw Russia as the main obstacle to their expansion in the region. The news about the meeting of the Emperor Nicholas 2nd with A. Dorjiev and other representatives of the Dalai Lama in 1900–1901 caused great concern for the British. An English-Japanese Treaty was signed in 1902 which had an anti-Russian orientation. In 1902, the British press repeatedly reported on the secret treaties between Russia, Tibet and China.¹⁰⁶ For example, in April 1902, a Reuters correspondent in Beijing reported that the Russian envoy P.M. Lessar had offered the Manchu Emperor to grant independence to Tibet. Signing of secret agreements on the Russian protectorate over Tibet was also reported, as well as the transfer of Beijing’s interests in Tibet to Russia, etc. Accounts of secret agreements between Russia and Tibet were given.

103 The English–Russian issue, 1891, p.151.

104 See autobiography: Dorjiev, 2003.

105 Bell, 1992, p.62.

106 Shaumian, 2000.

The documents from the Russian Archive of Foreign Policy did not confirm the existence of such agreements.¹⁰⁷ Obviously, Russia's dialogue with the Qing Empire served as the foundation for the allegations above. To the British Cabinet, representatives of the Military Ministry and the Indian press, it was clear that there was not much substance in the "Russian threat" as far as Tibet was concerned. On the other hand, such a threat justified plans for the most militant-minded of the British and served as a pretext for their military invasion. The British considered the sending of their mission to Tibet to be a legitimate response to such actions of the Tibetan Government as the return of three Curzon's letters unopened, the continued ignorance of the 1890 Agreement with the Qing Dynasty.¹⁰⁸ In reality, an act of aggression was planned based on these far-fetched pretexts.

On the 2nd of February 1903, the Russian Embassy in London sent a memorandum to the British Foreign Office stating that the Russian Government had acquired data about the British military expedition to Tibet from a reliable source, and wanted to draw attention to the fact that such actions could force it to take self-defence measures in the region.¹⁰⁹ The Russian and the British sides discussed this topic in London on several occasions. The Russian Foreign Ministry decided to send its emissary to Dartsedo (Kangding) to establish contact with the Buddhist authorities of Tibet and to have continuous monitoring of the relations between the Dalai Lama and the Government in Beijing. In addition, it allowed Russia to monitor the actions of Britain and France in South China, to oversee Russian pilgrims' trips to Tibet, and to develop economic ties with the Qing Empire. Dorjiev offered to send a representative under the guise of a pilgrim into one of the monasteries of Dartsedo. B. Rabdanov took on this role. In late 1903 he arrived in Dartsedo. On November 6, 1903 British authorities ordered their detachment to cross the border with Tibet, and on the 8th of November the Russian Foreign Ministry requested for confirmation of this information from Rabdanov. He replied in early 1904, stating that Tibet was preparing for war, and the Tibetans themselves were sympathetic to Russia above all Europeans. Rabdanov exchanged information with Dorjiev, who was then in Lhasa. Rabdanov returned to Russia in 1905 or 1906.

On the 20th March 1903, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a letter to the Russian Ambassador in London, in which, among other things, it was stated that Russia was interested in preserving the status quo in Tibet, and if England violated this, then Russia would take measures not in Tibet itself, but in other parts of Asia.¹¹⁰ After that, negotiations took place. The parties agreed not to change

107 Shaumian, 2000.

108 Shaumian, 2000.

109 Shaumian, 2000.

110 Shaumian, 2000.

the status quo in Tibet, and Britain promised not to annex its territory. Russia acknowledged the special interests of the British and “local dominance” in Tibet, for geographical reasons.

Then on the 6th November 1903, the British Government ordered an invasion of Tibet. “It is not mere curiosity to see the “closed country” that has led an armed British mission to move to Tibet in December 1903, but rather an arrogant hostility of Tibetans, which seemed all the more serious to us because of the intrigues of Russia, which wanted to seize power in the great political and religious centre”.¹¹¹ A.K. Benkendorf, the Russian Ambassador in London, was informed that the invasion was caused by the “violent behaviour” of Tibetans with regard to British subjects. In November 1903, the Russian Ambassador in London met with King Edward 7th. Among other things, they discussed Tibet, Manchuria and Persia. The aim of the British was to achieve a “better understanding” of the contradictions between Russia and Britain. Britain was preparing for war with Germany, so they tried to resolve its differences with a future ally in advance.

In December 1903, the British military detachment under the command of General D.R.L. Macdonald and Colonel F.E. Younghusband made it from India into Tibet. By the summer of 1904 it entered the central part of Tibet. The British began negotiations with the Tibetans and simultaneously opened fire on their camp in the Guru area. As a result, 500 Tibetans were killed, over 300 were captured, and the British seized all of their weapons. Advancing even further, the British also crushed the Tibetan resistance in Dzamteng, Souhang, Neyin and Gyantse. The Gyantse Dzong (Fortress) was captured after artillery shelling. Many Tibetans were killed. The Dzong Commander managed to leave and then return with reinforcements, and they spent two more days trying to take the English camp, having lost a lot of people in process. At this time the representative of the Manchu Amban arrived in Gyantse. He informed the British that the Amban was ready to come in person, but could not do so since the Tibetan Government did not provide him with a means of transportation.¹¹² From Gyantse the British marched on towards Lhasa, overcoming the resistance of Tibetans. In the Karo-la gorge, the British utilised the help of two disloyal shepherds to bypass a Tibetan stronghold and attack it from above.

About a third of the Tibetan army perished in the battles with the British. The British admitted: “The courage of Tibetans was now undeniable”.¹¹³ Or, as now is said in the PRC: “The Tibetans heroically resisted the British forces and wrote a glorious chapter in the history of the Chinese people’s struggle against imperialism”^{113a}, even though the Chinese did not participate in this war. At the same time the British did

111 Waddell, 1906, p.37–49.

112 Shakabpa, 1988.

113 Waddell, 1906, p.203.

113a Ran, 1991, p.1-2.



A British detachment near the Potala Palace in Lhasa (Waddell, 1906)

not engage in looting, tried to avoid unnecessary destruction, assisted the injured Tibetans and even paid for the acquired food and materials.

Along the way of the British advance, the Qing representatives put up posters that proclaimed that the war was fought between England and Tibet with China being a friend of both countries.¹¹⁴ This acknowledged the fact that Tibet and the Qing Empire were separate states. On the 4th of August 1904, the British entered Lhasa. On the first day of their stay there, the Amban Yu Tai visited Younghusband. He promised to supply food to the aggressors and give them full assistance as a representative of the sovereign Qing power.¹¹⁵ The Amban tried to convince the Britons that the Tibetans were ignorant and boastful barbarians. He utilised evasive tactics: first, he prolonged his departure from China to Tibet, and then did not leave Lhasa. The English got the impression that the Chinese were seeking to weaken both British and Tibetan forces and to restore their own power in Tibet.

Later, the Regent and the Tibetan officials began negotiations with the British. However, a monk sneaked into the British camp, and killed two of the British officers. It remained unknown to which monastery he belonged. The monk was publicly hanged. To avoid further incidents, the Englishmen took one monk hostage from each of the “Great Monasteries”.

114 Waddell, 1906, p.195.

115 Waddell, 1906, p.248–249.

Shortly before these events, on the 30th of July, the 13th Dalai Lama left his capital and headed north to Mongolia. During his absence, he appointed Lobsang Gyaltsen Lhamoshar, the Tri Rinpoche of Ganden, as the Regent.¹¹⁶ The regent was mandated to deal with the British. On the 27th of November 1904, the Dalai Lama arrived in the city of Ikh Khuree (now Ulaanbaatar), the capital of Outer Mongolia, which was then a vassal territory of the Manchu Emperor. It was the residence of the spiritual leader of Outer Mongolia, the 8th Bogdo Gegen Jetsundampa Khutuktu, one of the highest hierarchs of Northern Buddhism. The Dalai Lama was met by a ceremonial reception conducted by the authorities and numerous pilgrims, including those from the Kalmykia and Trans-Baikal areas. In Mongolia, he entered negotiations with representatives of Nicholas 2nd. One of them, the famous traveller P.K. Kozlov, recorded these talks in great detail.¹¹⁷ The Dalai Lama spent nearly a year in Mongolia hoping to get support from Russia. His relations with the monasteries and the monks were very good.¹¹⁸ The Dalai Lama spent much time in debates on the canonical books, explaining complex philosophical issues to the monks. He learned the Mongolian language, and loved dressing as a Mongolian for the rest of his life.

As a result of the intrigues of the Manchu authorities, who were acting on the principle of “divide and conquer”, there was an appearance of conflict between the Dalai Lama and the Bogdo Gegen.¹¹⁹ In fact, both of the hierarchs maintained normal relations, but were forced to do so secretly. The hierarchs met several times.¹²⁰ The content of these meetings is unknown. According to A. D. Khitrovo, the Russian Border Commissioner in Kyakhta Town, the Dalai Lama and the influential Mongol Khutuktus, gegens and princes “irrevocably decided to separate from China as an independent federal state, carrying out this operation under the patronage and support from Russia, taking care to avoid the bloodshed”.¹²¹ Perhaps this decision was made just then. It was motivated



The Tibetan Lama the 8th Bogdo Gegen, the last Great Khan of Mongolia. Icon, enamel on metal (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)

116 Shakabpa, 1988.

117 Kozlov, 2004.

118 Laird, 2006, p.225.

119 For more details see: Kuzmin and Oyuunchimeg, 2009, p.59–64.

120 Badarchi and Dugarsuren, 2000, c.37.

121 Belov, 1996, p.138.

by the fact that the Qing leadership began to violate its relations with Mongolia and Tibet, having started the conversion of these countries into ordinary provinces. The most important component was their impending colonization by the Chinese (Han). In this way Beijing hoped to strengthen the Qing state in the face of the Western powers' aggression.

Having seized Lhasa, the British began negotiations with the Tibetans. An agreement was developed by early September. The British wanted the Dalai Lama to sign it as acting sovereign of Tibet. The Amban and the Tibetan representatives wrote to the Dalai Lama asking for his return to Lhasa.¹²² When it became clear that the hierarch would not return, the Amban (probably not without Younghusband's influence) advised the Qing Emperor "to temporarily seize the rank of the Dalai Lama", and "appoint" the Panchen Lama in his place. This was contrary to the Buddhist canons. However, the absurd decree was issued. Undoubtedly, this decision was authorized by Cixi and not by the Emperor Zaitian, for he decided nothing.

The Chinese put up a poster announcing the imperial decree on the "disposing" of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, but it was torn down by the Tibetans.¹²³ After the decree was issued, an agreement with the British was reached in Lhasa on September 7, 1904. This agreement is usually called the Lhasa Convention. According to this Convention, the Tibetan Government accepted the border between Sikkim and Tibet, which was established by the English-Qing treaty in 1890 and the Regulations of 1893; it was obliged to open markets for trade in the three cities of Tibet, and paid five hundred thousand pounds to Britain as a tribute; and it agreed not to allow foreign powers to interfere in Tibetan affairs and to form concessions there.¹²⁴ In Art. 9 the Tibetan Government pledged that "No portion of Tibetan territory shall be ceded, sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise given to occupation, to any foreign power" without the consent of the British Government. British representatives could visit Lhasa. In Art. 5 the Tibetan Government promised not to provide resources (in form of either goods or money) for any reason to any power or its representative.

In accordance with this article, the Qing Empire also fell under the notion of a foreign power, which was reflected in the Art. 3 of the 1906 English-Qing Agreement, and Art. 6 of the 1914 Agreement in Simla.¹²⁵ Manchurian ambans as well as representatives of Bhutan and Nepal witnessed the Convention. The Amban requested that the signing ceremony take place at his residence, but Younghusband and the Regent offered the audience hall of Potala, and the latter prevailed. During the signing there were two hundred British soldiers in the hall, with the palace

122 Shaumian, 2000.

123 For text see: Waddell, 1906, p.342.

124 Waddell, 1906; Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

125 Shakabpa, 1988.



*Qing decree of “deposition” of the 13th Dalai Lama, which was torn up by people in Lhasa
(Waddell, 1906)*

being surrounded by troops and artillery. This agreement considered Tibet to be an independent state. The document has been negatively perceived in Russia, Germany and, of course, by the Qing authorities. The latter refused to accept the Convention, which did not recognize their authority over Tibet.

British occupation forces left Lhasa on the 23rd of September 1904, but they stayed in the Chumbi Valley until the entire contribution was paid. The Governor-General of India ratified the agreement, but reduced the size of contribution and dates of its payment on the 11th of November.

The Tibet issue was an important point in negotiations between Russia and Great Britain. Diplomats of both countries continued negotiations in London and St. Petersburg even during the advance of Younghusband’s detachment through Tibet. In April 1904, with the Russian-Japanese War already started, Edward 7th held talks with the Russian Envoy, A. P. Izvolsky (the future Minister of Foreign Affairs), and expressed a desire to establish friendly relations with Russia.¹²⁶ The Tibetan Policy of Russia contained two contradicting opposites: the desire to avoid the occupation of Tibet by the British and the desire to reach an amicable agreement on Tibet as a first step towards a rapprochement with Great Britain with help of

126 Shaumian, 2000.

mediation by the French, which subsequently led to the creation of the Entente.¹²⁷ The Russian Foreign Ministry decided to wait and to survey the situation while keeping an eye on both London and Beijing. However, Europe was the priority. On the other hand, Nicholas 2nd, the military leadership and public opinion in Russia were all alarmed by the British intervention in Tibet. The Tsar secretly sent a group of Kalmyk Buddhists there. In 1905, they visited Lhasa, met with the Tibetan authorities, hierarchs and the amban.

Feeling the pressure of mounting criticism, Britain agreed to a special agreement with the Qing Empire. On the 27th of April 1906, an addition to the Lhasa agreement was signed in Beijing. It involved the transfer of contracts signed on behalf of Tibet to the Qing Government, with the Qing Empire being now excluded from the “foreign powers” definition. Now the Manchu Emperor had greater responsibility for the integrity of Tibet when compared to such responsibility of the British Government. The Tibetan Government did not accept this agreement as it was a breach of the “priest – patron” relations between the Dalai Lama and the Emperor. The conclusion of the Tibetan Government was that “This Treaty cannot be regarded as binding by anyone”.¹²⁸

On the 31st of August 1907, in St. Petersburg, the “Convention between Great Britain and Russia Relating to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet” was signed. Accordingly, Iran was then divided into spheres of influence, Afghanistan was declared as a buffer state, and both powers pledged not to interfere with Tibetan affairs. At the same time, they recognized Beijing’s “suzerainty” over Tibet, and pledged to communicate with the latter only through Beijing. In this way Russia acquired illusory gains in Persia and Afghanistan in exchange for a refusal to support the country which was important both from its relative cultural and geopolitical standpoint. The two powers decided the fate of Tibet on its behalf and without its participation.

The British invasion of Tibet scared the Qing Government. They feared that the British, the Russians and the French would build a new base in their crumbling empire.¹²⁹ So the Manchu Government paid tribute to the British for Tibet, although the latter did not ask them to do that. Having failed to provide any assistance in repelling the aggressors, it now embarked on the “development” of Tibet.¹³⁰

In December 1903, the Governor of the Sichuan Province together with some other officials sent a memorandum to the Emperor, proposing to “develop the border areas of Sichuan”, that is, Kham.¹³¹ Introduction of agriculture, mining and

127 Andreev, 2006a.

128 Political & Secret files of the India Office, London/10/147, Bell to Government of India, 16 May 1910, Enclosure Tsongdu to Bell — in: Van Walt, 1987, p.38.

129 Van Walt, 1987.

130 Kychanov and Savitsky, 1975.

131 Sperling, 2003, p.70.

the arrival of Chinese settlers were to be these measures of “development”. Up until the beginning of 20th century, Tibet did not have any significant Chinese colonies.¹³² Suppression of “stubborn barbarians” (i.e. the local Tibetan nomads) was to be carried out by an armed force.¹³³ In early 1904 two members of the Sichuan Mines Bureau arrived in Bathang and, seeing that the land was fertile, began to discuss the prospects of its “development”. Around this time Feng Chuan, Deputy Amban, who was traveling to Chamdo, stopped in Bathang and met them. As a result, their collective decision to launch a “development” was made and a small field was selected for that purpose. The Chinese started to work there.

Impressed by Younghusband’s entry into Lhasa, the Qing Government decided to establish its authority in the area Nyarong that was subordinate to the Tibetan Government. This directive was sent to the Amban in Lhasa and to the Deputy Amban, who was in Bathang. The situation there became tense. Troops that arrived there with the Deputy Amban started to train using an unseen foreign system, the Chinese were ploughing more and more land, a French Catholic mission had opened in Bathang, and there were circulating rumours of an impending eviction of all Tibetan officials.

In the spring of 1905 an uprising started. It was directed against foreign expansion, both Chinese and Western. Although monasteries were its centres, it spread to all segments of the Tibetan society, because every family had someone who was a monk. Chuan Feng and several other people were killed, and the Catholic mission was ruined.¹³⁴ Using this as a pretext, the army of Ma Weichi, a Muslim General from Sichuan, entered Bathang in the middle of summer in 1905. Two months later the army was joined by troops of Zhao Erfeng, a Chinese General, which had 7,500 soldiers. 322 monks were executed. Ma then returned to Sichuan, but Zhao remained in Kham. Only Bathang and Lithang were under his control. The population was hostile towards the invaders and the revolt was spreading. Zhao did punitive raids to suppress it. They were accompanied by destruction, looting, mass repression and killings of Tibetans.¹³⁵ 1,317 people were killed, mostly monks. Six monasteries were destroyed completely or at least were significantly damaged, and metal objects of worship were melted down into coins. The Tibetans called this general “Zhao the butcher” for his cruelty.¹³⁶

Zhao Erfeng did not only encourage the settlement of the Chinese in Kham, he also tried to convert Tibetans into Chinese. The names of their settlements were replaced by Chinese names.¹³⁷ In 1906, the General promulgated forty-three

132 Kozlov, 1947.

133 Sperling, 2003, p.70.

134 Sperling, 2003, p.73–75.

135 Leontiev, 1956.

136 Shakabpa, 1988.

137 Kolmas, 1967.

new rules that had to be followed in Bathang. Residents were ordered to dress and speak in Chinese, to follow Confucianism, to live by Chinese laws, to take Chinese names, to wear Chinese hairstyles, to bury their parents by the Chinese tradition, etc.¹³⁸ Chinese residents of Sichuan were urged to move to “free” lands of Eastern Tibet.¹³⁹ In 1907, Zhao Erfeng troops confiscated very large quantities of grain from Tibetans of Southern Kham. By the end of 1907 and the beginning of 1908, the Tibetan administration in the occupied territories was replaced by Chinese military authorities.¹⁴⁰ Kham’s old administrative system was eliminated. Such were the fruits of the new Qing policy: turning “external” countries into colonies.

In April 1908, in Calcutta, the Regulations of trade with Tibet were signed. This was meant as a development of the 1906 agreement, with Beijing obliging to provide police service in the markets and trade routes. After that, according to a report that was sent by the Russian emissary Ya. I. Korostovets to the Russian Foreign Ministry, the Beijing administration started to seek ways of implementing unitary imperial control in Tibet.¹⁴¹ Beijing decided to split the power there. The Dalai Lama was to be concerned purely with matters of religion, and all administrative matters were to be dealt with by the Manchus.¹⁴² Foreign representatives in Beijing were informed that all diplomatic issues concerning Tibet now had to go through the Beijing Government, and all agreements that were signed without participation of the Beijing Government would be deemed invalid. In the same year, Zhao Erfeng was appointed as the High Commissioner for Border Affairs, and as the Second Amban in Lhasa. He decided to establish a regional government in Chamdo and then march his troops to the Tibetan capital.¹⁴³ The Qing government explained that this would be beneficial for policing the roads and even asked the British to allow troops through India, which was refused.¹⁴⁴ The Dalai Lama asked for urgent assistance from Great Britain, Russia, France, Japan and Nepal. The only result of this was a submittal of an inefficient British protest to Beijing.

The empathy of Emperor Nicholas 2nd, the Russian military and the public was not enough to provision armed assistance to Tibet or warrant that the Dalai Lama go to Russia or be supplied with a Cossack escort. All of that was blocked by the Russian Foreign Ministry.¹⁴⁵ It was entangled in a complicated diplomatic game with opponents of Tibet’s independence. The Foreign Ministry’s reluctance to incur the wrath of London and Beijing was a greater incentive than the benefits Russia

138 Kolmas, 1967; Sperling, 2003.

139 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

140 Shaumian, 2000.

141 Belov, 2005.

142 Shaumian, 2000.

143 Shakabpa, 1988.

144 Van Walt, 1987.

145 Andreev, 2006a, p.420.

could acquire in Central Asia. Thus, the Manchu Government prevailed. The 13th Dalai Lama had to return from Mongolia through China. In 1906, he moved from Khalkha in Kokonor, and then proceeded through Xian to Beijing.

He was met at the railway station by the ministers of internal and foreign affairs, as well as the Mayor of Beijing.¹⁴⁶ The Dalai Lama stayed at the Huansi monastery. He was given a ceremonial reception on the 27th of September of 1908, although it was different from what it was before. Cixi sanctioned ritual genuflections to be performed by the Dalai Lama in front of her.¹⁴⁷ Then, on her birthday, according to the court records, all of her dignitaries, the Dalai Lama and the Emperor performed deep bows in front of her. A magnificent reception was given in honour of the Dalai Lama in Beijing as Cixi particularly liked the ritual Buddhist dances and reading of holy books.¹⁴⁸ The Dalai Lama was “returned” his title of “Great, Good, self-subsistent Buddha” with “faithful and submissive” added in.¹⁴⁹ During the talks, he demanded that the Qing troops and officials be removed from Kham, and stressed that the Qing State relations with Tibet had always been based on religious patronage and mutual assistance. Cixi assured that the old attitudes had not changed, but the Foreign Minister expressed his dissatisfaction by the fact that the Dalai Lama insisted on purely religious relations.¹⁵⁰ An agreement to reduce the number of Qing troops and officials in the Kham was then reached.

These episodes show an interesting feature of the former concubine and her court, where extreme superstition was in conflict with Buddhism and Confucianism. Cixi often compared herself with Guan Yin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and Mercy, which is associated with the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (with Dalai Lama being its emanation). The Empress Dowager even liked her court to refer to her as “venerable Buddha” and other similar epithets.¹⁵¹ All this did not prevent the “deposition” of the Dalai Lama, the “designation” of the Panchen Lama, the authorization of the humiliating ceremony, the “return of the rank”, blatant violations of the main Buddhist precepts, and much more. At the same time the legitimate Emperor of the Qing State lived practically under house arrest and was subjected to public humiliation.

Cixi died on the 15th of November, one day after she poisoned Emperor Zaitian.¹⁵² The Dalai Lama conducted posthumous rituals for both of them in Beijing’s Yonghegong Monastery, and then attended the enthronement ceremony of the last Manchu Emperor, Puyi (era name: Xuan-tong).¹⁵³ While in Beijing, the Dalai Lama

146 Shakabpa, 1988.

147 Smith, 1996, p.166; Andreev, 2006a.

148 Sidikhmenov, 1985, p.256.

149 Andreev, 2006a.

150 Shakabpa, 1988.

151 Sidikhmenov, 1985.

152 The cause of Guangxu’s death was determined...

153 Smith, 1996, p.167.

tried to initiate relations with Britain, France, Germany, USA and Japan, however Chinese officials disregarded ethics and did everything to prevent this.

In late 1908, the Dalai Lama moved to Kumbum Monastery in Amdo. He also received a letter from the Tibetan authorities, in which he was asked to return to Lhasa. In 1909, a new Qing army made its way from Chamdo into Tibet, yet again under the pretext of protecting the trade centres as was prescribed in the regulations of 1908.¹⁵⁴ The soldiers had no food provisions so they robbed the local population approximately every fifteen miles. In September of that same year, Amban Liang Yu issued a statement that Tibet had been a Manchu colony for more than two hundred years, then in November, Zhao Erfeng advised the Beijing authorities to convert Tibet into an ordinary province as quickly as possible.¹⁵⁵ In 1910, he proposed to make the territory between Dajianlu (Dartsedo) and Kongpo Gemdy (120 miles east of Lhasa) a new province of the Qing State, in fact, a Chinese colony. Implementation of this decision was prevented by the Xinhai Revolution, but, a quarter of a century later, these lands were used to create the Sikang Province (“The Western Kham”).

Finally in December of 1909, the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa. He entered into negotiations with the Amban regarding the threat of Zhao Erfeng’s invasion. The Deputy Amban assured him that troops would be distributed to guard the trade centres and would not interfere in the internal affairs of Tibet, and promised that the total number of soldiers would not exceed one thousand.¹⁵⁶ However, a written confirmation of this, that was sent the next day, contained only general assurances of the Amban. In February 1910, a vanguard of 2,700 Qing soldiers arrived in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama fled again, this time heading for India. Having learnt this to be the case, the Amban Liang Yu chased him and ordered that his head be delivered to him. But the Tibetan people were able to delay the Chinese soldiers, and the Dalai Lama escaped to India. Chinese soldiers shot and killed several people, fired at Jokhang and Potala,¹⁵⁷ took the Dalai Lama’s property from the Potala and Norbulingka, and took the contents of the treasury of the Tibetan Government. Arms depots in Lhasa, coins and ammunition factories were all captured, and the houses of ministers who had fled with the Dalai Lama, were robbed from time to time.

On the 25th of February 1910, a decree was issued on behalf of the Qing Emperor. It proclaimed that the Dalai Lama was “disposed of his title” for the second time as a punishment for his flight from Lhasa, his ingratitude, disobedience to the Emperor, and his incitement of the Tibetans to resist.¹⁵⁸ The decree noted

154 Shakabpa, 1988.

155 Shaumian, 2000.

156 Van Walt, 1987.

157 Shakabpa, 1988.

158 For text see: Belov, 2005, p.135–137.

that the Qing soldiers were sent into Tibet in order to establish peace and to provide security to trade centres that were open. The Amban was ordered to find some boys with miraculous signs as soon as possible, to conduct the Golden Urn draw and to submit a proposal to gain permission for the chosen candidate to spread Buddhism. As we can see, this decree, as the one previously published by Cixi violated the “priest – patron” relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu Dynasty, and represented a defilement of religious traditions. But it too could not be considered to have been emperor’s will as the Empress Dowager Longyu held power with the infant Emperor Puyi having no control whatsoever.

Soon after the publication of the decree, the Russian Ambassador in Beijing presented a note to the Qing Government in which he encouraged them to refrain from taking any hasty steps with regard to Buddhism and the spiritual leader of Buddhists in Russia, the Dalai Lama.¹⁵⁹ In response, the Manager of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Waiwu Bu) stated that the “demotion” and “defrockment” was concerning the Dalai Lama personally and had no relation to Russian Buddhists or Buddhism in general.

The 9th Panchen Lama arrived in Lhasa and began to take on some of the responsibilities of the Dalai Lama, but he refused the illegal invitation to become the Regent of Tibet. All power in Lhasa was usurped by the Qing generals. The Beijing Government announced that Nepal and Bhutan were vassals of its Empire, and claimed sovereign rights over Tibet—allegedly the suzerainty stage had passed by that time.¹⁶⁰ However, the Dalai Lama and his ministers rejected these claims, and the United Kingdom, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim all sent protests to the Qing Government.

The Tibetans did not submit to the Qing governors. They began to send taxes to Darjeeling (where the Dalai Lama was at the time) and not to Lhasa. So the Qing guards were then placed along the border and were told to frisk-search all those who went to India. Tensions grew in the east and in the south of Tibet. The Qing Government was forced to begin negotiations. They suggested the Dalai Lama return and resume his spiritual guidance, but this was declined.¹⁶¹ The Dalai Lama wrote a letter to the representative Lo Ditai in which he explained the reasons for his departure to India:¹⁶² “Since the Emperor has done everything on the recommendation of the Qing Amban in Lhasa, without considering the independence of Tibet and the religious relationship between our two countries, I feel there is no further use in my negotiating directly with China. I have lost confidence in China and in finding any solution in consultation with the Chinese. <...> It is not possible for China and Tibet to have the same relationship as before”.

159 Belov, 2005, p.143.

160 Bell, 1992, p.114.

161 Van Walt, 1987.

162 Shakabpa, 1988, p.236.

In 1910, the 13th Dalai Lama left Darjeeling for Calcutta to remind Britain of its obligations under the 1904 Lhasa Convention.¹⁶³ Despite the obstacles created by the British authorities, the heirarch continued to seek contacts with Russia from which he hoped to get support. In 1910, he met with Russian Orientalist, F.I. Shcherbatskoi, in 1912 with the Russian Consul-General in Calcutta, B.K. Arseniev. The latter gave the Dalai Lama a letter from Nicholas 2nd which was couched in general terms.¹⁶⁴ For the most part, the Tsar wrote about the consent between Russia and Britain on the Tibet issue. But, the letter does indicate that the two countries did not recognize the “demoting” of the Dalai Lama by the official Beijing.

However, as before, the Tsar’s empathy towards the Tibetans and Dorjiev’s attempts at a solution in St. Petersburg yet again proved to be inadequate. In 1906–1910, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia was an Anglophile, A.P. Izvolsky. Then he was replaced by another Anglophile, S.D. Sazonov. Growing disagreements with the objective ally, Germany, increasingly drew Russia in an alliance with its objective rival, the United Kingdom. In terms of geopolitics, this alliance was advantageous to Britain, but not to Russia and Germany. The collision of two continental powers weakened their position but strengthened the island empires — Britain and the U.S. In Russia itself, there was a growing revolutionary movement that was destroying the country from within. Hence, the Dalai Lama could not get any support from Russia, nor could he go to Europe for negotiations there.

During the reign of the Manchu Dynasty, the highest lamas in Tibet integrated their country. Their relationship with the emperors followed the “priest – patron” principle and prevented transformation of Tibet into a province of the Qing Empire. With the weakening of the Qing State in the second half of 19th to the beginning of the 20th century, the United Kingdom used force to “open up” Tibet and provoked the expansion of Beijing. “Non-interference” of the latter during the British aggression on Tibet in the years 1903–1904 is connected with the weakness of the Qing Empire. By signing agreements (in which Tibet’s status was incorrectly interpreted in European terms) with third party countries behind Tibet’s back, the United Kingdom provided the basis for subsequent claims of China’s sovereignty over that country. Charles Bell correctly noted that “By going in and then coming out again, we knocked the Tibetans down and left them there for the first-comer to kick”.¹⁶⁵ First came the Manchus. But the legitimate authorities of Tibet did not acknowledge their suzerainty. Their hopes for Russia’s help did not materialise.

163 Shakabpa, 1988.

164 For text see: Belov, 2005, p.166–167.

165 Quoted in Van Walt, 1987, p.39.

After S.D. Sazonov became the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Russia moved away from previous agreements with Britain and gave it complete freedom of action in Tibet.¹⁶⁶ Due to the geopolitical miscalculations of the Russian Foreign Ministry, the contacts between the Russian Empire and Tibet became confined to purely religious matters, and Tibet became recognized as the British sphere of influence.

Shortly before the collapse of the Qing Empire, its Government changed its policy. Trying to resist the expansion of the Europeans, the crumbling dynasty decided to turn the former dependent countries into the “frontier” provinces of China proper. Dependent people (Tibetans, Mongols, and others) were converted into the usual subjects, and their lands into Chinese colonies. This hastened the collapse of the Manchu monarchy, the revolution and the collapse of the empire. Atrocities of the Qing soldiers in Tibet, the annexation of the territory and attempts to “depose” and “appoint” the Dalai Lama led to the cessation of “priest – patron” relationships. This was done not by the emperors themselves (who then had no power), but by Empress Dowager Cixi and the Regent Empress Dowager Longyu, who ruled the country. This meant a complete breakdown of former relations between the Qing Empire and Tibet.

166 Andreev, 2006a.

CHAPTER 4

Last Years of Independence



In 1911, the Xinhai Revolution began. It led to the collapse of the Qing Empire and subsequent proclamation of the Republic of China. The Chinese soldiers in Tibet became divided. Some were supporting the monarchy, while others the republic.¹ Chinese soldiers in Lhasa were members of a secret society “Ge Lao Hui”.² After learning about the revolution, they become demoralized and turned into a gang of robbers, just as it happened later in Mongolia. In November of 1911 they took the Manchu Amban Liang Yu hostage, and elected another Manchu as a the new amban, General Zhong Ying. The latter bought this loyalty by giving soldiers a salary that totalled 250,000 rupees. In the same year, Zhao Erfeng was made the Governor-General of Sichuan Province, and captured Nyarong. He was killed by one of the revolutionaries in the following year. In 1912, the Tibetans from Kham and monks from Chamdo tried to liberate the city from the Chinese garrison, but were defeated. In the same year, the Chinese destroyed the Kalden Jampaling Monastery in Chamdo, which was founded in 1436–1444. When the Tibetans regained Chamdo in 1917, they rebuilt the monastery again.

Demoralized Chinese soldiers were arriving in Lhasa from other garrisons in Tibet, as the revolutionaries were allowing them to return home. The guerrilla movement was spreading. The Qing garrisons of Gyantse and Shigatse left for India. Tibetan ruling circles were divided in their attitudes towards the Chinese troops.³ The monks at Ganden and Sera actively participated in anti-Chinese struggle, whereas the monks of Drepung and some members of the Tibetan Government did not want to break ties with the Chinese authorities. The monks of Sera killed the First Minister, his sons and officials. Then Sichuan soldiers laid siege to the monastery. The monks broke through the siege and moved towards Lhasa. They were supported by armed ordinary people. From the 8th of February to the 19th of June 1912, Lhasa was engulfed in street battles. Then, through the mediation of

1 Macdonald, 1932.

2 Shakabpa, 1988.

3 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

the Nepalese Resident, an agreement was reached under which the Chinese were to surrender their weapons and ammunition to the Tibetans with the latter obliging to provide them with transportation and food so that Chinese would go back into China via India. The Chinese resident and twenty of his guards were allowed to remain in Lhasa.

An agreement was signed on August 4, 1912. It contained the following main points:⁴ 1. The Amban and his small retinue were to remain in Lhasa. 2. Two hundred Chinese soldiers and bodyguards would also be able to stay. 3. The remaining Chinese troops were to hand in their weapons and ammunition and return to China. 4. Arms and ammunition would be sealed in Lhasa. 5. Tibetans who fought on the Chinese side were promised forgiveness. About five hundred unarmed Chinese soldiers were to be led by General Zhong back to China via India.

Meanwhile, the President of China appointed Zhong Ying to be “a senior officer in service in Tibet”.⁵ Then, Beijing sent further secret instructions, which delayed the troops’ withdrawal. On December 14th, with further mediation by the Nepalese, another agreement was signed which appointed an exact day for the withdrawal of Chinese troops, the 16th of December. The Chinese were not supposed to make stops in Tibet, with their weapons and ammunition remaining in Lhasa under supervision of the Nepalese. On the 6th of January 1913, the Chinese, led by Zhong Ying and guarded by Gurkhas, left Lhasa. In 1913, the Chinese government abolished the institution of ambans. And in 1914, Zhong Ying was blamed for failures in Tibet and subsequently executed in Beijing.

The events of 1912 in Tibet took place while China attempted to legitimize its claim to that state. On April 8, 1912 Yuan Shikai, the interim President of China, issued a decree which abolished the status of Mongolia, Tibet and East Turkestan as vassal territories and converted them into ordinary Chinese provinces:⁶

“At the present time, when the five nationalities are constituting a single Republic, Mongolia, Tibet and Turkestan must be included in the territory of the Republic of China on that very same basis, with the peoples that inhabit them: Mongols, Tibetans and Muslims must now be considered as citizens of the Republic of China. Consequently, the terms that were used by the monarchy, such as a colony and a vassal, and other such types of ownership may no longer be applied to nations above. From now on, the order of management of Mongolia, Tibet and Turkestan must be such that it would facilitate the unification of both the internal governance of the state, and all of its constituent peoples. The Republican Government did not create a special ministry for management of affairs relating to the administration of the colonies, this was because Mongolia, Tibet and Turkestan are considered on par with the provinces of the China proper. Hence, the future administration of all of

4 Kuleshov, 1992.

5 Van Walt, 1987.

6 For text see: Belov, 2005, p.178–179.

the areas mentioned above will be included in the internal management system of the state. <...> Meanwhile, since the general approach regarding internal controls has not yet been established, all of the current cases relating to Mongolia, Tibet and Turkestan must be dealt with under previous regulations”.

Thus, Yuan Shikai followed Qing authorities’ violations of the old agreements, which provoked the national liberation movement of the Mongols and the Tibetans. In addition, the presidential decree was illegitimate. China was only a part of the Qing Empire. This part claimed ownership of the other parts with the Republican power declaring “inheritance” of the feudal rights of the Monarchy. This decree was reinforced by Yuan Shikai’s orders to the Sichuan and Yunnan troops to come to the aid of the Chinese garrison in Lhasa. Great Britain announced its recognition of Chinese suzerainty, but not sovereignty over Tibet.⁷ Further, Britain refused to recognize the Republic of China, until this military campaign was stopped. This made Yuan Shikai halt his troops. Also, he sent a telegram to the Dalai Lama, in which he apologized for the excesses of the Chinese military and reported on the “restoration” of the Dalai Lama in his dignity.⁸

The Dalai Lama replied that he did not ask for this since he intended to exercise authority in Tibet by himself. A similar statement came from the other theocratic Monarch, the 8th Bogdo Gegen Jetsundampa Khutuktu. His enthronement as Bogdo Khan (Great Khan) of Mongolia on 29th December 1911 marked the proclamation of independence of the country. Now Yuan Shikai called Bogdo Khan to re-establish ties with China. Khutuktu replied quite reasonably that the Mongols took an oath of allegiance to the Qing Dynasty, the revolution broke this bond and formed two countries: Mongolia and China, with neither country being eligible to lay claims to the other. “The fact that you became head of the Chinese people, and I became that of the Mongolian people, is the most correct solution to the question, and this seems to give no reason to ferment mutual hatred”.⁹ As we can see, the situation in Mongolia and Tibet developed in a similar manner.

On the 11th January 1913, in Niislel Khuree (formerly Ikh Khuree), the capital of Outer Mongolia, the Treaty between Tibet and Mongolia was signed. The preamble stated that “Mongolia and Tibet, having freed themselves from the dynasty of the Manchus and separated from China, formed their own independent States”.¹⁰ In this treaty, the two States and both of their rulers, the Dalai Lama and the Jetsundampa Khutuktu, recognized one another. Both States pledged to protect the interests of Buddhism, to provide assistance to travellers, to promote mutual trade, to start businesses, to lend to each other, to exchange authorized delegations. The conclusion of the Treaty was preceded by negotiations of the

7 China can not have Tibet, 1912.

8 Shakabpa, 1988.

9 In: Belov, 1999, p.103.

10 Van Walt, 1987, p.320–321.

Dalai Lama's representative A. Dorjiev with Ravdan, the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia. Dorjiev travelled from Niislel Khuree to St. Petersburg after this signing.¹¹ There he handed the government two letters from the Dalai Lama and "The Memorandum on the Situation in Tibet". The Dalai Lama asked Russia and Britain to recognize the independence of his country and offered to receive their diplomatic representatives in Lhasa. The request was not granted. With the impending war in Europe, both empires did not want to get in the way of each other or initiate conflicts with China. Tibet remained a "bargaining chip" in the "big game" of the above powers.

The 13th Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa on January 23, 1913. From then on and until his death, he exercised complete authority over Tibet. He issued a declaration in which he wrote the following:¹² "I, the Dalai Lama, most omniscient possessor of the Buddhist faith, whose title was conferred by the Lord Buddha's command from the glorious land of India, speak to you as follows:

I am speaking to all classes of Tibetan people. Lord Buddha, from the glorious country of India, prophesied that the reincarnations of Avalokiteshvara, through successive rulers from the early religious kings to the present day, would look after the welfare of Tibet.

During the time of Genghis Khan and Altan Khan of the Mongols, the Ming Dynasty of the Chinese, and the Qing Dynasty of the Manchus, Tibet and China cooperated on the basis of the benefactor and priest relationship. A few years ago, the Chinese authorities in Sichuan and Yunnan endeavored to colonize our territory. They brought large numbers of troops into central Tibet on the pretext of policing the trade marts. I, therefore, left Lhasa with my ministers for the Indo-Tibetan border, hoping to clarify to the Manchu Emperor by wire that the existing relationship between Tibet and China had been that of patron and priest and had not been based on the subordination of one to the other. There was no other choice for me but to cross the border, because Chinese troops were following with the intention of taking me alive or dead.

On my arrival in India, I dispatched several telegrams to the Emperor; but his reply to my demands was delayed by corrupt officials at Peking. Meanwhile, the Manchu empire collapsed. The Tibetans were encouraged to expel the Chinese from central Tibet. I, too, returned safely to my rightful and sacred country, and I am now in the course of driving out the remnants of Chinese troops from Do Kham in Eastern Tibet. Now, the Chinese intention of colonizing Tibet under the patron-priest relationship has faded like a rainbow in the sky. Having once again achieved for ourselves a period of happiness and peace, I have now allotted to all of you the following duties to be carried out without negligence:

11 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

12 In: Shakabpa, 1988, p.246-248.

1. Peace and happiness in this world can only be maintained by preserving the faith of Buddhism. It is, therefore, essential to preserve all Buddhist institutions in Tibet, such as the Jokhang temple and Ramoche in Lhasa, Samye, and Traduk in southern Tibet, and the three great monasteries, etc.

2. The various Buddhist sects in Tibet should be kept in a distinct and pure form. Buddhism should be taught, learned, and meditated upon properly. Except for special persons, the administrators of monasteries are forbidden to trade, loan money, deal in any kind of livestock, and/or subjugate another's subjects.

3. The Tibetan government's civil and military officials, when collecting taxes or dealing with their subject citizens, should carry out their duties with fair and honest judgment so as to benefit the government without hurting the interests of the subject citizens. Some of the central government officials posted at Ngari Korsum in western Tibet, and Do Kham in eastern Tibet, are coercing their subject citizens to purchase commercial goods at high prices and have imposed transportation rights exceeding the limit permitted by the government. Houses, properties and lands belonging to subject citizens have been confiscated on the pretext of minor breaches of the law. Furthermore, the amputation of citizens' limbs has been carried out as a form of punishment. Henceforth, such severe punishments are forbidden.

4. Tibet is a country with rich natural resources; but it is not scientifically advanced like other lands. We are a small, religious, and independent nation. To keep up with the rest of the world, we must defend our country. In view of past invasions by foreigners, our people may have to face certain difficulties, which they must disregard. To safeguard and maintain the independence of our country, one and all should voluntarily work hard. Our subject citizens residing near the borders should be alert and keep the government informed by special messenger of any suspicious developments. Our subjects must not create major clashes between two nations because of minor incidents.

5. Tibet, although thinly populated, is an extensive country. Some local officials and landholders are jealously obstructing other people from developing vacant lands, even though they are not doing so themselves. People with such intentions are enemies of the State and our progress. From now on, no one is allowed to obstruct anyone else from cultivating whatever vacant lands are available. Land taxes will not be collected until three years have passed; after that the land cultivator will have to pay taxes to the government and to the landlord every year, proportionate to the rent. The land will belong to the cultivator.

Your duties to the government and to the people will have been achieved when you have executed all that I have said here. This letter must be posted and proclaimed in every district of Tibet, and a copy kept in the records of the offices in every district".

Thus, Tibet has officially confirmed her independence. Since then and until 1951 the Tibetan Government exercised full control over the external and internal

affairs of the country.¹³ Nevertheless, a list of Tibetan members of the first Chinese Parliament was published on May 15, 1913.¹⁴ These were the Tibetan people from inland areas of China, who, of course, did not represent all of the Tibetan people. In the same year the Dalai Lama appointed the Kalon Jampa Tendar to be the Governor of Kham and sent him there, along with eight generals.

The British Government frequently offered Yuan Shikai to solve the Tibetan issue through negotiations with the participation of the Tibetans.¹⁵ To this end, in March 1913, Yuan Shikai appointed two representatives in Chamdo. However the negotiations were suspended. They resumed on 3rd October 1913 in the Indian town of Simla, with Tibetan, Chinese and British delegations all taking part. At the opening of the Conference the Tibetan representative explained the position of his country, in particular the use of the “priest – patron” concept for conduct of its relations with the Qing Empire. The Chinese launched a long list of arguments for the fact that Tibet was an integral part of their country:¹⁶ it was conquered by Genghis Khan; the title of 5th Dalai Lama was bestowed by the Manchu Emperor; the Chinese Army helped against the Gurkhas and Dzungars; during the time of Emperor Xuanye, Tibetans asked for the amban and Chinese garrison to be stationed in Lhasa; Zhao Erfeng went to Kham for an investigation; following the British invasion of Tibet, Beijing paid Tibetan tribute; it was necessary to restore the status of Tibet with respect to Britain and the Qing to its state of 1908. Many of these provisions were provided without supporting documents.

Tibetan officials refuted the Chinese arguments one after another. The Conference was dragged out because of the disagreements. The representative of Great Britain, McMahon proposed to divide Tibet into two zones: the “Outer Tibet” and the “Inner Tibet” similar to the division of Mongolia. Accordingly, the “inner” part was to fall under China, while “outer” was to receive full autonomy. Although Tibet was to split into Outer and Inner parts, it was recognised as a unified state both geographically and politically.¹⁷ China had only nominal suzerainty over Outer Tibet, but received great privileges in Inner Tibet, a fact that is difficult to reconcile with the notion of suzerainty, which was entered into the agreement by the British.

To resolve the dispute, L. Shetra, the First Minister of the Tibetan Government, agreed to the proposal of McMahon to sign an agreement which would mention the suzerainty of China over Tibet.¹⁸ The agreement established a Tibetan-Indian border. This border went down in history as the “McMahon Line”. On 24–25

13 Shakya, 1999.

14 Ya Hanzhang, 1993 — in: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

15 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

16 Shakabpa, 1988.

17 Van Walt, 1987.

18 Shakabpa, 1988.

of March 1914, the Tibetan and British sides exchanged notes, which sealed the agreement. On April 27, the heads of Tibetan, Chinese and British delegations signed the draft Convention proposed by the British. Its Article 2 stated that the Governments of Great Britain and China recognize that Tibet is under the suzerainty of China and also recognize the autonomy of Outer Tibet, undertake to respect the territorial integrity and to refrain from interfering in management of Outer Tibet (this includes election of the Dalai Lama), which should remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government in Lhasa. The Chinese Government obliges not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province. The British Government agrees not to annex Tibet or any part of it.¹⁹ China was able to assign one of her officials to Lhasa along with no more than three hundred guards. The British trade representative in Gyantse was to be able to visit Lhasa for consultations with the Government of Tibet. In Article 9, it was stated that the border of Tibet and India and the “frontier” between Outer and Inner Tibet (i.e. the border of Tibet with the Chinese provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan) are such as shown on the map.

However, China’s representative, referring to his instructions from Beijing, refused to sign the Convention as the Chinese leadership contested this border. Later it was stated in the PRC that the British decided to tear away ninety thousand square kilometres of “Chinese” territory along the Tibet-Indian border as compensation for the independence of Tibet.²⁰ The British representative had no authority to put down his signature if the Convention was not signed by China. Therefore, the Convention was never signed.

However, McMahon and Shetra signed a bilateral Declaration on July 3, 1914. It said: “We, the representatives of Great Britain and Tibet, have made this declaration to announce the recognition of the signed Convention which was necessary to the Governments of Great Britain and Tibet; we have also come to an agreement that the Chinese Government must sign the Convention to enjoy the privileges deriving from it”.²¹ From the Tibetan side, in addition to the signature and the seal of the first minister, seals of the National Assembly, the Dalai Lama and the great monasteries of Drepung, Sera and Ganden were also attached to the Declaration.

A Chinese signature was not acquired. Thus, Great Britain could not do for Tibet what Russia did for Mongolia, which was to confirm the autonomy and create conditions for the strengthening of independence. Since the Simla Convention in 1914 was signed by two (Tibet and Great Britain) and not three (including China) parties, it did not come into force. The Republic of China did not simply refute the McMahon Line. It also lost the ability to invoke the Convention as an international legal document confirming its suzerainty over Tibet. Tibet recognized the suzerainty of China only “in one package” with the recognition of the “McMahon Line”. The

19 Kuleshov, 1992, p.265–267.

20 Ran, 1991.

21 Van Walt, 1987, p.58.

legal paradox was in the fact that Tibet's declaration with Britain recognized the suzerainty of China over itself, while China, through not signing the document, did not accept this recognition.

Russian Foreign Minister S.D. Sazonov saw that some provisions of the Simla Convention were contrary to the provisions of the 1907 Convention, so he initiated yet another barter with Britain, seeking to conclude a diplomatic deal: "Tibet in exchange for Afghanistan".²² At the talks, he talked of not caring about what that the British would do with Tibet, but stated that public opinion in Russia would condemn him if he did not get compensation for it. A long and fruitless bargaining process followed. Then came the First World War and Tibet dropped down on the list of Russian interests.

Yuan Shikai died on 6th June 1916. China and Manchuria plunged into a long time of civil unrest, fuelled by strife between local warlords. The central government could not pay much attention to China's periphery and territories which it had claimed. In 1917, the Sichuan General Beng Zosheng tried to oust the Tibetan troops from Eastern Tibet.²³ The post of the Chief of the Tibetan Army was at the time occupied by the well-known Dasang Dodul Tsarong (1886–1959), who conducted a reform in order to strengthen the army. Now the Tibetans were armed and trained better than during Zhao Erfeng's aggression. They had British arms, and the army was trained by English instructors. Much of the weaponry and ammunition was bought from the Chinese military, which was involved in the trade openly and on a large scale.²⁴

In September of 1917, the Tibetan troops counter-attacked, besieged and took Chamdo on



Dasang Dodul Tsarong, 1939 (Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-13-06-35/foto: Ernst Schaefer / License CC-BY-SA 3.0)

²² Andreev, 2006a.

²³ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

²⁴ Bell, 1992, p.193.



Tibetan Army in 1939 (Bundesarchiv Bild 135-S-16-01-17 135-S-11-07-17/foto: Ernst Schaefer / License CC-BY-SA 3.0)

April 16, 1918. Building on their success, the Tibetan Army took the whole of Kham up to Dartsedo (Kangding) and the border Province of Yunnan by summer of 1918. On August 19, 1918, Jampa Tendar and Sichuan General Liu Jangting (through mediation of E. Teichman, the British consul in Dartsedo) signed a peace agreement in Chamdo. According to this agreement, a temporary demarcation line along the upper Yangtze River (Drichu) was agreed upon. Derge, Payul and all the monasteries in the Tibetan areas, which were overseen by Liu Jangting, moved under the authority of the Tibetan Government. The Chinese pledged not to interfere with the religious life of Tibetan Buddhism, the Tibetans with the local authority of the Chinese officials. On October 10, 1918, in Rongbaza, a supplementary agreement on the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of troops by 31 of October of that year was signed.

In August 1919, a Chinese mission arrived in Lhasa, sent there by the Governor of Gansu Province, on behalf of the Central Government of China. Tibetans were offered to send a mission to Beijing for talks. But the latter offered to negotiate in Lhasa and Chamdo, with parties including Tibet, China and Great Britain. In April 1920, the Chinese delegation left Lhasa, without having achieved any success.

It is probable that the intensification of the talks was connected with the Mongolia affairs. In the summer of 1919, Chinese troops invaded Outer Mongolia under the command of General Xu Shuzheng, thus violating the Mongolian-Russian-Chinese Agreement signed in Kyakhta in 1915. In November of that same year, the Chinese abolished the autonomy of Mongolia. They explained this by the presence of an external threat (from Pan-Mongolists and the Russian White Guards) and the Mongol princes' "request", which was received in occupied Niislel Khuree. Perhaps they were hoping for something similar in Tibet, especially, considering that at that time the Chinese ceased consulting with the British in Beijing on Tibetan issues.²⁵

In 1920, a White Guard detachment of Baron R.F. von Ungern-Sternberg marched from the Trans-Baikal area into Outer Mongolia. Ignoring the diplomatic collisions, Ungern defeated the Chinese and restored the independence of Mongolia, the absolute monarchy and the theocratic power of the 8th Bogdo Gegen. The baron planned to build a strong federation made up of Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang as part of a great Central Asian Empire, in which he also intended to restore the monarchy. The main point in making this federation was that it would serve as a counterweight to Han China and would guarantee the real self-dependence of countries united by it. Ungern and the Mongolian Government corresponded with the Dalai Lama, and Tibet intensified its fight against China. After Ungern was defeated by the Bolsheviks, he wanted to go to Tibet, but did not have time. The Reds took Mongolia.

In 1920, the Comintern (Communist International), which was financed by the Russian Bolsheviks, sent a group of representatives to China so that they

25 Van Walt, 1987.

could organise a communist movement there.²⁶ Communist groups and clubs were established in Beijing, Shanghai and other cities. In February 1921, a Socialist Youth League of China emerged in France. From it came such prominent Communists, as Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping and others. The 1st Congress of the Communist Party was convened in June – July 1921 based on the established Chinese groups and clubs mentioned above. In the Manifesto, adopted at the 2nd Congress of the Party in 1922, among other main objectives was “to achieve genuine status of the republic through liberation of Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang”.²⁷

A river of money started to flow from Moscow into China. CPC expenditures were almost completely covered by Moscow.²⁸ Sometimes, requests from their Chinese comrades confused the Bolshevik patrons. However, despite the lack of money and economic chaos in Russia, Moscow has not been stingy. Foreign aid was a crucial factor in the formation of the CPC. The Soviet intelligence service, supported by the Chinese Communists, expanded their activity in China.

The Tibetan leadership could not boast of such protection. Relying almost exclusively on domestic resources, the 13th Dalai Lama continued to strengthen independence of his country and to modernize it. The most important task was to strengthen the army and the Central Government. However, this was met with resistance from some of the Tibetans (see Chapter 6). There had been conflicts between different factions, between the Government and local authorities, also the resources were scarce. Some areas were semi-independent, such as Sakya (Western Tsang), Lha Gyari (Central Tibet), the land of the Panchen Lama (the Tashilhunpo District), etc. The nomadic tribes of Kham and Amdo were self-regulating, even though they did acknowledge the authority of the Dalai Lama. In this sense, the story of an old nomad from Amdo is worth mentioning.²⁹ For him there was his tribe, there were neighbouring tribes, and there was the Labrang Monastery, where one could send his children to become monks. Lhasa was too far away, and it was rather a spiritual centre.

It is believed that the differences of opinion on taxation led to the 9th Panchen Lama's departure from Tibet in 1923. According to other sources, he wanted to get the support of China so as to bring back the old status quo, but the Chinese did not release him and went on to use him as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Lhasa.³⁰ The Panchen Lama attempted to resolve the differences with the help of the British. When the latter refused to mediate, he left for Inner Mongolia and in 1925 arrived in Beijing. He wanted to return to Tibet with a Chinese military escort, however the Tibetans did not allow this.

26 *Spiritual Culture of China*, 2009, p.294.

27 In: Van Walt, 1987, p.88.

28 Bills and details see: Usov, 2007, p.90–109.

29 French, 2004.

30 Tsendina, 2006.

The Chinese tried to send a representative to Tibet on many occasions, but were refused.³¹ Formally, the Lhasa Government had control not only over Ü and Tsang, but also over the territory in the north that was liberated by the Tibetan army. Tibetan generals, who were stationed there, were able to prevent a new Chinese invasion. The main task of the army was maintaining control over the borders. Thus, during the autumn of 1927, in Nagchu, the Tibetans stopped N.K. Roerich's expedition into Lhasa. This happened following a report from F.M. Bailey, the British Resident in Sikkim, who told the Tibetans that Roerich was an agent of the "Red Russians". N.K. Roerich believed himself to be a reincarnation of the 5th Dalai Lama, and the future "king of Shambhala", and was going to declare himself as the Dalai Lama of the West. He wanted to unite the Buddhists of Asia under the patronage of the Soviet Union, and he also fought for the union of Buddhism and Communism, discussing his plans with Soviet officials.³² Following a long stay in tents in the cold winter mountains, the expedition left with nothing. It is not surprising that its members made negative comments about Tibet.

Tibet was expanding its international relations during the 1920's. In 1921, the British presented China with an ultimatum demanding autonomy for Tibet, and threatening to start bilateral talks with the latter.³³ The Beijing leadership did not respond, so the British established contacts in Lhasa. Soon Charles Bell ceased to be a government official, and Kalon Shedra died in Tibet. The relationship became more formal. In 1924, Major F.M. Bailey travelled to Tibet and was convinced about the independence of the country. Several secret missions from Moscow to Lhasa, and from Lhasa to Moscow also took place. In Russia this was done by the Foreign Office, headed by G.V. Chicherin. Thanks to the efforts by A. Dorjiev, ten to twenty Tibetans were sent to Russia for training. A special class of "gun-powder studies" was even created for their benefit. In 1925, Chicherin tried to organize a permanent Russian diplomatic mission to Tibet, and in 1926 a diplomatic mission of the Mongolian People's Republic. However, the 13th Dalai Lama rejected these proposals, and he feared resulting complications with Great Britain. Moreover, he knew about the persecution of Buddhists by the Reds in both Russia and Mongolia. This information was passed onto him by Dorjiev and the 8th Bogdo Gegen. Perhaps some Moscow officials wanted to use the experience of the sovietization of Mongolia, which was seen by the Foreign Affairs Ministry as a base for exporting a revolution to China, and then throughout all of Asia. By 1930, the Soviet-Tibetan dialogue had been minimized, most likely due to the widespread repression of Buddhism in the USSR.³⁴

Dalai Lama made contacts not only with the British and the Russians. The Japanese came to Tibet, one of them even served as an instructor in the Tibetan

31 Shakabpa, 1988.

32 Andreev, 2006b, 2008.

33 Van Walt, 1987.

34 Andreev, 2006a.

army. But the most important were, of course, its relations with China. In 1928, the Kuomintang Government in Southern China established the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, headed by General Yan Xishan, in city of Nanjing. This Commission was formed on the basis of the Chamber of Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs that was established in 1914 (formed from the Office of Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs that was created in 1912). The Commission was partly made up of Tibetan residents of occupied territories (by the Chinese), including those who were in opposition to the 13th Dalai Lama. The Nanjing Government wanted to use it as a tool for the introduction of the provincial system to Mongolia and Tibet.³⁵ In addition, negotiations with the Dalai Lama were meant to take place through the aforementioned Commission as well. In 1928 and 1930, Chiang Kai-shek sent two letters to the Dalai Lama, and in 1933 a telegram.³⁶ However, formal negotiations never took place, as the Dalai Lama rejected the possibility of the accession of Tibet to China and the return of the 9th Panchen Lama (accompanied by Chinese soldiers). The Panchen Lama himself was granted the titles of “Great wise priest, guarding the nation and spreading the culture” and “Special commissar of culture for the western regions” by the Republican Government.³⁷

The Dalai Lama’s further contacts with the Nanjing Government were made through the abbot of the Yonghegong Tibetan monastery in Beijing. Nowadays this is sometimes interpreted as a sign of subordination to China, although, in reality, they were interstate contacts. The Dalai Lama rejected Britain’s attempt to mediate negotiations with China.³⁸ Balancing between the two powers, the Tibetan monarch preferred to resolve bilateral issues through direct negotiations.

In 1930, Tibetan troops were supported by monks during an offensive in Kham and reached the border with Amdo. Two Chinese generals-warlords, Liu Wenhui from Sichuan and Ma Bufeng from Qinghai, counter-attacked in 1932. The Tibetans were better armed than ever before. They had English and, in smaller numbers, Russian rifles. The Chinese Foreign Ministry sent a protest to the British Government in connection with the supply of weapons from India. Later, the Communists said that “British ruling circles were behind the Lhasa warlords”. These circles allegedly wanted to annex Tibet.

An armistice was reached following a Tibetan initiative. The upper part of the Yangtze River once again became the border. Given these circumstances, the National Assembly of Tibet appealed to the British Government for an immediate adoption of the Convention, which was signed in 1914 in Simla.

In 1932, a year before his death, the 13th Dalai Lama outlined the main principles of policy and asked Tibetan officials to adhere to them. This became

35 Klinov, 2000, p.34–35.

36 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

37 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

38 Van Walt, 1987.

his political testament.³⁹ The hierarch was concerned with maintaining Tibet's independence while being surrounded by British India and China. He said that he sent troops to the border with Kham to challenge those who seized Tibetan territory, that in Outer Mongolia the Communists destroyed the monasteries, forbade determining of reincarnation of the Bogdo Gegen, and forced monks to serve in the army. The Dalai Lama predicted that communism would come to Tibet at some time, be it from outside or inside. However, its arrival could be prevented if immediate action was taken, otherwise the whole country would fall into slavery to the system. So Tibet was made stronger, with every citizen taking part in doing so. Charles Bell, who knew the 13th Dalai Lama well, noted that the latter finally decided to liberate Tibet from the Chinese authority and the majority of Tibetans supported him in this fight. During the summer of the same year they launched an offensive in the direction of Yunnan. The Tibetans took Jongdian City in the north of the province, then proceeded to take Bathang and concentrate ten thousand soldiers in the region of the upper Yangtze River.⁴⁰ Mao Zedong sent a telegram to the International Conference against war and imperialism in Shanghai: "The British imperialists use Tibetan troops in Western China to attack and occupy our provinces Sikang and Sichuan, they prepare to turn West China into a British colony".⁴¹ Meanwhile, Britain was only striving for "the freedom of Tibet".⁴² She needed a buffer between India and China, and not a new colony.

Not only Mao himself, but also Kuomintang continued to consider Tibet as a part of China. In 1933, Chiang Kai-shek once again sent a telegram to the Dalai Lama with an offer of direct talks. According to the Chinese President, "For centuries, China and Tibet were united as if belonging to one family. China has now become a republic, and therefore there is every opportunity to freely discuss any issue between us".⁴³ On 16th December 1933, The Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission demanded the Dalai Lama halt military actions. But on 17th December 1933, the 13th Dalai Lama died. The Chinese Government expressed its condolences and sent a delegation to Lhasa. Posthumously, the Dalai Lama was given a title. This diploma is used in the PRC as one of the "proofs of approval" of the Dalai Lamas by Chinese Governments.

Military actions in Kham were suspended. By that time, Tibetans regained two thirds of the future Sikang Province,⁴⁴ the same one that Chinese leaders planned to create from Kham's lands. In March 1934, Tibetans conquered Derge. In May they signed a truce with General Liu Wenhui.

39 Shakabpa, 1988.

40 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

41 In: French, 2004, p.361.

42 Bell, 1992, p.190.

43 In: Bogoslovsky, 2002, p.60.

44 Gurevich, 1958.

On the 25th August, 1934, General Huang Musung, a high-ranking official of Kuomintang, arrived in Lhasa. He paid tribute to the deceased Dalai Lama in one of the temples and held talks with the Tibetans. Huang put forward the following conditions: Tibet should be part of China; the latter takes responsibility for its defence; the amban's office is to be restored in Lhasa.⁴⁵ The Tibetans were willing to accept only the following conditions: Tibet's major treaties with other countries will be signed with participation of the Chinese in the process; defence from external aggression would be the subject of consultation with Nanjing; Tibetans will notify China about elections and appointments of senior officials in Lhasa; a Chinese Resident and his entourage of up to twenty-five people will be stationed in Lhasa, he will be subject to local authorities; the Chinese would return Derge, Nyarong, Horkok and some other areas of Amdo and Kham and would not grant asylum to any Tibetan who rebelled against his government. At the same time the Tibetans insisted on British India's participation in the negotiations with the rationale being that this would provide international guarantees; the Chinese refused.

Thus, the Lhasa Government was prepared to accept that Tibet would become a dependent state, but not a part of China. First and foremost, it sought to resolve the issue of borders.⁴⁶ However, Huang Musung was not authorised to sign important agreements. He agreed only that two Chinese liaison officers with a radio transmitter would remain in Lhasa. The officers stayed and established permanent contact with Nanjing, and Huang went on to take the helm of the Chinese Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission. In the 1940's both Chinese and British missions were stationed in Lhasa. The Chinese Government believed that the presence of its mission in Lhasa asserted Chinese sovereignty.

In March 1937, the 9th Panchen Lama arrived to Jekundo (in Eastern Tibet) with an escort of twenty Chinese officials and five hundred soldiers. In August, the Nanjing Government withdrew the escort due to the beginning of Japanese aggression against China. The Panchen Lama died in Jekundo on 1st of December of that same year. His "testament" is quoted in the Chinese collection of documents that was designed to prove that Tibet was always a part of China. According to this text that was addressed to the chairman of the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs, the hierarch spent his lifetime striving for loyalty to the Central Government of China, the development of Buddhism, the unity and friendship of the five nationalities of China; the people and Government of Tibet were asked to take the Central Government of the republic of five nationalities of China, etc. The Tibetan Government in exile expressed serious doubts about the authenticity of this document.⁴⁷ According to Tibetan tradition, the last will and testament are called as

⁴⁵ Shakya, 1999, p.6.

⁴⁶ Bogoslovsky, 2002.

⁴⁷ A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

such only when a dying person dictates them to another person or writes it by himself. In addition, some parts of the letter could only have been written after the death of the 9th Panchen Lama. Finally, “the Secretariat of the Office for the Dissemination of Buddhism in the Western Border Region” was stated as the sender.

China took advantage of infighting in the ruling circles of Tibet and of the weakening of its Central Government. In June of 1935, a committee was formed with an aim to organize the Province of Sikang (which the Manchu monarchy wanted to make from the lands of Kham). Now this idea was revived by the Han Republicans. In August 1936, the committee was transferred to Dartsedo (Kangding, Dajianlu) and was declared as an administrative body of the Sikang province.⁴⁸ This city was to become the capital of the new province. Public secular schools were created in each of Kham’s counties for the first time. The Amdo region was divided between the provinces of Qinghai and Gansu. Reforms that were meant to unify them with other Chinese provinces were launched. The Sikang Province was proclaimed on January 1st, 1939, in Dartsedo.

The death of the 13th Dalai Lama started the infighting of rival factions amongst the aristocracy. The most influential of Dalai Lama’s entourage was Thubten Kunphel who was born into a peasant family. In 1931, this monk was appointed as head of the electrical machines department in Drapchi near Lhasa, where in 1931–1932 he formed an elite regiment of thousands of soldiers, which controlled the capital. The regiment consisted of middle class citizens, that is, not “serfs” and not aristocracy. The regiment organized a revolt, after which it was disbanded, and Kunphel was arrested and deported. He, along with the Oracle of Nechung, was accused of wrongly organizing the medical treatment of the 13th Dalai Lama. One of Kunphel’s supporters tried to start an uprising in Kham but was defeated. The rebels and their families took their possessions and migrated to Bathang to be under Chinese protection.

The National Assembly elected the twenty-four-year old Reting Khutuktu as a regent. As a result, it turned out that the posts of first minister and regent were taken by young and inexperienced people.⁴⁹ Dorje Lungshar Tsogyal, who was in the Dalai Lama’s entourage, proposed to reform the country’s system of administration. Kalons were no longer to be appointed by the Dalai Lama for life, but rather were to be elected for four year terms by the National Assembly and had to report back to it. He managed to convene two meetings of spiritual and secular officials, which were attended by one fifth to one quarter of their overall number. A petition to Kashag was prepared following this assembly. But the day before the petition was submitted, Lungshar and his associates were arrested for attempting to overthrow the Government and install the Bolshevik system of administration. Lungshar was blinded, and his followers were exiled. This was the end of yet another attempt of administrative reform in Tibet.

48 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

49 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

Supporters of the new regent in Lhasa were in favour of strengthening relations with China under the condition of non-interference from the latter. But the Chinese Government demanded that foreign policy, defence, communications, and approval of senior officials were managed under its authority. Tibet was promised autonomy, but under leadership of the authorized official designated by Nanjing.⁵⁰

Having removed Lungshar, the secular and spiritual authorities of Tibet started their search to find the boy who was the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. The necessary rites and divinations led the search party to the Kumbum Monastery in Amdo. A new Dalai Lama was identified in the neighbouring village: a boy named Lhamo Dhondub who was born on 6th July 1935. The Amdo region was mostly populated by Tibetans, Mongols and Turkic people, but was controlled by the Chinese. In order to be able to take the reincarnation with them, the envoys agreed to pay a large ransom to the Chinese authorities. But they suspected that the reincarnate was of much higher rank than was disclosed by the Tibetans and demanded a bigger sum still. When the money finally arrived from Lhasa, the boy was taken away along with his family.

The National Assembly of Tibet confirmed the identification of the new reincarnation while the mission was still en route to Lhasa. Regent Reting, in contradiction of Tibet's policy of independence as was promulgated by the 13th Dalai Lama, sought to improve relations with the Chinese, so he invited them to the ceremony of drawing lots of from the Golden Urn, then asking to cancel the ceremony, he corresponded with them.⁵¹ Kuomintang issued a decree on "approval" of the Dalai Lama, the abolition of drawing lots from the Golden Urn and allocated four hundred thousand yuan. This was despite the fact that both the identification and the enthronement were carried out independently from the Chinese. In early 1941, Reting was forced to resign and died in 1947.⁵² The ceremony of the 14th Dalai Lama's enthronement took place on 22th February 1940 in the Potala. The representative of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission remained in Lhasa.

The Chinese Government later claimed that it played a decisive role in the process of selection and confirmation of the 14th Dalai Lama through its envoy Wu Zhongxin. However, the role of Wu Zhongxin at the ceremony did not differ from that of other foreign representatives. Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee (SC) of the National People's Congress (NPC), specifically investigated this issue by studying Chinese archives. In 1989, he provided a detailed description of the Kuomintang falsifications regarding this matter.⁵³ It turned out that a bogus Envoy's report was used together with a picture from "Chinese News

50 Bogoslovsky, 2002.

51 Smith, 1996; Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005; A 60-point Commentary, 2008; <http://reting.org/retingtulku5.html>.

52 A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

53 A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

Report” that showed the Dalai Lama and Wu Zhongxin together, with the signature indicating that it was made during the enthronement. According to Ngabo, this picture was actually taken a few days after the ceremony, when Wu Zhongxin had a private audience with the Dalai Lama.⁵⁴ So it is incorrect to assert that the choice of the Dalai Lama was approved and confirmed by the Kuomintang Government.⁵⁵

A civil war between the Kuomintang and the CPC broke out in China. In 1934–1936, the Long March of the Chinese Red Army took place. It was a retreat of its main forces to the north-west while under pressure from the Kuomintang with up to 60% of the army being killed in rearguard actions.

By that time regular payments towards the upkeep of the CPC by the Comintern stopped. But now the question of a large-scale Soviet aid package was once again on the agenda. Mao decided to create a “nationality minorities” state on the border of Sichuan – Sikang. Then, using it as a base, the main Communist forces planned to break into Xinjiang through Qinghai and Gansu to establish a link with the USSR and receive all types of support from it.⁵⁶ However, this plan was never implemented. But in 1936, the CPC requested Comintern in Moscow to supply three million U.S. dollars, a number of aircraft, heavy weapons, anti-aircraft machine guns, shells, rifles, ammunition, etc. The Bolsheviks began to develop a system of supply chains and promised up to two million U.S. dollars.⁵⁷ In 1940, Mao said: “To refuse accepting aid from the Soviet Union means to condemn the revolution to defeat”.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, foreign aid to Tibet was more than modest (mostly confined to small arms and ammunition), while foreign influences on power and ideology could not be sensed at all.

In June 1935, parts of the Chinese Red Army went through the Yunnan Province and entered the southern part of Sikang. Their route was through the counties of Derge, Lithang, Nyarong, Horkok and Ba.⁵⁹ The Red commanders started to create soviet “governments” in those counties that were formed by special squads of poor young men, who were given the task of combating the landowners. Land was seized and handed over to landless or land-poor peasants. The movement was met with resistance.⁶⁰ One of the goals of the Chinese Soviets was “capture of all the oppressed minorities around the Soviets (of China) as a means to increase the strength of the revolution against imperialism and KMT [Kuomintang. – Author]”.⁶¹

54 For detailed analysis of the documents of the Kuomintang, designed to prove their rule over Tibet, which did not have any factual or legal force, see: A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

55 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

56 Braun, 1974.

57 Usov, 2007, p.108.

58 What Beijing does not Say, 1972, p.24.

59 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

60 Norbu, 2003, p.613.

61 Van Walt, 1987, p.89.

The Reds did not have enough food. They took to looting these very “oppressed minorities”, picking up livestock, grain, vegetables, rice, and oil.⁶² “Women’s regiments” and “children’s units” were even assembled for that purpose. This was the first time the Tibetans were faced with the fact that the Communists robbed and destroyed their monasteries.⁶³ In September, the Reds, having amassed enough grain, formed into two groups and moved to the north. There were disagreements between their leaders. One group, headed by Mao Zedong, incurred big losses on its way to Shaanxi through the Gansu province. A special area, Yanan, became an outpost for the Communists there. The other group was defeated by the KMT during spring of 1936, returned to Sikang and captured a territory of 30,000–40,000 sq km in size.⁶⁴ Now the Red High Command started to set up Tibetan “governments” (instead of the Soviet ones). They were made from some of the “upper class patriots” of Tibetan nationality, but above all the poor.

In May 1936, the Congress of People’s Representatives from Kardze, Daofu, Luho and other areas took place in Kardze. It was chaired by Zhu De who was the Supreme Commander of the Chinese Red Army. Congress formed the “Tibetan Autonomous Government of the Chinese Soviet Republic”. Getak Lama was the elected chairman. Some of poorest Tibetans joined the CPC and the Red Army.⁶⁵ When the CPC took power in China in 1949, these people were given positions of high power. Propaganda covered that fact extensively.

There were 40,000–50,000 soldiers in Reds’ Number 4 Corps in Sikang.⁶⁶ Soon they were joined by the 2nd and 6th groups of the Chinese Red Army. Together they started to break out of Sikang and into Gansu. The local population was leaving prior to the army’s arrival, taking with them everything that they could. The soldiers took away what they could find, troops were sent into the mountains to hunt for hidden stock. Military Adviser, O. Braun, recalled that the locals were equally hostile both towards the Kuomintang and the Communists. They attacked the individual soldiers and small groups of Reds. The number of dead, frozen or dying of hunger was getting bigger and bigger. Migration was made extremely difficult due to the lack of good roads. Eyewitnesses recounted that the withdrawing soldiers were starving, eating grass and leaves, and some even the corpses of their comrades.⁶⁷ After the departure of the Chinese Red Army, the “governments” it has created were ceasing to exist.

Such was the first failed attempt to export revolution to Tibet. Its outcome was predictable as the Tibetans were satisfied with their traditional society. They saw the behaviour of the Reds in Sikang. In addition, they knew what was happening in the

62 Ling, 1964, p.447–448.

63 Ling, 1964, c.447–448; Kolas and Thowsen, 2005, p.45.

64 Braun, 1974.

65 Shakya, 1999, p.33.

66 Braun, 1974.

67 French, 2004.

MPR. At the same time, mass arrests and executions of the clergy and the feudal lords, the destruction of monasteries, collectivization and the indoctrination of the “masses” were conducted there.

During the Sino-Japanese War, which began in 1937, the war between the Kuomintang and the CPC was put on hold. But tensions between the two revolutionary parties did not cease. “The Soviet Government had to suppress one smouldering armed conflict after another, between the forces of the KMT and the CPC, which were often provoked by Mao Zedong in hope for aid, and even direct military support from the USSR”.⁶⁸

The subversion activity that was coming from abroad against the legitimate authorities in Tibet also continued to take place. In 1939, in Kalimpong in the north of India, a pro-Chinese structure, the Reform Party of Western Tibet was formed. It was created by a member of one of Kham’s richest families, with other members including Tibetan exiles and emigrants. Its core idea was the proclamation of the Tibetan Autonomous Republic as a part of China. One of its leaders travelled to China in the 1930’s to early 1940’s, and worked for some time in the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission. There is evidence that he received money from the KMT and wanted to conduct a revolution in Tibet similar to the Xinhai Revolution.⁶⁹ In June 1945, he was captured by the British colonial authorities and deported to Tibet. There he was whipped and imprisoned. Indian homes of the rest of the party were searched. Documents that were found indicated the intention to hold a coup and annex Tibet to China. This was yet another failed attempt at a revolution.

The National Socialists, who came to power in Germany expressed interest towards Tibet. They fruitlessly tried to organize an expedition that would travel there through the USSR.⁷⁰ Since then, the question of Nazi links with Tibet has aroused interest in many people. Numerous speculations about “Traces of the SS in Tibet” for the most part do not correspond to reality. As was shown,⁷¹ information about the German expeditions to Tibet that were tasked to make contact with members of the underground communities “Order of Shambhala” and “Agartha”, as reported by T. Ravenscroft in “The Spear of Destiny”, was pure fiction. Equally mythical are the details of the “Tibetan colony” (or “colonies”) in Nazi Germany, which can be found in the same book and also in equally well-known work by L. Pauwels and J. Bergier “The Morning of the Magicians”. Only one Tibetan was living in Germany in the first half of the 20th century, a man by the name of Bugyal, who was translator of German Central Asia explorer A. Tafel. It is known that this man married Tafel’s German cook in 1920 and took her surname. There is evidence that in the early 1940’s he lived near Stuttgart. As far as the dead “Tibetans” that

68 Ledovsky, 2005, p.14.

69 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005; McCarthy, 1997.

70 Andreev, 2006a.

71 Andreev, 2006b, p.127–132.

were found dressed in German uniforms, it is possible that these were Kalmyks who had gone to Germany in late 1942–1943. Incidentally, these Kalmyks have often stated in documents that their birthplace was Lhasa. Although during the last days of the war there were almost no Kalmyks in Berlin.⁷²

However, the modern Chinese propaganda usually cites the following well known case as the “proof” of communication between the elite of Tibet and the Nazis. In 1945, two imprisoned German army officers, Austrians H. Harrer and P. Aufschnaiter, escaped from a British internment camp in Dehradun, India. They were captured while returning from the mountain-climbing expedition in Pakistan. H. Harrer was an officer in the SS and a Nazi Party member. Both came to Tibet and took refuge, as the country maintained its neutral status. They lived there for seven years and established good relations with the authorities and with the British representatives. The latter occasionally helped them, in particular helping them send letters home. Harrer talked a lot to the Dalai Lama about the Western countries, which at that time were peculiar and largely unknown to the Tibetans. Subsequently, Harrer wrote his famous book “Seven Years in Tibet”.⁷³ However, neither he nor any other member of the German Reich were advisers to the Government of Tibet and in no way influenced its politics. The Dalai Lama said that by the end of the Second World War, when he was only ten years old, he knew nothing about the Nazis.⁷⁴

Another earlier case is a more important one. Despite the opposition of the Anglo-Indian authorities in early 1939, the German expedition of E. Schaeffer made it safely to Lhasa and went on to spend about two months there. During this time, its members established contact with the ministers of the Tibetan Government and the Regent Reting, and they had a friendly relationship with many of the Tibetan aristocratic families. Prompted by Schaeffer, the Regent, who was interested in the international recognition of Tibet, wrote a brief letter to the head of the German State, A. Hitler. Among other things, this letter reported that Schaeffer and his men, who were “the first Germans to visit Tibet”, were allowed into the country and given the necessary assistance. A desire was also expressed to establish friendly relations between Tibet and Germany.

Although the letter of the Regent is just a sample of typical Tibetan official correspondence, “polite and non-binding”, it gave rise to various speculations. And nowadays it is often referred to as “proof” of the friendly relations between the Tibetans and Nazi Germany. This argument is rather strange as after all, at that time the Soviet Union too had diplomatic relations with Germany, and in the same year of 1939 signed a “Non-Aggression Pact” with them.

72 For more information about the Kalmyks who fought under the banner of the Wehrmacht, see.: Guchinova, 2004.

73 Harrer, 2002.

74 Laird, 2006, p. 290.

On December 1941, after the start of the war in the Pacific Ocean, prayers were held in Tibet, praying for peace, but not for the winning of any one of the warring parties.⁷⁵ In late 1942, an official mission arrived in Lhasa. It consisted of staff of the Office of Strategic Services (Intelligence), U.S. Lieutenant Colonel I. Tolstoy and Captain D. Brook.⁷⁶ They were the official representatives of President Roosevelt and passed on his letter to the Dalai Lama. The officers' task was to collect information about the opening of the road from India to Inner China.⁷⁷ It was necessary for the delivery of goods to the front of the anti-Japanese war. The transportation of military aid was refused. But Kashag allowed the two officers to go through the Tibetan area into China. It was announced that the establishment of friendly relations between the U.S. and Tibet should be considered as a precedent for other foreigners.⁷⁸ In 1942, Tibet rejected the proposal of the Kuomintang Government of China to construct roads for the delivery of goods from India to the Japanese frontlines. The British were only able to get agreement for transport of non-military goods, but without prior construction of special roads. Once again Tibet demonstrated that it was an independent country and that it was reluctant to expand its ties with China.

In 1943, Britain returned to the recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet only on the basis of the Simla Agreement.⁷⁹ In 1943, hoping to resolve the situation with supplies from India, Chiang Kai-Shek ordered the troops of Sikang provinces, Sichuan and Yunnan to come to the borders with Tibet.⁸⁰ Tibetans moved their army in response. But the parties were not ready for war. As a result, the carriage of goods was leased to private individuals. Nevertheless, an air corridor that connects North-eastern India with the Province of Sichuan ran through Tibet. Recently, the remains of American airmen who died in a plane crash in Central Tibet have been found.⁸¹ Japan also tried to establish contact with highly ranked Tibetans, to organize intelligence work in Tibet.⁸² But to no avail. The news of Hitler's coalition defeat was met with Tibetan celebrations, thanking speeches and religious ceremonies.⁸³

Thus, during the Second World War Tibet remained neutral. In doing so it showed the ability to follow a foreign policy of non-alignment and independence.⁸⁴ By staying neutral, Tibet tried to maintain its closed borders, to avoid revolutionary upheavals and external aggression. Perhaps the Tibetans were hoping for the lack of road network and natural barriers in the form of high mountains to carry

75 Bogoslovsky and Moskalev, 1984.

76 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

77 Ran, 1991.

78 Van Walt, 1987.

79 Van Walt, 1987.

80 Tsendina, 2006.

81 Remains were found in Tibet...

82 Qin Yongzhang. A secret history...

83 Gurevich, 1958, p.80.

84 Van Walt, 1987.

them through. In 1942, an Office for All States (the Bureau of Foreign Affairs) in Lhasa had been restored, having been formally established in 1909.⁸⁵ The Chinese representative refused to accept it. Before it closed in 1951 it was mainly used to deal with the British. In 1945, R. Ford, who visited Tibet, testified that it was an independent country that lived by its own customs and laws.⁸⁶

In 1946, an emissary of the KMT Government arrived in Lhasa. He agreed with the Tibetan authorities that a “goodwill mission” should be sent to Nanjing via India to commemorate the victory of their allies from World War 2.⁸⁷ The Tibetan powers supplied their delegation with an official message. It stated that Tibet was an independent country under the rule of the Dalai Lama that wished to establish “non-tense” relations with China based on the “priest – patron” principle. Tibetans also asked for Kham and Amdo to be returned. When the delegates arrived, the local press announced that they should visit the National Assembly to “represent the Tibetans paying homage to President Chiang Kai-shek for his guidance during the war against the Japanese aggression”.

The Britons warned the Government of Tibet that the delegation to Nanjing should refrain from participation in the Assembly and in political discussions. As they expected, the mission in Nanjing was practically held hostage.⁸⁸ The Tibetan Government demanded its return, but it was too late. The Chinese refused to organise the departure of the mission and left it to wait for an answer from Chiang Kai-shek in response to the message from Lhasa. In November 1946, the Chinese Constitutional Assembly declared that the mission sent to the National Assembly of Republic of China was in fact a group of Tibetan delegates.⁸⁹ A resolution was prepared to the effect that “all the people of the countries whose delegates are present in this assembly are subjects of the Chinese Kuomintang Government”.⁹⁰ Tibetan delegates reported this to Kashag. They immediately received a telegram in response, stating that they could not accept the resolution, that they were only sent for passing on congratulatory messages, that issues of bilateral relations needed to be resolved, and that they would have no choice but to leave the meeting if not given a right to speak and if such a resolution was to be accepted. Tibetans publicly proclaimed their refusal to sign any resolution, including the draft of the Constitution of China, and that they had no right to do anything other than to be merely present at the meetings. Neither the status of Tibet, nor the letter from Lhasa was discussed.⁹¹ But the Chinese press announced the presence of the Tibetan

85 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

86 Klinov, 2000, p.381.

87 Shakabpa, 1988; Van Walt, 1987.

88 Van Walt, 1987.

89 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

90 Van Walt, 1987, p.83.

91 Smith, 1996, p.253–254.

delegation at the Assembly, giving the impression that the former had participated in the latter's work.

The delegation returned to Lhasa. So the Nanjing Government demanded that a new delegation be sent. Taught by bitter experience, the Tibetan authorities refused. However, in the Constitution adopted in 1947 by the National Assembly of China, it was said that Tibet was guaranteed its autonomy, although members of the Tibetan delegation did not sign the Constitution and did not accept it. The Chinese propaganda still uses this story as "proof" of the subordination of Tibet to China.

Meanwhile, the situation worsened in Tibet. The new Regent Ngawang Sungrab, from the Taktra Monastery, tried to launch some reforms, such as collecting arrears from the monastery's peasants, and opening a secular school for studying the English language in Lhasa. There were two attempts on his life. Monks of two monasteries rebelled. However, the rebellion was crushed and more than two hundred monks were killed.⁹² The former Regent Reting was also arrested for preparing an uprising. He was accused of trying to kill the current Regent, and of sending a letter to Chiang Kai-shek with a request for military assistance in exchange for the establishment of Chinese rule. The arrested people died in prison — apparently by suicide, or from being poisoned. The other people that were accused were whipped, some were imprisoned, some were sent to do forced labour on the estates of aristocrats, and some were acquitted. Accusations of collaboration with China apparently had some ground as more than two hundred people fled from Tibet to the territory which was under the KMT.

The Tibetan Government, along with its head Regent Taktra, did everything to strengthen independence and gain international recognition. In the spring of 1947 the Party of the Indian National Congress organized an Asian Conference in Delhi. A delegation from Tibet was invited there as one from an independent state. At the March 23rd opening, the Tibetan flag was raised and the posted map designated Tibet as an independent state. This led to a protest from China's Foreign Ministry. A compromise was then found, the flag was removed, and Tibet was "included" as part of China on the map, however the Tibetan delegation was allowed to participate in the convention.⁹³ This led to displeasure on both sides.

On 15th August 1947, India declared her independence. All of the UK rights and obligations that related to agreements with Tibet were now transferred to India.⁹⁴ The mission in Lhasa, and the sales offices in Gyantse, Gartok and Yatung were also transferred to India. The Tibetan Government initially claimed Ladakh, Darjeeling and Sikkim since they were populated by Tibetans, but then they decided to postpone this problem for later. According to historian Ts. Sakya, at first, India was apparently interested in the preservation of Tibet as a buffer country between itself and China, but the question was: did it have enough strength to withstand

92 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

93 Shakya, 1999, p.3.

94 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

the pressure from the Chinese? After all, it was weaker than the UK. In addition, India's leaders considered economic recovery, cessation of civil strife and solution of problems with Pakistan as the primary challenges.

In October 1947, Tibet sent an official delegation headed by Tsipon (Secretary of Finance) W.D. Shakabpa to India, China, Britain, France, Italy and the U.S. The main objective was to establish relations with these countries. In addition, Shakabpa was instructed to obtain the British debt from India in dollars or pounds sterling, but not in rupees, so that silver could be bought for minting coins.



Passport of V.D. Shakabpa with stamps from different countries

The delegation was received by the highest officials: M.K. Gandhi and J. Nehru in New Delhi, Chiang Kai-shek in Nanjing, George Marshall in Washington, King George 6th and Prime Minister K.R. Attlee in the UK. During its stay in Nanjing, the National Assembly was gathered to elect a president and a vice president of China. The delegation did not participate in the meetings of the Assembly, although some argue the opposite.⁹⁵ Following their receptions, India and the U.S. received protests from China. The U.S. State Department found it necessary to explain that it did legally recognize China's sovereignty over Tibet, although in reality the Chinese Government did not control the country. The Americans had to allow the Chinese Ambassador to accompany the Tibetan delegation to a reception with the U.S. president. This led the Tibetans to refuse attending altogether. Instead of the president, they met with the Secretary of State. The mission did have some political success, but failed as an attempt to achieve formal recognition of independence. The Tibetans only signed several trade agreements with India. Members of the delegation had Tibetan passports and travel documents, which were accepted by all the countries that they visited.

In 1948, a year before the founding of the PRC, the Tibetan people witnessed the flight of a comet in the sky. This was considered a bad omen, as people said that the appearance of Halley's Comet in 1910 was followed by the Chinese invasion.⁹⁶ Prayers for deliverance from danger were started in Lhasa.

Tibet and Mongolia declared independence before the Xinhai Revolution. For Mongolia, this was caused by the Chinese settlement policy in their country, for Tibet by the Qing aggression whose ultimate aim was also colonization. This was a violation of the conditions on which the Mongols recognized the suzerainty of the Manchu Khan, and the Tibetans enjoyed his patronage, limiting their sovereignty. The revolution and the collapse of the Qing Empire gave rise to another legitimate reason, which was that their relationship with the Qing Empire was built on relations with the Aisin Gioro Manchu Dynasty, and with the abdication of the latter these links broke down. China, as part of the Qing Empire, had no rights to claim the other parts, especially those countries that were not even part of it. Han republicans-nationalists that came to power combined Western democracy and nationalism with an ancient imperial tradition of subordinating the "barbarians". However, Tibet remained independent from the Republic of China, despite an imitation of Chinese sovereignty over it and the "restoration" attempts made by the Kuomintang Government.

⁹⁵ Van Walt, 1987.

⁹⁶ Shakya, 1999, p.8.

CHAPTER 5

Religion and Culture



The ancient religion of the Tibetans was Bon. This name originated from an old Tibetan verb “to pronounce in a singing manner”.¹ There are also other versions of the origin of the word. Bon was said to be connected with Shamanism² or the Iranian Zoroastrianism.³ This religion is more similar to pre-Buddhist shamanistic beliefs of the Mongolian peoples,⁴ than it is with ancient Chinese faiths. The role that Bon played in life of the Tibetan Kingdom was the same as the role of Shamanism in the states of the ancient Mongols, Turkis and Churchens.⁵

According to some reports, Bon appeared in Tibet in the beginning of AD, and by the time of King Songtsen Gampo it had already passed through several stages of development. Usually, the founder of this religion is believed to be a semi-legendary personality, Shenrab Miwoche from the country Zhangzhung. However, according to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, this is a misconception. The Shenrab Miwoche doctrine is known as Yundrung Bon in all texts, but before that there were already many traditions of Bon present.⁶ This religion includes several “layers”, which were formed at different times. Some of its followers believe that Shenrab Miwoche was



Shenrab Miwoche

1 Namkhai Norbu, 2008, p.114.

2 For example, Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

3 Kuznetsov, 2001.

4 Gumilev, 1968.

5 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

6 Namkhai Norbu, 2008, p.32.

a contemporary of Buddha, while others believe that Buddha was a reincarnation of him or that he was the reincarnation of an ardent Buddhist Pandita, who later became an opponent to Buddhism.⁷

Bon is characterized by a belief in many spirits and the recitation of magic formulas that have an effect in the world of spirits and gods, such as necromancy, sacrificial ceremonies, rites of purification, prosperity, astrology, and others. Before the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet, the term “bon” was used to describe performance of certain rituals, reading of certain mantras, etc., i.e. it meant ritual action. Therefore, it is suggested that it is impossible to establish a single source of the origin of Bon. At the time of the ancient Yarlung Dynasty, twelve branches of Bon knowledge were flourishing: security rituals – Bon of deities; of wealth – the desire for prosperity; of wandering beings – buy-substitution; of death – *shen* of birth (knowledge of the funeral rites); of the pure – rituals of exile, of release – deities and curses; of useful – medicine and healing; of the design of being – astrology; of speech – the Mo rituals; of flight– the rituals of deer; of divination *Jutig*; of liberation – magical power Bon.⁸

After the dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet, it competed with Bon and eventually prevailed. However, Bon itself became enriched with a number of elements of Buddhism, especially in the ritual part. Later versions of Shenrab Miwoche biographies resemble those of Buddha. Sometimes it is said that Nazis adopted the swastika symbol from the Bon religion.⁹ This is unlikely, as the swastika is an ancient Indo-Aryan symbol that was widely used in different countries. For example, it was present on Soviet banknotes issued in 1919.¹⁰

The religious status of the king of Tibet was based on the Bon tradition. Bon priests not only participated in public ceremonies and sacrifices, but also influenced the running of the state. The king conducted small scale yearly sacrificial killings of monkeys, sheep and dogs. One night, every three years, a great sacrifice of people, horses, cattle and donkeys was also performed. Each beast had its legs broken and was then carved open, had its entrails taken out and then laid out in front. Bon priests followed the procedure using the following words: “Let the fate of the perjurer be the same as of that cattle”.¹¹ Such traditions existed in the ancient forms of Bon. Shenrab Miwoche quashed the bloody sacrifices, adopting such substitutes as *torma* (a flour offering) white grains and *yuti* (light alcoholic drink).¹²

The adoption of Buddhism by the Tibetans helped to further moderate their manners, as doing no harm to living beings is one of the main precepts of the religion.

7 Shakabpa, 1988. Estimating the time when Shenrab Miwoche lived, see: Namkhai Norbu, 2008, p.52–56.

8 Namkhai Norbu, 2008, p.120–126.

9 For example, Ovchinnikov, 2006.

10 Nikolaev, 2005.

11 Bichurin, 1833, p.130.

12 Namkhai Norbu, 2008, p.37.

As was recalled by H. Harrer, “religiousness that was emitted from every Tibetan was impressive. After having spent some time in the country, I could no longer thoughtlessly kill a fly, and I would never crush an annoying insect in the presence of a native. Behaviour of the local residents in such cases was truly touching. If, during a picnic, an ant climbed onto someone’s clothing, it was carefully removed and returned to the ground. If a fly fell into tea, all means were used to try and save it as it could be the reincarnation of a dead grandmother. In winter, people broke the ice in the ponds, so as not to let fish to die from the cold. In summer, if the pond dried up, fish were placed in containers or pots before being returned back to the reservoir. The rescuers ennobled their souls in this way. The more lives a person managed to save, the happier he felt”.¹³

Buddhism entered Tibet during the time of king Lhathothori Nyentsen (4th century AD). According to the Buddhist tradition, sacred texts fell from the sky onto the roof of his Yumbulakhang Palace, along with the golden mortar and the six syllables of the sacred mantra “Om-ma-ni-pe-me-hung”. A prophecy was then announced from the sky that the value of these things would be known to the fifth king after Lhathothori. The king could not understand the significance of this even with the help of the Bon ministers. He was ordered to place the items in the dungeon, where they were casually flung along with other old things. Following that, crop failures, loss of livestock, famine and diseases hit the country.¹⁴ Then “five noble men” appeared and said that the cause of the misery was due to the disrespect of these objects. Having stated that, the five men disappeared. Then the king ordered these items to be placed in a place where they could be seen by all of his subjects, demonstrating great respect towards the items, and their sorrows ceased.

The fifth king in line after Lhathothori Nyentsen was Songtsen Gampo. He also could not find out the purpose of these items from the Bon priests. Then he sent some Tibetans to India. This was the beginning of Buddhism in their country. An important role in this was played by the wives of Songtsen Gampo, Buddhists Bhrikuti and Wencheng, the Nepalese and Chinese princesses respectively. Bhrikuti is revered by Buddhists as the emanation of Green Tara, Wencheng as the emanation of White Tara. The two princesses brought the relics of Buddhism to Tibet. Ramoche Tsuglakhang and Tinlang (later known as Jokhang) temples were built for the newly brought shrines. Some Western and Chinese authors argue that Buddhism did not play a significant role in Tibet during the time of Songtsen Gampo and even almost a hundred years later. More recent Tibetan sources adhere to a different opinion. They recognize the introduction of Buddhism as the main achievement of this king. It’s no wonder that Songtsen Gampo, Trisong Deutsen and Tri Ralpachen

¹³ Harrer, 2002.

¹⁴ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

were named the “religious kings” (Tibetan: chögyal). Following the death of Songtsen Gampo and until the 9th century, rivalry between the powerful factions in Tibet has developed under the religious banners of Bon and Buddhism.

Tibet became one of the great powers during the reign of Trisong Deutsen. During that time the two prominent Buddhist teachers, Shantarakshita and Padmasambhava were invited to Tibet. Padmasambhava was able to tame the local spirits of Tibet, however many of them would go on to become custodians of the teachings and were included in the Buddhist pantheon. Samye Monastery, 137 km from Lhasa, was built. It housed the first monks of Tibetan Buddhism, who received ordination from Shantarakshita.



Padmasambhava (Chandra, 1999)

The king ordered the Buddhist Canon to be translated into Tibetan. At the same time, Buddhist teachers from China and Hotan were also preaching in Tibet. In 781, Buddhism was declared the state religion of Tibet. The text of royal decree was carved on a stone stele that was set in the Samye Monastery. Bon followers were persecuted, and many books were destroyed. In 791–794, the famous dispute took place between the Buddhist Indian teacher Kamalashila and the Chinese preacher of Chan Buddhism who was also known as Hashang. The latter is not a first name, but a title that can also be translated as “monk”. His monastic name was Mahayanadeva. There is conflicting information regarding this dispute. According to the contemporary Tibetan tradition it is believed that Kamalashila won the dispute. Anyway, Hashang was ordered to return home, and Indian Buddhism was firmly established in Tibet.

Buddhism strengthened its position under Trisong Deutsen’s successors, and was then weakened during prince Darma’s time, as he sought to become the king through using Bon. He organized one of the monk ministers to be murdered, and then killed the king himself.¹⁵ Having become a king, Darma forbade Buddhist preaching and practice, closed the temples, and forced the monks to abandon their faith under the threat of a death penalty. He succeeded in destroying Buddhism in Central Tibet, but could not do the same in other regions.¹⁶ People did not like

¹⁵ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

¹⁶ Shakabpa, 1988.

the king's attitude towards them and their religion. Because of that he was nicknamed Langdarma ("Ox Darma", or "Youthful Ox Darma"). This is how he is remembered in history. Lhalung Pelgi Dorje killed Darma in 842. He was not a monk, as it is usually written. In fact, he had given vows of novice, and was a hermit that engaged in deep contemplation in a cave.

During the next two centuries disintegration of the Tibetan State took place, but the influence of Buddhism grew stronger. Fusion of secular and religious powers began during the 10th century in Sakya. Members of the ruling class became Buddhist teachers, built monasteries, etc. In 10th–12th centuries several sects of Buddhism were formed in Tibet.

The oldest of these sects, later known as Nyingma (literally: "[sect] of old [translations]"), goes back to Padmasambhava. In contrast, all sects that followed it were called Sarma, "[sect] of new [translations]". During the second quarter of the 11th century a famous Buddhist preacher Atisha of India was invited by the ruler of Ngari that was situated in the west of Tibet. Having spent the rest of his life in Tibet, he and his disciple Dromtonpa laid the foundation for the Kadam sect. Atisha's teachings are honoured in all sects in Tibet.

Marpa (1012–1097) was the founder of the Kagyu sect. He received tantric precepts in India from the famous teachers Naropa and Maitripa. The main branch of the Kagyu sect, Karma Kagyu, was created by followers of Karmapa Düsum Khenpa, who founded its main monastery Tsurphu in 1155.¹⁷

The Sakya Monastery of western Central Tibet was founded in 1073 by Konchok Gyaltzen, a pupil of Lama Drogmi Sakya Yeshe, who travelled around India



Atisha (Chandra, 1999)



Marpa (Chandra, 1999)

¹⁷ Shakabpa, 1988.



Konchok Gyaltzen (Chandra, 1999)



Tsongkhapa (Chandra, 1999)

and obtained teachings from different gurus. The first of the breakaway sects of Tibetan Buddhism also gained the monastery's name. In 1294, Kün pang Thukje Tsöndu, a monk from Sakya, founded a monastery in the Jomonang area. The monastery was named after the area, with Jonang being the name of the sect. Later, Takten Phuntsokling became the main monastery of this sect. It is situated to the west of Shigatse City. The Jonang sect gave rise to a number of prominent religious thinkers and scholars that included Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen and, Jetsun Taranatha, etc. Taranatha was reborn as Jetsundampa Khutuktu Zanabazar, who became the head of the Buddhists in Outer Mongolia, and established a theocratic system there.

As already mentioned (in Chapter 2), during the Mongol Empire, theocratic rule of Sakya hierarchs was established in Tibet. During the twilight of the Mongol Dynasty, the power in Tibet shifted to the Kagyu sect, represented by Jangchub Gyaltzen and his successors. At the beginning of the 14th century, the famous historian and religious leader of Tibet, Buton Rinchendub, systematized the Canon of Tibetan Buddhism, and wrote "The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet".¹⁸ In 1346, Kunga Dorjee wrote

"The Red Annals", one of the important sources on Tibetan history. Other writings on Tibetan history and religion appeared in the early 14th century.

Tsongkhapa Lobsang Drakpa (1357–1419) was one of the most prominent persons in Buddhism. He was born in the Nyingma family in Tsongkha (Amdo). Chöje Dhondup Rinchen taught the seven year old Tsongkhapa tantric initiations in his cave in the ritode Chugartan. He then took the boy to his monastery, that was founded in 1349, about 90 km from Tsongkha. Tsongkhapa took his initial vows here and stayed at this monastery until the age of sixteen.

¹⁸ Budon, 1999.

Even as a youth, he had already received initiations, strived for spiritual realizations, travelled to the holy places, and received teachings in different monasteries. His excellent memory enabled him to memorize long texts. When he was twenty-five, Tsongkhapa took the full monk's vows. He worked diligently in philosophy, yoga, and meditation, and he taught others: he had over a thousand disciples. Tsongkhapa wrote a number of fundamental works on Buddhism. The most famous of them is the "The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment" ("Lamrim Chenmo").¹⁹ Practically, this is synopsis of Buddhism, presented in order that follows the improvement of the practitioner.²⁰

Tsongkhapa founded a new sect of Tibetan Buddhism, Gelug. His aim was a reform that prescribed a stricter enforcement of the Buddhist canons. Tsongkhapa positioned his sect as "The New Kadam", since Kadam itself has faded by that time. The Gelug doctrine also included many of the highest achievements of other sects. The Gelug sect followers founded a number of important monasteries in Tibet: Ganden in 1409; Drepung in 1416; Sera in 1418; and Tashilhunpo in 1447. With thousands of monks living in each one, these monasteries grew. In 1432, the Ganden Monastery was headed by Khedrub Je who was later referred to as the 1st Panchen Lama. During his time a special pavilion with an installed stupa containing the remains of Tsongkhapa was built at Ganden. In 1447, Gedundub, one of Tsongkhapa's disciples founded the Tashilhunpo Monastery.



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¹⁹ Russian translation: Tsongkhapa, 2007.

²⁰ Tsongkhapa's biography published in Russian: Tsongkhapa, 2007, v. 1, p.XXXV–LIII.



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Sera Monastery: 1 – in 1938 (Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-13-22-38/foto: Ernst Schaefer / License CC-BY-SA 3.0); 2 – sculptures of “Three longevity deities” – Ushnishavijaya, White Tara and Amitayus; above them, wrapped in fabric, 108 volumes of the Tibetan Buddhist canon “Kangyur”: each in a separate cell, 1938 (Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-KA-07-064/foto: Ernst Krause / License CC-BY-SA 3.0); 3 – pieces of broken metal sculptures in the monastery courtyard, 1991 (Norbulinka Institute Archive, Dharamsala / Ngodup Tsoknyid)

After Sonam Gyatso (1543-1588), the Lama of the Gelug Sect, received the title of Dalai Lama from his Mongol patron Altan Khan, two of his previous incarnations, Gedün Gyatso (1475–1542) and Gedündub (1391–1474), received the title retrospectively. Accordingly, Sonam Gyatso was the 3rd Dalai Lama. Dalai Lamas are earthly incarnations of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. His manifestation as the Dalai Lamas can be compared with the reflection of sun in droplets of water. Each of the Dalai Lamas is a reincarnate of his predecessor, not Avalokiteshvara directly. This line of reincarnation goes back to antiquity. According to the tradition, Dromtonpa was the 45th and Gedundub was the 51st. In 1582, while on his way to the headquarters of the Mongol Khan, Sonam Gyatso founded the Kumbum Monastery in the birthplace of Tsongkhapa. Kumbum became one of the main monasteries of Gelug sect.

The 4th Dalai Lama, as was described above (in Chapter 2), was found in Mongolia and then taken to Tibet. His teacher, Lobsang Chögen of the Tashilhunpo Monastery, received the title of Panchen Lama. Panchen Lamas are incarnations of Buddha Amitabha, the spiritual “father” of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. But this does not mean that the Panchen Lama is “superior” to the Dalai Lama. Traditionally, the one who was the oldest, was a mentor to the one who was younger. According to the rebirth line, a disciple of Tsongkhapa, the monk Khedub Gelekpel (1385–1438) was announced as the 1st Panchen Lama. The second and third incarnations were Sonam Choglang (1439–1504) and Lobsang Dhondup (1505–1566), respectively. Accordingly, it turned out that Lobsang Chögen was the 4th Panchen Lama. However, as was already stated, the Tibetan tradition recognizes this line of rebirth, and yet the numeration of Panchen Lamas began with him. The main monastery of Panchen Lamas was Tashilhunpo near the town of Shigatse.

As was mentioned above (see Chapter 2), during the Middle Ages, Tibetan feuds sometimes had a religious connotation. This was often referred to as a struggle between the various sects of Tibetan Buddhism. In fact, the objectives of these clan fights were purely secular and typical of the times of feudal fragmentation. One can see an approximate analogy with the religious wars of medieval Europe, which shows once again that people manage to justify their greed and violence even when they consider themselves to be followers of the most peaceful religions.

Buddhism was spreading towards the north from Tibet, i.e. to Mongolia. It was adopted by more and more tribes. In 1587, the largest monastery in Khalkha, Erdene Zuu, was sanctificated. Following that, the number of Buddhist temples and monasteries started to grow rapidly. Oirats adopted Buddhism at the beginning of the 17th century. The famous Zaya Pandita, who was educated in Tibet, conducted his teachings on their territory in the middle of 17th century. The Gelug teachings were also spread among the Mongol peoples living in Russia: the Kalmyks, the Buryats and the Tuva. In the course of several centuries, just like any other religion,

Buddhism in Russia was enriched by local features, but did not change either doctrinally or canonically.

Buddhism, one of the officially recognized traditional religions of the Russian Federation, is actually Tibetan Buddhism and not something local that is distinct from its direction.

This book is not intended as an explanation of the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism. However, some of its important features should be noted. The best source is the authentic one. Therefore, I will use well-known books of the 14th Dalai Lama²¹ to pick these features out.

Religions can be divided into two groups: the theistic ones that claim the existence of God as the Creator of the world, and the non-theistic, which do not claim that. The former, for example, include Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism, and the latter Buddhism and Jainism. The feature of Buddhism is assertion of anatman i.e. the absence of a unified and unchanging soul.

Teachings of the Buddha Shakyamuni consist of both Sutra and Tantra. Having achieved enlightenment, the Buddha began to turn the Three Wheels of Dharma. During the First Turning the Buddha set out the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, during the Second Turning he set out the doctrine on emptiness (that there is no self-existence of phenomena) and compassion, and during the Third Turning he set out the doctrine on Buddha-nature.

The Buddha also emanated as Vajradhara (the tantric form of Buddha) and outlined the teachings of Tantra, a set of techniques that accelerate the process of achieving enlightenment. The Buddha's words were recorded by his disciples with these recordings laying the foundation to the set of sutras. They made up the multi-volume "Kangyur" in the Tibetan translation. Tibetan Buddhism is nothing but the Indian teachings in their purest form. It combines the traditions of both of the main branches of Buddhism, Hinayana and a large part of Mahayana (including Vajrayana or Tantrayana).

A distinctive feature of Mahayana is the desire to achieve enlightenment not for oneself but for the sake of liberating others from suffering. Buddhas cannot pass insights from their stream of consciousness to others. Rather, sentient beings are liberated from all suffering through a Buddha's teachings on the true nature of phenomena. Sentient beings can be set free by teaching them what should be accepted and what should be rejected. However, before one can teach this, he first needs to realise and understand this himself, and this is only possible for a buddha. Therefore, the goal of reaching enlightenment is that of attaining Buddhahood.

The Four Noble Truths that were taught by the Buddha are: the truth of suffering; its causes; the cessation of suffering; and the Noble Eightfold Path to end suffering. Consciousness is a stream that is not interrupted by death, rather

²¹ Dalai Lama, 1991, 2008.

it is continued through reincarnation. Bad deeds are accumulated due to a lack of discipline of the mind, and this builds layers of foundation in the stream of consciousness with that foundation determining rebirth in one world or another.

Obscurations are sources of suffering. Obscurations are defined as the peripheral factors of consciousness. They arise because of the beginningless conditionality of consciousness that holds on to true existence, that is, the self-existence of “I” and the surrounding world. There are six main obscurations: attachment, hostility, arrogance, ignorance, doubt, false views. They are the causes of karmic visions. Such collective vision makes up one of the samsaric worlds, in which consciousness is reborn:²² the worlds of gods,²³ demigods, men, hungry ghosts, animals, and hells. In Buddhist iconography, this cycle is represented by “The Wheel of Life”. Six (sometimes five) worlds of samsara, the three main obscurations (ignorance, hatred and attachment), twelve units/links of dependent origination (i.e. the causal factors of existence in samsara) and way out from samsara are all drawn here. The existence in samsara is always associated with suffering, but types of suffering are different in different realms.

By eliminating obscurations, one can achieve Liberation or Nirvana of an Arhat, and then the state of a Buddha, thus fully realizing the true nature of reality. It must be emphasized: Nirvana is not non-existence, as is often suggested. The 14th Dalai Lama writes:²⁴ “Nirvana literally means a state beyond suffering, and refers to the state of freedom from the cycle of being”. It cannot be described, as all concepts and notations exist only in samsara.

Actions (or “karma”, in Sanskrit) and their consequences are divided into good and not good. The law of karma is the law of cause and effect. If one could get rid of the obscured aggregates (Sanskrit: skandha²⁵), then related suffering would also disappear and Liberation would be realised. The cycle of rebirth cannot be broken, and consciousness cannot be purified without religious practices. Buddhas used to be the same kind of beings like all others. This includes Buddha Sakyamuni.

Refuge is implied by the Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma (The Teachings)²⁶ and Sangha (the spiritual community). Without them, the path to Liberation is not possible. For Liberation to occur, one needs to include Dharma into the stream of

22 Namkhai Norbu, 2004, p.5–34.

23 In this case we are not considering God as the Supreme Being, or absolute, but creatures that, due to their merit in past life, live longer in a different world, and in greater satisfaction with life than humans.

In Buddhism, there is no concept of God the Creator, God–personality or concept of “many gods” in place of Him. From this, it is often concluded that Buddhism is atheism. This is not accurate: Buddhism operates another system of concepts that cannot be reduced to atheism.

24 The Dalai Lama, 2008, p.38.

25 Skandhas are elements that united on the principle of psycho-physical activity that makes up a person.

26 The word Dharma in Sanskrit means “that which holds”. Everything that exists are dharmas, phenomena in the sense that they hold, or bear, their own essence or nature. Also, the doctrine or religion is also dharma in the sense that it protects people from disasters.

own skandhas. To do this, all physical and verbal actions need to be coordinated with religious practice. Without it, no matter how much people may meditate, no matter how much they recite scriptures, no matter how much life is spent in the temple—all of that would not help. The mind is precisely what is needed for practice. An immoral lifestyle is incompatible with religious practice. Since all arises from causes and conditions, it is necessary to find the causes in the flow of one's consciousness which are related to the Jewel of the Teaching, the true Refuge.

To do this, one needs to progress through the ways that include three practices: higher morality, higher meditative concentration and higher wisdom. The basis of morality is to avoid the ten non-virtuous actions of: killing, stealing, fornication, lying, slander, harsh speech, meaningless talk, covetousness, ill-will and wrong views. These are contrasted by ten virtues. Adhering to them implies practicing morality.

Initially, the practice of meditative concentration involves mastering single pointed concentration on an object. If this is accompanied by adoption of taking the Buddhist Refuge, then this is considered to be Buddhist practice. Images of the Buddha, or other enlightened beings may be used as objects for that purpose. These are not "idols" as some authors suggest, and these objects as such are not worshipped in Buddhism. Images are needed to direct consciousness towards those whom they represent during prayers or concentration.

The practice of Vajrayana provides a faster path to Liberation when compared to others. It is based on the method of using meditation and yoga to direct consciousness and various body energies to achieve Enlightenment.

In recent years the horrors of bloody sacrifices and debauchery that go on in Tibetan Tantric Buddhism of Vajrayana received increasingly more coverage. This trend is fuelled by the emergence of an increasing number of translated texts, passages of which are taken out of context and presented to the public as the terrible "inner essence" of Buddhism. The religious art of Tibet is almost always referred to. In this art, we often encounter terrifying deities, depicted in copulation, holding severed heads or cups made of human skulls filled with blood, which contributes to this impression. To go into this matter, one must be familiar with the teachings of Tibetan Vajrayana. And then everything falls into place, as we realise that the famous moral teachings of the Buddha with their ten principles listed above, apply fully to the teachings of Tantra.

Images of aggression in Vajrayana texts and iconography are Buddhist reformulations of the motifs of earlier forms of religions. Numerous images of deities in Tantra are images that show the methods of purification of polluted skandhas, dhatu (elements) and ayatanas (bases). Differences in personality, attitudes and abilities of students are corresponded to the peaceful or wrathful facial expressions of deities, their number of faces and hands, the number of principal and accompanying figures portrayed in any one scene, etc. These are not "devils that are to be worshipped". Pictures of murder, tearing and eating flesh, etc, all embody



A ritual dance performer, 1938, Lhasa (Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-05-10-04/foto: Ernst Schaefer / License CC-BY-SA 3.0)

things such as spiritual forces, the overcoming obstacles to Liberation, living out negative karma, and the purification of consciousness, etc. They imply an attack on *internal* enemies — an obscuration of consciousness (klesha) that primarily include ignorance, hatred and desire. To interpret this guide as one for action in the external (physical) world and not in the inner (spiritual), is not one just of crude oversimplification, but also of a complete false understanding of Buddhism.

It is no less ridiculous to suspect Buddhists take part in bloody rituals, than it is to suspect Christians take part in cannibalism on the basis of Jesus Christ's well-known metaphor, when he offered his disciples bread and wine and likened them to his flesh and blood.

Sexual images are present in the art of Vajrayana. Just as in the case of the wrathful deities, these are only symbols. They indicate the need for the connection of wisdom (comprehension of emptiness, Sanskrit: Shunyata) with method (compassion) to achieve Liberation. As for the so-called "sexual yoga" that exists in Tibet, it is only one of many methods that exist for activating latent energies of the body that can be directed towards comprehension of emptiness. Only the best yogis, who spent many years in contemplation were admitted to this practice, and even then they almost always practiced with the visualized and not real yogini-partners. Both partners had to respect their vows, which were obtained during initiation, and they both preferably had to be at approximately the same level of yogic development, so that both could gain spiritual benefit from the practice. Of course, Vajrayana, as any other human community, has people who merely hide behind the letter of the teachings for personal gain. Therefore, all information about "tantric sex", which we find on the Internet and in esoteric literature, is simply money-making pornography with a mystical touch that has no relation to Buddhism.

Some Buddhist sacraments have not been studied by scientific methods, but have been confirmed in practice. For example, the predictions of the main oracle of Tibet, into which Chökyong (defender of Teaching) Nechung is "descending", are being confirmed. This is evidenced by the 14th Dalai Lama, and many others. Another example are yogis, the so called *lungpa*. They entered a special trance and were able to run across mountains at a pace of about 70 km per day.²⁷ Some Buddhist practices are confirmed and being studied by scientific methods. For example, *tummo* yoga, the results of which may be used to judge achievements in Tantra.²⁸ In the experiments, monks were sitting naked in the snow and dried wet sheets on their bodies despite the air temperature being below zero. Another surprising phenomenon is the incorruptible bodies of some lamas. A famous example is the body of the Buryat Khenpo Lama D. Itigelov, that was extracted in 2002, seventy-five years after the funeral. After the study, experts noted that the tissues of his body did not correspond to the tissues of a dead person.²⁹ According to the Dalai Lama, during the Cultural Revolution in Tibet, a few lamas were found in the same condition as Itigelov. Not so long ago, a high Lama Lobsang Nyima died in India. It was stated that he was in a state of meditation for eighteen days after his death.³⁰ According to Buddhist teachings, reaching a high degree of realisation allows a

27 Tucci, 2004.

28 Dalai Lama, 1992.

29 For more detail, see: Body of a great lama...

30 Tibetan Lama...

person to enter into a state of samadhi and stay there for a very long time. Samadhi is a non-dualistic state of consciousness, induced by insight meditation, which does not require other causes besides the existence of consciousness itself. Some enter into such a state before death and remain in it.

The Dalai Lama follows the Buddhist view that all must be analyzed, rather than accepted on blind faith, which supports the study of the above phenomena through the use of scientific methods. International research projects were established so as to study the “mysterious” phenomena. The International Institute “Mind and Life” was founded with the purpose of establishing collaborative work and research partnerships between modern science and Buddhist science so as to understand the nature of reality and to improve the wellbeing of people. The research conducted there is related to medicine, neurology, psychology, physics, and education. The Institute hosts conferences, publishes books, participates in joint projects, etc.

According to Buddhism, the practice of wisdom is the practice of conditional, or nominal knowledge as well as absolute knowledge. Conditional knowledge is knowledge about things as they are perceived and described by men. Absolute knowledge is knowledge of the nature of being. Through meditation, it is established that the ultimate nature of all things and phenomena is emptiness. This does not imply a vacuum and non-existence, but rather a void from one’s own independent existence, from self-existence. A false concept of “I” arises from the lack of knowledge about the true nature of things. Everything in samsara exists by virtue of dependent origination, and nothing exists by itself. This does not mean that the world is an illusion. The world does exist, but, due to dependent origination, only conditionally and not unconditionally. So the world is *similar* to an illusion. Overcoming an egocentric worldview helps us to love and care about others, the basis of spiritual practices of Tibetan Buddhism. Without it Liberation is impossible.

Tibetan lamas did not change Buddhism and did not combine it with any other religion. The Dalai Lama stresses that the Tibetan commentaries always cite their source (whether it was the Buddha himself or one of the other Indian teachers) even in brief interpretations of particular parts of the doctrine. Modern Indian scholars, in the field of both Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophy, point out that even when a part of a Teaching was difficult to understand, its meaning became more clear from the Tibetan translations that were made many centuries ago. Some Indian scholars believe that some fragments of texts are easier to understand in a Tibetan translation than they are in Sanskrit. Also, many Buddhist texts that were lost in India have been preserved only in the Tibetan translation. There are slight differences between Tibetan and Indian Buddhism, that arose due to differences in geography, time or external conditions, as is often the case in other religions. Different sects of Tibetan Buddhism are united in their inherent nature. They only differ slightly in the way of teaching.

Tibetan Buddhism is the exact Tibetan language version of late Indian Mahayana Buddhism, and it differs strongly from Chinese Buddhism.³¹ Tibetan and Chinese branches of Mahayana developed separately, and the Tibetan and Chinese languages became the most important non-Indian languages on which Mahayana Buddhism was passed on. Many varieties of East Asia Buddhism sprang from the Chinese-language tradition, while the Tibetan version formed the basis of Buddhism in Mongolia and the Trans-Himalayan region.

Consequently, it is incorrect to regard Tibetan Buddhism as some kind of transformed variation, or, worse, a mixture of Buddhism and Shamanism, to which the Europeans have coined the term “Lamaism”. This word must be abandoned, because it is invalid both in terms of the term itself and its implied meaning. Much was written on this subject. I will quote the opinion of E.A. Torchinov, an eminent Russian scientist:³²

“Speaking of Tibetan Buddhism, we must immediately point out the illegality of using the term “Lamaism” to refer to this branch of Mahayana. Tibetans themselves do not know this word, for them, there are only such concepts as Dharma (*chos*), the Dharma of the Buddha (*sangs rgyas kyi chos*) or Mahayana (*theg-pa chen-po*). This word was created by Europeans in 19th century to stress the cult of the spiritual master that existed in Tibet, the “good friend” (*kalyana mitra*), Lama (from the Tibetan words *bla* – “high” and *ma* – “no,” that is “no higher”). Thus, it was as if Tibetan Buddhism has turned into a special confession, which is absolutely unjustified, because the Tibetan monastic tradition has not simply absorbed, but also preserved and reproduced with extraordinary care the late Indian Buddhist tradition in its entirety. In this regard, Chinese Buddhism might be considered a special confession with a much greater reason for it was much changed and transformed under the influence of traditional Chinese culture. As for the cult of the lamas, the yoga of teacher’s veneration (guru-yoga) is a phenomenon that is quite Indian and free from any Tibetan specifics. Practically all differences of Tibetan Buddhism from Indian Buddhism from the epoch of Pals exist only at the level of popular religiosity, without affecting the actual “great tradition”.

During the 1960s the question of “Lamaism” also acquired a political dimension, i.e. after the suppression of anti-Chinese uprising in Tibet and the flight of the 14th Dalai Lama to India (and especially during the infamous 1966–1976 “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution”) the PRC authorities carried out a number of repressive acts directed against the Tibetan clergy and against the Buddhist tradition and culture of Tibet as a whole, arguing that Tibetan “Lamaism” (Chinese: “lama jiao”) is not actually Buddhism, but merely a degraded form of Buddhism and hence does not deserve conservation as part of the Great Chinese cultural heritage.

31 The Dalai Lama, 2008.

32 Torchinov, E.A. Buddhist tradition...

That's when the Dalai Lama called for scientists around the world to abandon the use of the word "Lamaism". We will not use it either and for reasons of a purely scientific nature".

Nevertheless, China's propaganda materials can often be found to contain the assertion that "the Tibetans have their own Tibetan religion: Lamaism,"³³ which supposedly is a branch of Chinese Buddhism, and that the Panchen Lama is apparently a "religious teacher of Chinese Buddhism".³⁴ But, perhaps, things are changing. The English translation of the Chinese "White Book" on Tibetan Culture in 2008 has already used the term "Tibetan Buddhism" instead of "Lamaism".³⁵

In addition to the adherents of Bon and Buddhism, there are also some Muslims and Christian Catholics in Tibet. Prior to the occupation there were also some Hindus.³⁶ There was complete tolerance of other faiths. Theocracy never tried to convert them to its own faith. This was reported by both Muslims and the adherents of other religions.³⁷ So it is wrong to assert that "the so-called unitary faith that existed in old Tibet was in fact a violation of human rights under the social theocratic system that took a distorted shape. Indeed, in the old days people could not even manage their own destiny, let alone have rights to freedom of religion".³⁸

As we see, Tibetan Buddhism is full of interesting things. Nevertheless, people are often attracted by the aberrations. I will not discuss "the para-Buddhist" concepts, such as theosophy. I will also not discuss the propaganda aimed at inciting hatred between the religions (relevant responses can be found on the Internet).³⁹ I will only dwell slightly on some frequently discussed examples, and firstly, "ritual murder" and "sacrifices" in Buddhism.

Russian merchant, A.V. Burdukov, wrote the following about a Mongolian sacrificial ceremony in the early twentieth century: Ja Lama sacrificed ten Chinese prisoners and took the skin off a Kazakh; Chojjon Lama ate the heart of a White Guard soldier; some commanders used hearts' blood of executed Chinese and the White Guards to sprinkle their banners. During the "Tibet Today and in the Past" exhibition in Beijing in 2008, human skin, products made of "serfs'" skulls and leg bones were on display. Similar promotional exhibitions followed the suppressed uprising in 1959 and were held at Drepung Monastery, Lhasa, Sera, Gyantse, Lhoka and other places.⁴⁰ Visitors were told that people were killed for the sake of these items. In 1948 monks allegedly sacrificed twenty-one people in hope of preventing

33 Briefly on Tibet: Population and peoples...

34 Negotiations...

35 Protection and development...

36 Shakabpa, 1988.

37 For example, Butt, 1994; Harrer, 2002.

38 China and Tibet, numbers and facts. 2006...

39 For example, Pandaev, 1999.

40 Smith, 2008, p.68, 72, 133-135.

the Chinese invasion, and then annually used fresh human body parts.⁴¹ Soviet journalist Vsevolod Ovchinnikov tells a story of the former apprentice monk who was ordered to be buried alive during restoration of a temple. Allegedly some monks were ordered to go into samadhi and to be buried under the slabs of monasteries, and that such remains would then act as beacons for telepathic communication.⁴²

All this is contrary to Buddhism. Murder is considered to be one of the worst actions. The karma of one creature cannot be transferred to another.⁴³ Here are a few quotes from the Buddha.⁴⁴ “Do not kill, nor cause slaughter <...> He who seeking his own happiness punishes or kills beings who also long for happiness, will not find happiness after death. <...> By oneself the evil is done, by oneself one suffers; by oneself evil is left undone, by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself, no one can purify another”.

In fact, Ja Lama grossly violated the commandments, tortured monks, and refused to subordinate to the head of the Mongolian Church. Consequently, the 8th Bogdo Gegen stripped him of his titles, confiscated his property and ordered his arrest. Plain old museum pictures were shown at the Beijing exhibition, it is unknown when and who made them as they had no supporting documentation. This was confirmed by J. Powers, author of a book on Beijing’s propaganda about Tibet.⁴⁵ Even A.T. Grunfeld, one of the main critics of Old Tibet, admitted only rare sacrifices took place in remote areas.⁴⁶

It is known that human bones, and sometimes other tissues are taken from the dead for Tantric purposes. There is a consensus on this from both scholars and the Chinese propaganda.⁴⁷ There was no need for sacrifices as “sky burials” had been practiced in Tibet for centuries where dismembered corpses were fed to vultures. Before the revolution, there was a similar custom in Mongolia. The corpses were fed to feral dogs. So dead body materials were always in abundance. Such funerals were practiced in relation to the fact that in the mountains there are little facilities for burial in the ground and too little fuel for cremation. In addition, it is justified by religion, as the essential principle of Buddhism is that of caring for others, and self-sacrifice is its logical conclusion. Giving your body as food for the animals was just a form of this practice. When such burials were banned people were discontented. In general, body parts of corpses are widely used not only in Buddhism, but also in other religions such as Christianity.⁴⁸

41 Smith, 1996, p.553–554; Kalovski, I. The true face...

42 Ovchinnikov, 2006, p.95–96; 2009.

43 For more details see: Balakirev, E.V. Myth...

44 Dhammapada, X, 129, 131; XII, 165.

45 China’s Tibet exhibit...

46 Grunfeld, 1996.

47 For example, Wright, 1904, p.333–334; Forney, M. China...

48 See large collection of photographs: La magie...

As in other countries, there were tortures and cruel murders in Mongolia, Tibet and China. Perhaps some offenders tried to hide behind religion, which was captured by witnesses. In fact, it could have been sadism or the remnants of some pre-Buddhist traditions. For example, S. Hedin wrote that Chinese women often killed their children if they could not feed them.⁴⁹ This was not the case with Tibet and Mongolia. But just as in China, the pre-Buddhist belief that eating a heart gives you the courage of the murdered man persevered. For example, Tibetans have eaten the heart of the heroically perished enemy, Zoravar Singh.⁵⁰ In the 19th century, Chinese troops, having suppressed the uprising of Muslims, were cooking hearts and livers of the dead.⁵¹ In 1909, in Manchuria, the crowd ripped the heart of an executed bandit to pieces after it was thrown to it by the executioner, who also swallowed a piece of the organ.⁵² In 1914, the Chinese executed a few Mongols by cutting out their hearts.⁵³ Cannibalism was practiced in the PRC during the Cultural Revolution.⁵⁴ In Tibet, it also occurred during the famine that was caused by Mao's reforms.

I have specifically investigated the issue of ritual killings and burying people under the temples by speaking to both people in Tibet as well as Tibetan refugees, and they said that such things did not happen. It is possible that the basis for such stories were the burial of corpses into the ground, a rare occurrence in Tibet. For example, dead children were sometimes buried into the ground in Ü-Tsang.⁵⁵ The killed were also sometimes buried. There were special people who, on a particular day, had the right to exhume bodies of the killed so as to use their bones in religious ceremonies.⁵⁶ Sometimes the bodies were buried in the walls of houses.⁵⁷ Stories about burying children only became prominent after "peaceful liberation" by China. Old Tibetans have told me that this propaganda was carried out on purpose. Perhaps, the episode that was retold by Ovchinnikov was also invented back then, although without the telepathy. The Museum of the Revolution has opened in Lhasa in 1965. The exhibition featured a skeleton of a boy, allegedly one of the four that were buried under the corners during construction.⁵⁸ And another boy was walking around the Museum and telling everyone how he avoided the same fate. A special exhibition of clay figures "vividly depicted" this among other "horrors of feudalism".⁵⁹ Subsequently, this exhibition was withdrawn from the mandatory routes for foreigners as it mainly caused mistrust and ridicule.

49 Gedin, 1899, p.417.

50 Tucci, 2004.

51 Ringardt, 1903, p.83.

52 Baikov, 1997, p.30–123.

53 Below, 1999.

54 The CPC continues to resist... See also Chapter 9.

55 Bell, 1991, p.289.

56 French, 2004, p.263.

57 Kauffner, P. Was human...

58 Smith, 2008, p.133–134.

59 Powers, 2004, p.141.

Ritual killings are known in the modern history of many countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and America. Perhaps, Tibet is no exception. There are reports that pre-Buddhist practices of sacrificial killings occurred in recent times in Tibet.⁶⁰ But, as far as Buddhism is concerned, there is no place for ritual killings and human sacrifices, not in the past, present or future.

But that is enough about the macabre. In recent decades, newsagents' shelves were piled with products of pseudo-scientific and pseudo-religious business projects. There are also such "projects" on theosophy and Tibetan religions. I will not discuss theosophy because it is really not Buddhism, and it is nothing to do with Tibet. In Russia books by E.R. Muldashev about the "city of the gods", somati (samadhi), the secret caves, Shambhala, the Mount Kailash, the Manasarovar Lake, numerology, the origin of Tibetans from Atlantis, etc. are more or less popular in recent times.⁶¹ There are also many books written about esoteric Tibet and its mysticism by Lobsang Rampa, which also sell well. However, not every reader knows that Cyril Henry Hoskin, a son of a British plumber, hid behind the Tibetan name above. He did not even speak Tibetan. I will not describe in detail fables and mistakes in these books as there is not enough room. All of books of this type are no more than amusing fiction in the genre of fantasy. In 2005, the Dalai Lama told Russian reporters: "For how long are you going to stay in India? Four days? Look for the secret knowledge! And if you manage to find it, please let me know. I know nothing about it. <...> The books by Lobsang Rampa have appeared and turned Tibet into a mystical land".⁶²

* * *

The life of the Tibetan people is inseparable from religion. Perhaps this is the most religious nation in the world, as almost all Tibetans are faithful. This can be seen by anyone who visits their country. Both Bon and Tibetan Buddhism have more in common with similar teachings of India and Mongolia than with those of China. Tibetan Buddhism is the Indian Teachings in their pure form. It is neither a form of Chinese Buddhism, nor is it a distortion of Buddhism, nor its mixture with Shamanism, nor is it a religion that practices killing or cruelty. The term "Lamaism" should be dropped because it is invalid from both scientific and religious viewpoints.

Clearly, Buddhism best suits psychology and the worldview of Tibetans. Its adoption helped Tibetans to humanize their lives and became a major factor in shaping the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization. Buddhism (in its Tibetan form) is one of the traditional Russian religions. At its core are not miracles, but spiritual self-improvement for the sake of doing good for the others. The Dalai Lama stresses, "The purpose of spiritual practice is not to gain miraculous abilities, but in the transformation of our inner world".⁶³

60 Grunfeld, 1996, p.29–30; Kauffner, P. Was human...

61 Muldashev, 2008.

62 Zhironkina Yu. "A clear picture of the world"...

63 Dalai Lama, 2007, p.377.

CHAPTER 6

State, Society and Economy



Tibet was ruled by kings (*tsempo*) during antiquity and the early Middle Ages, and they were assisted by members of the council, which dealt with the state's affairs. There was diarchy and strife between the secular leaders (whose positions originally were not hereditary) and Bon priests during the time of the first *tsempo*.

The administration of the state was reorganized during the reign of Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century. The Office was in charge of ministers who were divided into three groups. Administration of the state was performed by its Central Government, which had the following structure:¹ the Great State Chancellor, the State Chancellor (Deputy Commander), the Interior Minister, the Chancellor Administrator, the Inspector Superintendent, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Revenue and Taxation, the War Minister, and the Minister of Justice. The ministers and the king's dignitaries formed the State Council, whose members were divided into advisers on foreign affairs, advisers on internal affairs and simply advisers. An institution of local administration was also introduced.

A king was served by the court officials. Tibet was divided into provinces and smaller units. Once external territories were conquered they had General Governorships installed. Special officials distributed the land among the inhabitants. One thousand families, with the "thousand-man" being at their head, became the main administrative unit. The distinguished dignitaries received land along with its peasants. Each province had its own army that had its distinct uniform, banner and horses' colour. The main unit in the army also consisted of one thousand men. The army was divided on the decimal principle. The soldiers fought in pairs — an archer and a swordsman.

Tibet had its own legal system. There is evidence that the first Tibetan laws were borrowed from the Uighur and the Turkic states. They also had a judge. Over the centuries, the Tibetan language developed precise legal terminology. Tibet's law system was absolutely independent, although in some cases the old Mongolian law norms were used along with some laws from the Yuan and Qing empires. As a

1 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

whole, however, it was a completely independent section in Central Asian law.² One characteristic feature of the Tibetan law system that lasted until mid-twentieth century was its division into two parts, religious rules (for monks) and legal rules (for laity).³ A system of criminal penalties were also in place in Tibet, with crimes against a person being punished by fines. The size of a fine depended on the severity of the crime and the social rank of the perpetrator and the victim. As was the case in many other ancient states, trial by ordeal was used in ancient Tibet in order to establish guilt. During this procedure, a white or a black pebble was to be drawn from muddy water, milk, boiling milk or boiling oil. Accordingly, the subject was found not guilty or guilty.⁴

In 7th –10th centuries the arable lands in Tibet were divided into state - owned, royal (which the King gifted as reward for service) and lands of families that headed Tibetan clans.⁵ Clans united descendants of one ancestor in the male line. The highest dignitaries descended from clans, often from those that had kinship with the king. Society was divided into nobility and commoners, who, in turn, were divided into free and personally not free people. They cultivated the king's land and paid land tax. Each of the free landowners received a red tag, which specified an amount of grain tax that was due from his land. At all times the law and traditions of Tibet forbade landowners to mistreat the peasants. Starting from the King Songtsen Gampo, many Tibetan rulers created laws that were based on the ten virtues of Dharma,⁶ which is the Buddhist practice of morality (see Chapter 5). It required rulers to patronize their subjects. Lists of taxpayers started to be kept from the mid-8th century. These lists were written on paper, as in China. In addition to land tax, a free land-owner was further burdened with labour duty and extra fees. The personally not free section of society included not just farmers, but also people such as shepherds, craftsmen, and servants.

The 5th Dalai Lama increased the size the amount of land owned by monasteries, with this being true for monasteries belonging to different sects of Buddhism (apart from Karma Kagyu). He also carried out administrative reform, introduced the codes of “thirteen laws” and “sixteen laws”, which relied on earlier legislation. The higher class of Tibetan society was composed of aristocrats and their descendants, important officials, the higher clergy. The middle class were merchants, monks, and subordinate officials, and the lower classes were peasants, as well as those who were somehow connected with killing, such as butchers and tanners, as well as those who

2 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

3 Valiakhmetov, 1958, p.40.

4 Tibetan monk Geshe Jamyang Khentse who lived for a long time in St. Petersburg in the middle of the 20th century had seen such a procedure in his monastery, with boiling oil not causing harm to the arm of the subject.

5 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

6 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

worked with metal. The first Tibetan money appeared in 1792.⁷ The silver Nepalese coin *tamka* was used as an archetype but a Tibetan inscription was minted. Coins of various denominations began to be minted later. The monetary system in Tibet was not connected with the currency of the Qing Empire, and remained independent.

The system of judgement and punishment, as before, included torture and trial by ordeal.⁸ A number of crimes that ranged from grand theft to murder warranted a death penalty. In some cases it was replaced with a fine. Fines were always used in the case of theft. Crimes against religion were severely punished. Divorce cases (when initiated by a wife or a husband) implied a fine with the boys having then to stay with the husband, the girls with the wife. The husband had to provide his wife with clothes and resources for keeping servants, while he himself could take back what he gave to his wife during the marriage. Adultery was punished by fines.

According to the Tang imperial annals, the population of Tibet in the 7th century totalled ten million people.⁹ In the Yuan and Qing times it was composed, according to different estimations, from 850,000 to 3.5 million people.¹⁰ This is not surprising as during those times Tibet lost vast territories.

Throughout its history, the social structure and economy of Tibet changed very slowly. This was partly due to severe climatic conditions. Agriculture was the basis of Tibet's economy. A natural economy was prominent while manufacturing developed slowly. The Tibetans developed a system of low agricultural productivity, which allowed them to live in harmony with nature, avoiding ecological crises and famines. The traditional system led to the development of a custom that cares for the environment.¹¹ According to Buddhist teachings about the correct way of life, which were followed by the Tibetans, "moderation" is very important; one is advised to avoid excessive consumption and over-exploitation of natural resources, because it is believed such attitudes lead to harming living beings and the environment.

The contra-distinction of the man and nature concept is alien to Tibetans. Chinese and Westerners, with all their pragmatism, do not understand the values of the Tibetan civilization. The reluctance to commercialize rural products is often labelled as "backwardness". According to Chinese official figures, "Grassland overload was not significant in the old days in Tibet, because of stagnant population growth, frequent natural calamities, and massive human and livestock deaths in times of snowstorms and other natural disasters".¹² This is wrong. The nomadic livestock breeding system is well adapted to the low productivity of mountain pastures. A specific culture of livestock breeding was developed over centuries, which included a continuous register

7 Shakabpa, 1988.

8 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

9 Childs, 2003, p.423-444.

10 Childs, 2003, p.424.

11 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

12 Ecological Improvement...

of the use of pastures, the responsibility for their ecological stability, and the regular movement of herds of yaks, sheep and goats.¹³ Nomads had mixed herds of different animal species grazing on most pastures. This way, the animals eat different species of plants, and place a more balanced pressure on the pasture, when compared to grazing just one type. Furthermore, nomads used different systems of grazing that depended on the type of pasture, altitude and specific environmental conditions.

Although the modern concept of environmental ecological capacity was unknown to the Tibetans, the result of their use of natural resources is the same. Instead of “conquering” nature, they adapted their lifestyle and economy to it. This way of peaceful coexistence is largely due to the influence of Buddhism. As early as 1642, the 5th Dalai Lama issued a “Decree on the Protection of Animals and Nature”. Laws prohibiting the killing of animals in certain months and strict regulation of hunting were launched repeatedly.¹⁴ The nomads rarely hunted, and even then it was only for food. For example, they had a custom not to kill the wolf female, if she lived with her brood near the camp of nomads. This was based on the observation that the wolf does not hunt near its den, so as not give away its location. If you kill her brood, she would start hunting sheep.

Tibetans and Mongols still show great care towards animals, especially in holy places. For example, even now, by my observation, wild partridges allow people to approach them as closely as three meters away. I noted this in the vicinity of the Ganden Monastery in Tibet. Also, in areas near the Amar Bayasgalant Monastery and on the Bogdo Uul Mountain in Mongolia, the local fauna is considerably more diverse and more numerous than it is near local towns and cities.

Similar methods of reducing the strain on the environment were also used by people who did not lead nomadic lifestyles, such as the weak development of manufacturing, natural economy, and limiting population growth by traditional methods (a large number of monks, polyandry, etc). Polyandry was considered to be normal in Tibet.¹⁵ It was necessary to keep the inheritance to one family and limit population growth. In such families, women occupied the central place, in which their influence increased. Typically, several brothers (of similar age) would marry one wife. Ovchinnikov wrote that the father-in-law could marry his daughter-in-law, and if a widow got married, her daughters became their stepfather’s wives. These are known to be exceptional cases. If a wife lived longer than all her husbands and was still childless, she was exempt from all duties and taxes. Polygamy was also practiced, but was more rare than polyandry. The type of marriage was determined by economic conditions and specific circumstances.

13 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

14 For example, Chhodak, 2003, p.36–42.

15 Kozlov, 1947; Ovchinnikov, 2006; Bell, 1991, p.159.

Before democratic reform, the Tibetan State was structured by estates. The supreme power was held by the Dalai Lama. Theocracy was manifested in the fact that the administration of almost all levels included representatives of the clergy. Although the secular power of the Dalai Lama was absolute, he did not use it without consultations.¹⁶ During his absence, or while he was still a minor, the power was exercised by the National Assembly (Tsongdu), which appointed a regent. The post of the regent sometimes became a bone of contention for rival factions.

The Government had two first ministers, a layman and a monk. Civil control was exercised by the Council (Cabinet) of Ministers (Kashag). It was engaged in all public and private matters. It consisted of three clerks, two laymen and a monk. They were called the Kalons (Ministers). Below the Council there was an administration that consisted of the following departments: political, military, economic, legal, foreign affairs, finance and education.¹⁷ Management of religious affairs was exercised by a butler (*chikab khenpo*) and also by the Council that consisted of four monks. This body passed its stance on religious issues to the Dalai Lama through the administration of the first minister. The butler was also the custodian of the personal treasures of the Dalai Lama and also headed the Forest Department.

Top government positions were usually occupied by relatives of the Dalai Lamas and the representatives of ancient clans, especially those whose lineage could be traced back to the kings and their ministers. There were only 197 such families. Of these, twenty-five had the most influence. Aristocrats had advantages in terms of posts, privileges, honours, etc.¹⁸ Hereditary aristocracy was the serving aristocracy, of each family only one son deputised for the post that was reserved for laymen officials.¹⁹ However, this was not an insurmountable obstacle to the career of a commoner. A.T. Grunfeld's statement that historically Tibet had very low social mobility,²⁰ was not correct.

Firstly, almost every peasant family had a child that became a monk, thus making him a representative of a different class. Most of the clergy originated from peasants. Secondly, higher-ranking lamas were often reborn into families of ordinary people. This system gave rise to great social mobility. Finally, a man from the "lower ranks" could succeed in the role of a monk and then reach the top government posts. This was the case, for example, with Pishipa who reached the post of the First Minister in the Tibetan Government in the middle of the 19th century.²¹ A soldier's

16 Shakabpa, 1988.

17 Shakabpa, 1988.

18 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

19 Van Walt, 1987.

20 Grunfeld, 1996.

21 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

bravery also earned him hereditary titles and land.²² At the same time, the senior official could easily lose a position by falling into disfavour with the Dalai Lama or the first ministers. Officials were punished (e.g. by whipping) in the case of serious misconduct. Their families could also be subjected to punishments.²³

Formally, all the land in Tibet belonged to the Dalai Lama.²⁴ It was primarily distributed and used by the Government, the feudal lords and the church. Farmers were given land on behalf of the Dalai Lama. For this, they had to pay taxes and serve their conscriptions. Families of aristocrats had large estates that were given to them in the past. In return, one of the men in the family had to serve the state. Some of these families paid money to the State, and the rest of the estate's income was paid to the state servant.²⁵ If the Dalai Lama gifted land to a person or to a monastery, the recipient gained its income, fully or partially.²⁶ Such ownership was



Peasants from Central Tibet (Waddell, 1906)

not absolute, and one could not sell or mortgage this allotment. Tibetan officials could obtain land for the time of their state employment.

22 Dalai Lama, 2000.

23 Macdonald, 1932, p.209–210.

24 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

25 Dalai Lama, 2000.

26 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

Government land was cultivated by mobilized peasants or special employees. The income from this land went to the State. Slightly more than half of all the peasants worked on public lands.²⁷ They had their own inherited land or livestock. Most local officials were recruited from them. Most workers could freely choose their jobs, and create their own enterprises either in the countryside or in towns. Rural families gathered together into communities and elected their chiefs. The latter oversaw the payment of taxes and performance of duties. In addition, they were able to judge some disputed cases. Community life was regulated by community gatherings.

Chinese propagandists still divide the Tibetan peasants into “serfs and slaves” who constituted over 95% of the total population.²⁸ Or even simpler: “Before the democratic reforms in Tibet, there were only two categories of people: slaves and landlords advocating serfdom”.²⁹ In fact, it was different from this.

First of all, there is no reliable data on what percentage of the population were “serfs”. A.T. Grunfeld,³⁰ voicing Chinese data for the year 1959, cited different figures: nobility 5%, the clergy 15%, the nomads 20%, “serfs” 60%. But it is more likely that those who could be classified as “serfs” constituted about 30%.³¹ Furthermore, the peasant was basically free, as there were no serfs in the European sense of the word in Tibet. Tibetan “serfs” were in fact farmers with legal identity, often with detailed documentation about their rights, as well as with access to the legal justice system.³² There were several groups of “serfs”.³³ Those who cultivated the fields (*duchung*), were tied to estates with their work, but not with taxes. Village “serfs” (*tralpa*) had tax liabilities and were also obliged to participate in the transport service (*ula*). Half were “*mi-bog*”, that is, those who have bought their personal freedom. All of the “serfs” were actually more like tenants, because there was no legal reason for their state of serfdom.

In reality, the so-called “slaves” were domestic servants (*nangsen*) and managers of estates. Those who could not pay back their creditors fell into this category. They were supposed to look after the households of the feudal lords. The servant status was inherited. They were often “favourites” of the owners and had a higher actual status than that of the peasants. Although there was no slavery in Ü-Tsang, it is possible that it could have existed since ancient times in some places around the border areas. Peasants and servants were not isolated groups. Transitions between them did happen. After the reforms of the 13th Dalai Lama, every “serf” who was

27 Van Walt, 1987.

28 Champion of peace...

29 Happiness of Tibet...

30 Grunfeld, 1996.

31 Laird, 2006, p.318.

32 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

33 Smith, 2008, p.15–16.

absent from his estate for more than three years, received the status of an ordinary man (*chi-mi*), that is, the state “serf” status. And in 1944, the Tibetan Government issued an order exempting the debts of the insolvent poor.

Most farmers had plots of land. However, a farmer could not leave his plot until he paid its cost to the owner and found someone who would continue its cultivation. The allotment was not subject to division and was passed through inheritance to the eldest son with all corresponding rights and responsibilities. The other sons had to leave. They often went to the monasteries. Having sent a child to the monastery, parents first and foremost wanted to make him a respected man who took care of his next life as well as that of others. If a “serf” became a monk, his “owner” never stopped him from leaving the estate. If the peasant’s son left for another landowner, then they became a tenant or a labourer, and could also leave at any time once he met his obligations. With this system, the land was not divided into increasingly smaller plots between children, grandchildren, and so on, which allowed the preservation of areas that were large enough to feed families.³⁴ Land ownership by the State was purely formal, with state peasants being the actual owners of the land who were seeking not to sell it but to pass it along by inheritance.³⁵

The farmer who received land from the landowner on hereditary lease terms could bond it, lease it, or use hired labour. Once given to the labourer, the land could not be taken back, if the labourer paid for it regularly with his service. He could only be deprived of the land in the case of failure to pay tax or not fulfilling his labour duties.³⁶ In general, the landlord provided the land and labour was the peasant’s rent. Therefore, it is erroneous to assume that a “serf” was tied to an allotment for life without being paid by his master.³⁷

The farmer decided himself what would grow on his land and when, and which animals to keep. This was not prescribed by the landowner, as some authors suggest.³⁸ If necessary, the landowner could give a “serf” his livestock and seeds. Taxes and duties were paid by the homeowners’ community. Farmers themselves decided how to distribute work. The landowner was only concerned with taxes and duties, otherwise he did not interfere in the life of the peasants.³⁹ When obligations were fulfilled, all members of a household community were free to do what they wanted, such as leave for other areas for pilgrimage, or to visit relatives.

34 Division of peasants’ lands between the descendants of several generations was a major cause of landlessness of peasants in the European part of the Russian Empire (Bryukhanov, 2007). Subsequently, it became one of the causes of great socio-economic crisis.

35 Dalai Lama, 2000.

36 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

37 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

38 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

39 Goldstein, 2007, p.12.

The farmers worked for eighteen hours per day during harvest time. This was not “exploitation of the serfs”. They just strived to harvest their crops before frosts, so as not to lose them. But after the harvest they had more free time, and some of the foreigners called the Tibetans lazy. Thus, during summers there were not enough workers and during winter there was not enough work. Tibetans travelled a lot, especially during winter. This season is still widely used for pilgrimages in Tibet. There were even special guides, called *neyig* and *lamyig*.⁴⁰

If necessary, the landlord could lease his peasant labour to another person. Leftist propaganda termed this “selling a serf”.⁴¹ Some senior officials had very large estates. For example, an estate of one regent had five thousand farms. Some members of the aristocracy had up to ten to twenty thousand dependent peasants.⁴²

Traditional headmen and landlords were not oppressors in their majority. Their treatment of “serfs” and “slaves” was limited by religion and also by dependence on their labour. People often write about the wealth of the Tibetan elite and the poverty of commoners. But witnesses have reported that the gap in incomes between different social strata was not that significant. This gap was smaller than, for example, in Europe, Russia or China. For example, in the 1940’s, travellers reported that Tibetan peasants were on average richer than the Chinese peasants. According to the conclusion of the International Commission of Jurists, the wealth of most people in old Tibet was similar to that of some European countries.⁴³ “Serfs” were not necessarily poor. Many were wealthy and even had servants.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the diet of rich merchants was basically the same as that of peasants: meat, oil, cheese and tea. Unlike many other countries, in Tibet the higher social strata were not completely separated from the lower, and their relationships often developed into friendships.⁴⁵ Even the butchers, the members of the lower class, often befriended aristocrats. In 1959, when the Tibetan aristocrats were arrested by the Chinese in Samye, their former servants secretly brought them food. An eyewitness recalled: “The landowner was more of a patriarchal head of a household than an exacting or an oppressive master”.⁴⁶

Witnesses reported that Tibetan peasants lived in stone built houses that were more durable than, for example, Indian peasants.⁴⁷ Stone houses were built in Central Tibet since ancient times. Their peculiar architecture follows a single

40 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

41 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

42 Gurevich, 1958.

43 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.28.

44 Goldstein, 2007, p.13.

45 Norbu, 1999, p.174–175.

46 Andrugtsang, 1973, p. 30.

47 For example, Bell, 1991.



The home of a sedentary Tibetan (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)

design. Typically, houses are built with the facade facing south so as to maximise the sun's warmth. The main materials that are used for building were bricks and stones. The one-storey half of a building was usually followed with a two-storey second half.⁴⁸ Door and window openings were trimmed with black cement or painted in black so as to improve heat conduction into the room. The roofs were flat, and were traditionally used for firewood storage and installation of prayer flags. Temple architecture was formed under the influence of the traditions of Nepal, India and China. Nomads made their tents from yaks' wool. These tents came in different sizes. Some could accommodate one to two hundred people and were split into rooms inside. Prayer flags were arranged around the nomads' camps.

Any worker had the right to build his own house. For example, Thondup Chödrön, whose family belonged to the poorest estate of Tibet, said the following about life before "liberation":⁴⁹ "I am one of those who the Chinese now call "serfs" in Tibet ... There were six of us in the family... My house was two stories high and was surrounded by a wall. The ground floor was used for the animals. We had four yaks, twenty-seven sheep and goats, two donkeys and a 4.5 *khel* (0.37

⁴⁸ Shakabpa, 1988.

⁴⁹ In: Tibet: a Human Development, 2007, p.70.



1



2

*The Gongtang Stupa at the Labrang Tashikyil Monastery in Amdo:
1 – during the 1900s. (Archives of the Russian Geographical Society, fund 18, list 7), 2 – the new version,
rebuilt on the site of the one that was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (photo: Don Croner)*

hectares) plot of land... We have never had difficulties earning a living. There were no beggars in our area”. Thus, it is strange to hear the assertion that, before the



The Jampaling Stupa in the Dranang Valley, the largest in Tibet, before its destruction, 1938 (Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-15-15-24/foto: Ernst Schaefer, / License CC-BY-SA 3.0)

“peaceful liberation”, 900,000 out of 1 million people were homeless.⁵⁰ If 90% of people did not have a roof over their head, they would have died out! Numerous stories about the bad life of “serfs” have only appeared after their “liberation” by Communist China.

Even the poorest servants and “serfs” were never limited in terms of religion or the ability to migrate.⁵¹ But, in order to temporarily leave the estate, they had to obtain special permission from a manager.⁵² The farmer could also file a petition to the landowner stating his desire to leave permanently (*midro shuwa*).⁵³ The leave had to be paid for. If a “serf” left without permission he was caught and returned to the estate, if that was possible. Being dissatisfied with difficult work, a “serf” could file a petition asking his master for relief. The result would depend on many factors,

but if the master did not agree, the “serf” would often run to the more remote parts of Tibet or to India.⁵⁴ There was no effective policing in place.

Most Tibetans engaged in agriculture, with livestock breeding being less common. Both were exchanging goods.⁵⁵ Often, some people in the same tribe were farmers, and others herdsmen. The nomads’ pastures were owned by the whole tribe, with livestock being the property of individual families. There was also renting of livestock from feudal lords for a fee. Lessees were denied the right to free movement and migration. Only those who had their own livestock moved freely. Poorly developed zoo-technics sometimes caused a great loss of livestock, even up to 80%, with Chinese sources reporting a general decline in livestock.⁵⁶ Clearly, the number of livestock fluctuated but did not actually decline continuously, otherwise it would have ceased to exist altogether.

50 During a half of century...

51 Shakabpa, 1988.

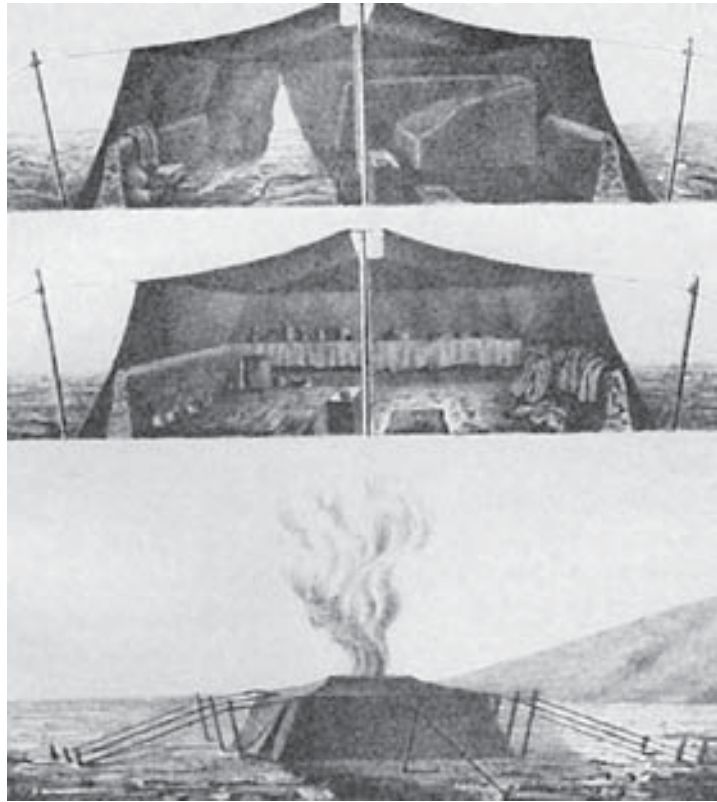
52 Valiakhmetov, 1958, p.12.

53 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

54 Norbu, 1999.

55 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

56 Gurevich, 1958.



A Tibetan nomad's tent (Przewalski, 1883)

The basis of taxation in Tibet was largely natural product tax with monetary taxes being minor.⁵⁷ In order to meet this aim, regular census were held, and land registry was updated. Monastic estates were exempt from taxes, and many monasteries received subsidies from the government, which were mainly food. Land tax could be paid in three instalments: in November, December and January. Livestock tax was collected based on the number of heads. In the 19th century, one sheep out of every ten had to be given up. After 1914, the government began to levy taxes on salt, hides, wool and teas imported from China.⁵⁸ Some write about the “taxes” on marriage, birth, death, planting trees, keeping animals, travel to another village, etc.⁵⁹ In fact, these were not taxes but fees, duties, etc. For example, if a farmer married a “serf belonging to another master”, he had to pay a ransom. Another way was for this “master” to receive a girl from the groom’s estate in exchange for the bride. This was called “an exchange of people” and it ensured stability in the number of peasants in each estate.

57 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

58 Shakabpa, 1988.

59 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

If the “serfs” remained with their former masters, their newborn boy was a “serf” of a master of the husband, and a girl of her mother’s master. Births of “serf” children were recorded in special registers by the feudal lords.

According to the Europeans who visited Tibet in the 19th to early 20th century, farmers gave up as much as a third of their crop as a form of rent payment, and livestock owners up to 60% of their livestock’s products.⁶⁰ The magnitude of the tax was determined yearly and depended on the size of the crop. This ensured that the taxes of peasants were bearable. The amount of tax from each district was determined by the government, but local officials could impose local taxes in their favour. The 14th Dalai Lama, after having consulted with the Government and his Committee on Reforms, changed this system. From then on, county leaders were to gather a fixed amount for the treasury, and the government fixed their salaries.⁶¹

Besides taxes, obligations to the state also included transport obligations (*ula*) where several times a year peasants had to provide riding and pack animals, and food for them (only monasteries were free from this obligation), labouring (hay-making, weaving, gathering firewood, construction, repair of dams, etc), and special taxes (in the form of food, textiles, paper, etc). The 13th Dalai Lama abolished the *ula* and introduced a flat fee for the use of transport. This helped to increase the income of ordinary people. The 14th Dalai Lama increased that fee.

According to M. Parenti, taxes were levied even on beggars. Indeed, beggars constituted a separate “guild” with their own headman, who collected the levies from them. Begging was an inherited trade. Beggars were quite well regarded, especially old people.⁶² It was a kind of a profession. There are a lot of beggars in Tibet now as well.

There was a system of accumulation of products that were obtained as taxes.⁶³ Surplus products, especially grain, were accumulated in private and public repositories. There were enough supplies to last for three years in case of crop or livestock failures. A small population, the absence of large cities and relatively low consumption allowed for the sustainable use of such repositories. As a result, according to historical sources, there was no famine in Tibet. It was self-sufficient in terms of the main forms of food, with only some foodstuffs being imported.

The administration of obligations to the state were often abused and could have been a heavy burden on the common people. For example, officials could get peasants to work on their own lands under the guise of state labour, and inflate the number of peasants they actually needed, etc. In these cases, the “reviewing authorities” were the Qing ambans who were supposed to curb such abuses.⁶⁴

60 Gurevich, 1958.

61 Dalai Lama, 2000.

62 Bell, 1991; Govinda, 2002, p.100.

63 Shakabpa, 1988.

64 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

However, many ambans themselves served their own interests or were docile and inactive. After Tibet escaped from the custody of the ambans, the 13th Dalai Lama paid particular attention to combating the problem of local abuses of power and issued a relevant decree in 1913:⁶⁵ “The Tibetan Government’s civil and military officials, when collecting taxes or dealing with their subject citizens, should carry out their duties with fair and honest judgment so as to benefit the government without hurting the interests of the subject citizens. <...> From now on, no one is allowed to obstruct anyone else from cultivating whatever vacant lands are available. Land taxes will not be collected until three years have passed. After that, the land cultivator will have to pay taxes to the government and to the landlord every year, proportionate to the rent. The land will belong to the cultivator”.

The 13th Dalai Lama forbade the dismissal of elderly servants, and he forbade children to drive away their elderly parents. During his rule, the interest rate of moneylenders was capped. The issue was that the latter ended up loaning peasants seeds at 20% per annum.⁶⁶ According to Chinese data, more than half of the stockmen sought to buy products from dealers which were too costly for them. Shortly before the PRC’s invasion, the 14th Dalai Lama decided to return part of the aristocrats’ large estates back to the state by paying them compensation. The land was then to be distributed among the peasants, with all public servants having to rely on salaries for income.⁶⁷

A major landowner in the country was the Church. In 1950, its share of all arable land in Central Tibet accounted for 36.8%.⁶⁸ Some of the monasteries accumulated considerable wealth over the centuries. At the same time, not all monasteries had large property. Some did not even have enough money for maintenance. To make ends meet, such monasteries engaged in trade and usury.⁶⁹ This was done by specially appointed monks. In 1913, the 13th Dalai Lama ordered them to uphold the purity of faith: “The various Buddhist sects in Tibet should be kept in a distinct and pure form. <...> Except for special persons, the administrators of monasteries are forbidden to trade, loan money, deal in any kind of livestock, and/or subjugate another’s subjects”.⁷⁰

The lands that belonged to the Church were divided up amongst the monasteries and personal ones. The latter belonged to the incarnated Lamas. These lands were not passed with inheritance: Lamas were reborn in different families. Most of the monks were born as peasants. They maintained strong ties with their families, who were providing them with financial aid. The multitude of clergymen was not perceived by Tibetans as a heavy burden. The monks are not slackers, they

65 Shakabpa, 1988, p.247–248.

66 Gurevich, 1958.

67 Dalai Lama, 2000.

68 Bogoslovsky, 1976, p.262.

69 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

70 In: Shakabpa, 1988, p.247.

are active creators of social well-being, moral health and stability (although, as in any religion, not always and not all members of the clergy were such beacons of light for the laity). The final product was enlightened teachers, whose wisdom, mental clarity and practical guidance as the leaders of the people was absolutely essential. Mongolia was similar in that regard. However, people that were brought up in communist or bourgeois traditions of mercantilism do not understand this. This explains discussions about “monk-parasites”, the need to eliminate or reduce the number of lamas, etc. Having seized power, the Communists were able to instil such a view in many Tibetans and Mongols.

It should also be noted, that birth rates were naturally suppressed due to a high number of monks. This was important for Tibet as its agriculture produces a small amount of crops, and so the population needs to be low. Finally, old monks were fed by the monastery, and they did not become a burden for their families. Because the money for the monastery was donated by society, it was a sort of old-age allowance.⁷¹

Depending on their individual talents and inclinations, the monks “specialized” in three ways: Those who had an inclination for intellectual pursuits devoted themselves to teaching, and others to rituals and ceremonies. Those who were not inclined to these pursuits became officials of the monastery, who were in charge of its economy.⁷² The pro-Maoist assertion that monastic estates had “taken children of peasants for lifelong service as servants, dancers and soldiers”⁷³ is wrong indeed.

Tibetans strived for scrupulous performance of the necessary rituals, and they devoted a great deal of attention to religious education.⁷⁴ Observations of the zoologist and ethnographer Ch. Stonor were precise:⁷⁵ “In the whole of the Sherpa country I have not seen anything more exquisite and beautiful than the chapel in this house, with room for a priest, a shrine, utensils and frescos. If we translated all of this into money, it would probably amount to several thousand rupees. To be able to allocate this amount out of family savings is no small sacrifice! <...> Sincere and deep religious faith compels Sherpas to build chapels. It is difficult for us to understand this when we judge through the prism of our own materialism”.

According to the Tibetan tradition, the good, reasonable and beneficial life is more important than material accumulation, and this is not a religious theory but rather an everyday practice.⁷⁶ Even today, when the Tibetans are actively “making

71 Assertions that peasant children were sexually abused in monasteries (Goldstein et al., 1997 – quoted in: Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...) have no more foundation than similar accusations against the Christians in the “works” of militant atheists, although isolated incidents of this kind may have occurred.

72 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.27.

73 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

74 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.20.

75 Stonor, 1958, p.140.

76 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

money”, they largely spend their income within their local community, funding local monasteries, schools and hospitals.⁷⁷

Famous Tibetans practiced charity for centuries. Occasionally, this generosity was significant, for example, in the case of the death of a rich man, or when the patrons and the kings donated gifts to monasteries. Continuous financial assistance to certain monasteries by some people was widely practiced. These people were regarded as patrons of these monasteries. The rich were generous to the peasants as well. According to contemporaries, rich Tibetans staged receptions and refreshments on a very large scale, not thinking about the costs.⁷⁸ The practice of generosity is not just a tradition. This is the first of the six perfections (*paramitas*) on the path to Liberation, a component of Buddhist teachings.

There was no currency regulation, or restrictions on exports and imports into Tibet.⁷⁹ The economy was completely at the market’s mercy. Since 1914, the Government of Tibet started minting copper coins in addition to gold and silver.⁸⁰ Along with that, Indian and Qing money and ingots of silver were also in circulation. Since 1890, banknotes were launched in denominations of 5, 10, 15, 25 and 50 thousand *sangks*. Then their release was made thanks to two Tibetans who went to Calcutta to study the technology of paper money production. The latter were supported by the Government’s gold reserves.⁸¹ This money, as well as postage stamps, was brand new, emphasizing the independence of Tibet.⁸²

The Tibetan Government sent convoys for the procurement of goods imported into trade centres along the border. Trade was conducted mainly with China, Nepal and Ladakh, for the most part in close proximity to the monasteries, which charged merchants a certain levy. Wool was exported to India and even to New York (through China). Trade with India was controlled by the Nepalese traders, who had the right of extra-territoriality in Tibet. Tibet also traded with Japan. Muslim traders from Kashmir had come to Tibet for centuries, settling there, and they were very wealthy. Artisans from Bhutan also lived in Lhasa. During the 19th – 20th centuries, Tibet’s main trading partner was the Qing Empire, and then China. The most prominent exports were wool, yak tails (which were bought by the U.S. for making Santa Claus beards), borax and salt.⁸³ Less prominent exports included hides, musk, spices and medicinal plants, bear bile, and dried deer blood. Horses, donkeys, mules, sheep, and goats were also exported. Tibet imported many products from India, including woollen fabrics, cotton clothing, silk, cotton, kerosene, glass, craft goods, iron,

77 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

78 Ringardt, 1903.

79 Shakabpa, 1988.

80 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

81 Shakabpa, 1988.

82 Van Walt, 1987.

83 Shakabpa, 1988.



Two Tibetan coins (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)

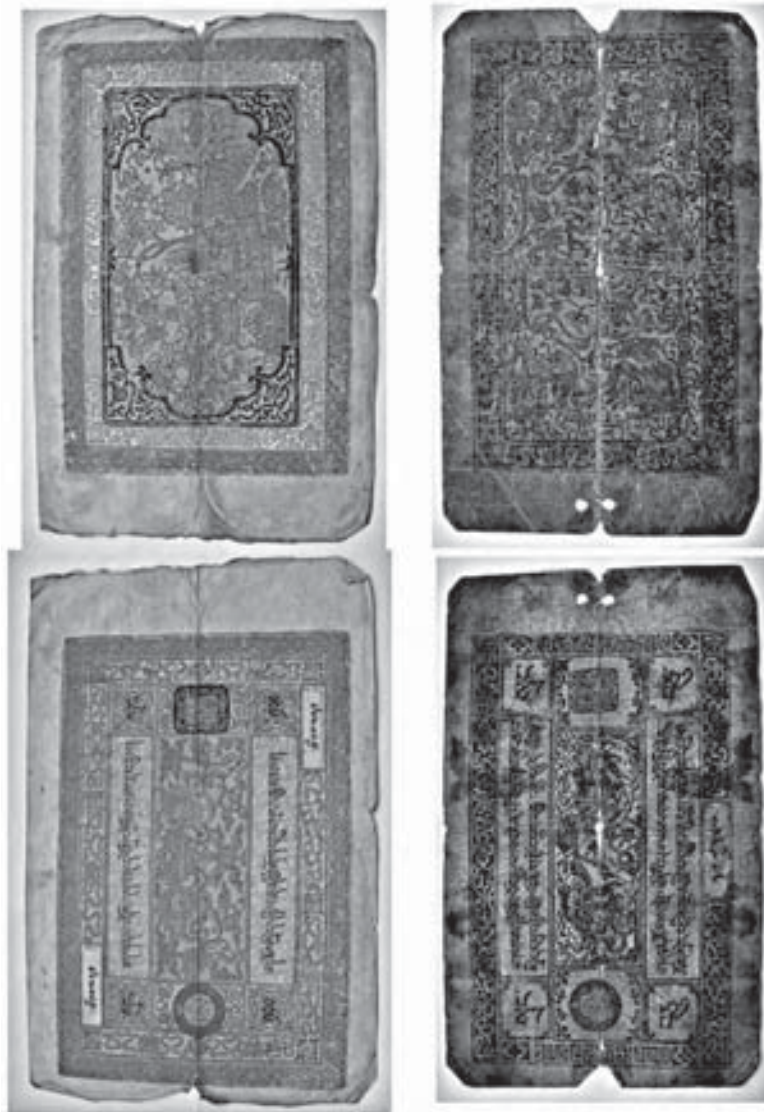
copper, rice, fruits and medicines. Tea, silk, porcelain, enamel, *khata* (Mongolian: *khadak*, a ceremonial silk scarf) were all brought in from China, and from Nepal, rice and products made of copper were imported. Up to 40% of all fabrics that were produced in Lhasa were exported to other regions.⁸⁴ Thus, simple manufacturing and commodity-money relations started to grow in the depths of Tibetan society, and monetary rent was also starting to appear.

The 13th Dalai Lama consulted the British Resident in Sikkim, Ch. Bell, about modernization, which allowed him to spend a year in Lhasa. Bell promised British support. First of all, it was necessary to modernize the army, whose fighting capacity was low by 20th century standards. Its main function was protection of borders and securing commuting routes from robbers. The claim that this army served as a landlords' gendarmerie, to maintain order and to catch runaway "serfs",⁸⁵ is incorrect.

The British promised to provide the Tibetans with machine guns, mountain guns and ammunition, but with the proviso that these weapons would not be used against China. They also promised to assist in laying telegraph cable between Gyantse

⁸⁴ Gurevich, 1958.

⁸⁵ Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...



Two Tibetan banknotes (photo: S.L. Kuzmin). 100 Sangk to the left, 10 Sangk to the right.

and Lhasa, and they promised to help with mineral exploration.⁸⁶ Four Tibetans were sent to England to study electrical engineering, mining, attend military courses and study telegraph wire works. Attempts to send Tibetans for education in Russia, Germany and the United States failed. British instructors provided Tibetans with military tuition in India and in Gyantse. Russian instructors (Buryats who spoke

⁸⁶ Shakabpa, 1988.



Tibetan stamps (<http://www.rangzen.net>)

Tibetan) and a Japanese military adviser were secretly stationed with the Tibetan Army. In 1913, the Dalai Lama appointed Tsarong as the Commander-in-Chief. (The latter was born in an ordinary family, not connected with the elite.) The Dalai Lama proposed to increase the size of the army to fifteen thousand people. In 1914 the Government purchased five thousand rifles and five hundred thousand cartridges from the British.⁸⁷ However, this initiative was not supported by the three “Great Monasteries”. Their hierarchs feared the introduction of taxes and a reduction in the number of monks.⁸⁸ At the same time, they understood the threat that was coming from the Chinese. As a result, the government agreed to a compromise that provided for a gradual increase in the army, and spared the monks from conscription. The Dalai Lama told the British emissary, D. Macdonald, that the army reform encountered opposition, because the people were extremely conservative and the lamas especially so.⁸⁹

During the rule of the 13th Dalai Lama, telegraph, telephone, mail, and automobiles all appeared in Tibet. Several vehicles were brought from India. They were disassembled and delivered to Lhasa in 1928 on the backs of pack animals due to the absence of roads.⁹⁰ In 1930, a British trade agent built a road for jeeps, connecting Pari and Gyantse. However, it had to be closed a few weeks later. Local residents complained that it deprived them of their livelihood,

⁸⁷ Van Walt, 1987.

⁸⁸ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

⁸⁹ Macdonald, 1932, p.231.

⁹⁰ Shakabpa, 1988.

because they could no longer lease their pack animals. In the 1930's, a 120 kilowatt power plant was built in Lhasa.⁹¹ An air service to Northern India was also planned.⁹² New establishments included the new post office, police, the Institute of Tibetan Medicine, and a bank which was in charge of all monetary circulation. Doctors were sent to different counties. Women in childbirth and sick animals were able to receive medical and veterinary care for free.⁹³ Two medical clinics opened in Lhasa.

The 13th Dalai Lama wanted to modernize the education system, which until then had been largely monastery - based. Such education did not just give rise to literate people and clergy, it opened doors to the heights of Buddhist logic, philosophy, art and medicine for people from all social classes. However, it did not give the knowledge that was needed for economic development and foreign relations. The Monarch was aware of that. He sent Tibetans to the Rugby school in England, and, in 1923, a British educator, F. Ludglow was invited by the Government to Tibet, with the task of establishing an English system school in Gyantse and Shigatse.⁹⁴ A secular school was established in Gyantse, and its English teacher started to fine tune the learning process. In 1944, a similar school was established in Lhasa, with the number of state schools being on the increase.

Despite that, the hierarchy of the three "Great Monasteries" felt that English education was a threat to Tibetan religion and culture. The discontent of ordinary people and aristocracy was growing. It was compounded by an epidemic of smallpox in 1925. In the 1920s, there was unrest within both the general public and the military in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama was forced to depose his minion Tsarong from the position of the Commander-in-Chief. Modern Chinese historians blame Tsarong himself for this, stating that he allegedly conspired with pro-British officers who wanted to overthrow the Dalai Lama, and install a pro-British secular government.⁹⁵

In fact, the firing of Tsarong was associated with several factors. The Dalai Lama could not ignore the negative attitude towards him that came from the nobility and the clergy; he was anxious not to give too much power to Tsarong. China no longer induced much fear in the Tibetans and the need to strengthen the army was underestimated. Also, with the Panchen Lama's departure from Tibet, it was necessary to reassure the clergy and the officials. The resignation of Tsarong was intended to meet this aim.⁹⁶ Despite persistent requests from the enemies, the Dalai Lama did not take Tsarong and his officers into custody. The Monarch suspended

91 Gurevich, 1958.

92 Shakya, 1999, p.12.

93 Shakabpa, 1988.

94 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

95 In: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

96 Klinov, 2000.

the growth of the army as well as police activity in Lhasa, and in 1926 he closed the secular school in Gyantse.

In 1920, the Tibetan Government gradually expanded their area of control in Kham, and installed bases for the protection of caravan routes from Mongolia to



Medieval weapons of Tibetan soldiers, parade in honor of the New Year, 1938 (Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-11-08-32/foto: Ernst Krause / License CC-BY-SA 3.0)

Tibet. Taxation and conscription, which accompanied these developments, caused discontent among the nomads. This resulted in revolts, the overthrow of local authorities, and the killings of officials and soldiers. Thus, reforms in Tibet were met with serious difficulties that had far-reaching consequences.

Tibetan society was diverse. It contained not just “serfs”, “slaves”, the feudal lords and monks. There were also scholars, artists, merchants, artisans, blacksmiths, boatmen etc, and there were families engaged in hunting, fishing, craft or trade. There was a certain division of economy by region. For example, horticulture was mainly developed in the south, stock raising in the north, manufacture of carpets in Gyantse, and dishes and silver jewellery in Shigatse, etc.⁹⁷ Urban artisans were united into guilds. The strata of professional artisans and craftsmen, according to Chinese data, made up 1.5–2% of the population.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

⁹⁸ Gurevich, 1958.



Tibetan Dance troupe, 1938 (Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-KB-10-096/LicenseCC-BY-SA 3.0)

Many of the tribes of Northern and Eastern Tibet considered themselves free. The areas of Kham, which were nominally governed from Beijing, were actually ruled by the *pons*, the local chiefs. However, both there and in Amdo, the Tibetan population acknowledged the authority of the Dalai Lama and the clergy to a certain degree. Although most of Tibet was not governed directly, the Tibetans believed Lhasa to be the centre of their culture. All of the monasteries in Kham and Amdo were governed by the main monasteries of their sects, all of which were in Ü-Tsang.⁹⁹ It was usual for the lamas to be asked by residents to resolve their disputes, to settle conflicts. The power of Beijing representatives, who considered themselves to be masters of Tibet, was nominal at best.¹⁰⁰ For example, in 1880 the Tibetans did not allow N.M. Przewalski's expedition to enter Lhasa, despite the latter possessing the relevant permit and passport issued by the Beijing powers.¹⁰¹ These powers had no income coming from the Tibetans. Only the local officials were able to line their pockets.

There were vast areas of Amdo and Kham which were controlled by outlaws. Robbery was a way of providing a living for some Tibetan settlements and

⁹⁹ Smith, 2008.

¹⁰⁰ Kozlov, 1947.

¹⁰¹ Przewalski, 1883.

nomad camps. Due to continuous mutual looting, some villages were in a state of irreconcilable enmity.¹⁰² There were even cases of feuding clans within the same tribe. The Golok tribe's "clan mentality" has survived to this day.

Along with this, they plundered the caravans that were making their way from Mongolia and China into Lhasa, and they attacked their Mongol neighbours. Because of these constant raids, the Mongolian population sometimes moved their settlements. Caravans bonded together into large parties and armed escorts were acquired. Sometimes the thieves made long-distance forays.¹⁰³ Usually, robbers retreated when greeted by well-armed opponents, even if the latter were numerically at a disadvantage. For example, the expeditions of N.M. Przewalski and P.K. Kozlov beat off attacks of robbers who had far superior numbers. In Tibet, feud fights typically ended after the deaths of several people from each side. Mediators and Tibetan officials tried to resolve conflicts. Usually this was achieved, and fines were paid for the ones killed. Punishments included imprisonment, flogging or even mutilation in special aggravating circumstances.

Like most other Tibetans, robbers did not recognize the authority that was appointed from Beijing. Robbery victims also understood that complaining to the authorities was useless. Even if looters were punished, the loot was usually confiscated and not returned to the owners. Chinese bureaucrats often passively ignored the looting problem, as they themselves were receiving bribes.¹⁰⁴ In other cases, investigation commissions were sent to crime scenes, and they delayed the investigation so as to live at the expense of local Tibetans.¹⁰⁵ Relations with Chinese representatives were limited to deliveries of "tribute" and receipt of titles, whereas the real power was in the hands of the Tibetans.¹⁰⁶ In 1874, eight hundred Tibetans from the Golok and Egrai tribes attacked the convoy of a Chinese Resident, who was returning from Lhasa to Beijing.¹⁰⁷ Some soldiers were killed, some ran away; about 30 poods (ca. 490 kg) of gold and valuables were taken. The resident's palanquin was destroyed as punishment for resistance, with the official having to continue his journey on horseback, something which was difficult for him.

The punishment system in feudal Tibet was cruel. Even in the 19th century, offenders were wrapped in a damp yak's hide that dried, gripping the victim, who was then thrown into a river. Hand and leg shackles and stocks, neck shackles, devices for clamping fingers and blinding were also used. Other punishments included the cutting off or breaking of hands and feet, the cutting of tendons on the feet, being put into a pit with scorpions, and cutting off kneecaps, a nose, an

102 Kozlov, 1923.

103 See, for example, Przewalski, 1875.

104 Przewalski, 1875.

105 Kozlov, 1947.

106 See, for example, Kozlov, 1947.

107 Przewalski, 1883, p.237.

ear or a tongue. In order to obtain admissions of guilt, people were whipped, placed in cold water, pored over with hot oil, or had bamboo splinters driven under their fingernails. By the 19th century, the Manchus “enriched” the practice with even more severe penalties, such as wearing a neck *kamga* (wooden board with a slot for the head) for long periods, *linchi*, etc.

One needs to compare in order to understand. The law of the Qing Empire listed 2,759 crimes of which more than a thousand were punishable by death.¹⁰⁸ Some types of executions were designed to ensure that the victim would not die for many hours. In the Qing Empire, executions were divided into three types: heavy, medium and easy, ranging from *linchi* to a simple beheading. The latter was so commonplace that it was often done in large numbers on market days. Itinerant travellers, who enquired about torture, were offered demonstrations on arrested detainees by local authorities in Manchuria.

Thus, up until the 20th century, Tibetan penalties were no crueller than the Manchu and Chinese penalties. In Tibet, the hands and feet were cut off only for serious crimes, such as robbery and major theft, etc. The same applied to punishment by blinding that was applied for major political crimes. The only local officials, who could impose penalties associated with mutilation, were *dzongpons* (governors). In January 1913, the 13th Dalai Lama issued a decree that abolished all of these penalties, leaving the death penalty and amputation only for those who conspired against the government.¹⁰⁹ It was very rare for these sentences to be carried out. Apparently, the last offender who was blinded was the minister Lungshar in the early 20th century. Blinding was carried out by specially selected people, who used yak knee bones for the purpose. In the case of Lungshar, it took a long time to find a person who knew this technique.

Chinese propaganda claims that this was the way feudal lords punished “serfs”. This is not true. Ill-treatment and suppression of peasants by their lords was prohibited by law and social contracts. If a lord did beat his servant severely, he was obliged to call a doctor. Of course, there were cases of feudal lords killing peasants.¹¹⁰ The frequency of such cases is unknown. In 1909, the 13th Dalai Lama decreed that every peasant who was abused by his “master” had a right to file a complaint directly to the Dalai Lama. Such a complaint could also be registered through a *dzongpon*.¹¹¹

Apparently, the “local officials” continued to administer amputation in violation of the law. H. Harrer gave the following description of those who were punished in that way in Kham:¹¹²

108 Levkin, G.G. China or Manchuria...

109 Shakabpa, 1988.

110 Gurevich, 1958.

111 Bell, 1991.

112 Harrer, 2002.

“Usually, a gang is based in three or four *yurtas* that serve as its headquarters. The forays are carried out as follows: armed with rifles and swords, Khampas burst into a nomad’s home and require a reception of the highest category. The horrified nomad puts out everything he has. Bandits stuff their bellies and pockets, take away some of the herd and disappear in shoreless space. The following day they attack another *yurta*, and repeat the procedure until they clean out the entire district. Then the Khampas transfer their headquarters to a different place and start all over again. Lacking weapons, the victims submit to their fate, and the government is unable to protect them in such remote areas. However, if any district official reaches this outback, he also benefits greatly, for all of the gangster’s loot becomes his. The captured robbers face the tough punishment of having their hands cut off. But that does not stop the Khampas. Many talk about their cruelty. Sometimes they even kill pilgrims, itinerant monks and nuns. <...> When the police caught bandits and robbers, they usually cut off one of their hands or feet. I watched with horror as the wounds were sterilized on punished offenders: a stump limb was immersed into boiling oil and held there. But even such horrors could not deter the lawbreakers. One governor was telling me about robbers who demonstratively stretched out their hands that were to be cut off, and were robbing again in a few weeks”.

Those who were sentenced to lighter penalties were not always placed in jail. “We were joined by a man whose knees were put in shackles, and he could only move in very short steps. With a smile, as if talking about a normal event, he told us that he was a murderer and a robber, first sentenced to two hundred lashes, and then to having to wear shackles for the rest of his life. <...> We soon found out that in Tibet, the offender does not have to be locked up. The sentenced criminal was free to socialise and made his living by begging. And I must say, his lifestyle was not bad... Those sentenced to life imprisonment would have been sent to the state prison of Shöl, or fall under the supervision of the district governor. Their fate was better than that of prison inmates, who were only allowed to leave their cells on days of the birth or death of the Buddha, when they were chained to other prisoners and allowed to beg in Lingkhör... Thieves and other petty criminals were punished with the whip. A notice with a description of the crimes was hung around the neck of a convicted person, and he had to stand at the pillory for several days. And again, kind people brought him food and drink”.¹¹³

These, however, were the exceptions. Towards the middle of the 20th century corporal punishment was very rarely used in Tibet, except for whipping. But whipping was also widely used in “civilized” countries. For example, in the UK, birching in schools was abolished in 2003. Punishments in 20th century China were far more brutal.

113 Harrer, 2002.

There were only two prisons in Tibet, one in Lhasa and one in Shöl. Old people have told me that according to their observations, each prison had five to ten inmates before the Chinese invasion. Children under thirteen years old were not punished for theft, with their parents receiving a warning.¹¹⁴ Corporal punishment did not apply to pregnant women and the sick. Estates had special rooms for interrogation and whipping. Propaganda probably labelled them as the “horrible prisons” that every “serf owner” had.

A European style health care system was beginning to be implemented in Tibet only in the early 20th century. However, as before, Tibetan medicine was the foundation. It was mostly practiced and developed by monks. Over the centuries it reached such a level that in our time it is highly valued by the world’s scientific community. There is evidence that epidemics inflicted high mortality rates in old Tibet because of the failure of peasants to adhere to health regulations, and non-performance of preventive measures. At the same time, the statements to the effect that 90% of Tibetans were infected, with this being the cause of widespread death and female sterility,¹¹⁵ is incorrect leftist propaganda that has no basis in any proper statistics. Chinese sources estimated the average life span then was 35.5 years, and birth and infant mortalities were 43%.¹¹⁶ Although the validity of these estimates is questionable, the average life expectancy in Tibet could have been less than in Europe at the time, mainly due to high infant mortality. Nevertheless, the population was evidently growing, albeit slowly. By various estimates, in late 19th – early 20th century, it ranged from 1 to 15.4 million.¹¹⁷ Apparently, the figures that are closest to the truth are those provided by Ch. Bell and P.K. Kozlov,¹¹⁸ according to which, in the first decades of the 20th century, the number of Tibetans was four to five million people.

Old Tibet is not the fantastic Shangri-la country from James Hilton’s novel, to which it is often compared by critics (although the Tibetans themselves have never known of such a country). It is also often stated that old Tibet was backward and subject to reform. Of course, one can find something bad in every country. However, one needs to compare in order to understand.

Tibetan “serfs” were in fact tenants, and so-called “slaves” were really domestic servants. In contrast to Europe and the Qing State, Tibet had no significant class antagonisms. Hence, the feudal theocratic system was satisfactory for Tibetans. The

114 Valiakhmetov, 1958, p.43.

115 Kalovsky, I. The true face...

116 National regional autonomy...

117 See overviews: Grunfeld, 1996; Sautman, 2008.

118 Kozlov, 2004, p.35.

people it did not satisfy were the foreigners, but nobody asked them to live in Tibet. With scientific and technical aspects, Tibet did lag behind China, but the gap was not significant. Tibetans successfully defended their state even during the Qing era. The lag did play its role later. The Tibetan leadership attempted to conduct reforms, but this was met with resistance from within the society. In human and social aspects, old Tibet was not worse than either the Qing or Western states. After the fall of the Qing Empire, medieval tortures and executions became very rare in Tibet. The exhibitions of torture equipment in the PRC mainly demonstrate tools that were no longer used at the time of the Chinese invasion.

When it comes to religion and philosophy, any talk about the “backwardness” of Tibet simply does not apply. Tibetan Buddhism (see Chapter 5) reached unprecedented heights of thought. Some of them (relativity, *shunyata*, the plurality of worlds, etc.) find their confirmation in the achievements of modern science. Philosophical concepts that were developed in feudal Tibet were not lower than anything that was created in other Eastern and Western countries.

Thus, the reforms did go through in feudal theocratic Tibet, but did so very slowly. The process was accelerated with the 13th and 14th Dalai Lamas, but they did not have enough time to see it through to the end, as Tibet was invaded by the PRC. No reforms that would have been done over a couple of decades could have made Tibet so strong that it could have single-handedly repelled the aggression of China (with its multimillion population), which was supported by the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER 7

“Peaceful Liberation” and Its Consequences



A unitary China that was conducting an anti-Western policy, no matter if it was under the rule of the Kuomintang or the Communists, was important for I.V. Stalin.¹ In his mind the union between the USSR and China in Asia could have become an invincible force. However, China did not become the USSR's ally. After the mid-1940's, Stalin placed his hopes on the CPC. Having liberated the State of Manchukuo from Japan's grip in 1945, the Soviet leadership gave it to China. Inner Mongolia, where the Japanese were defeated by Soviet and Mongolian troops, Stalin also gave to the Chinese, despite the desire of its people to free themselves from China and reunite into a single state with the MPR.² In 1949, the East Turkestan Republic was annexed to China after all of its leaders were killed in a mysterious plane crash, on their way from Alma-Ata to Beijing (i.e. from USSR to China) for talks.³

After the liberation of Manchukuo from the Japanese troops, the Soviet side opposed the entry of Chinese Government (KMT) forces, in order to buy time and create more favourable conditions for the CPC's entrance.⁴ In addition, the travel of Government troops through Manchuria was severely hampered by the main forces of the CPC (the 8th Army) that were stationed in Northern China. The Soviet Government allowed the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) to be used for the transportation of Communist troops. The Soviet command arrested the Kuomintang members who were trying to create military and police forces in Manchuria, while at the same time allowing the Chinese Communists to “break the law” in exactly the same fashion. Arriving Communists were receiving large arsenals and were allowed to conscript new military units. Having assembled its arrived 8th and new 4th armies, the CPC ended up leading a hundred thousand soldier strong army. This army's size later reached nearly one million people. Soon

1 Alexandrov, 1995.

2 Bache. 50 years of turmoil...

3 Petrov, 2003, p.499–501.

4 Ledovsky, 2005, p.25–28.

after the Japanese surrendered, a Soviet military plane brought a group of Chinese Communist leaders into Manchuria from Yanan. They were meant to take charge of the United Democratic Manchuria Army, the Party organization, the North-east office of the Central Committee of the CPC and other regional bodies.⁵ The KMT failed to establish its authority throughout Manchuria, and after the withdrawal of Soviet troops a number of areas were controlled by Chinese Communists.

Authorities of the People's Democratic areas started to receive full support and assistance from the USSR.⁶ Chinese Communists went to the Soviet Union, and Manchuria was visited by Soviet delegations. The Soviet Union played a decisive role in strengthening the United Democratic Army. The Soviet command equipped it with first-class weaponry that was taken from the Japanese Kwantung Army. Most of the captured Japanese weapons were handed over to the United Democratic Army during September to November of 1945. 327,877 rifles, 5,207 machine guns, 5,219 artillery guns and mortars, 743 tanks and armoured vehicles, 612 aircraft, 1,224 vehicles, tractors and trailers were handed over.⁷

Having received so many weapons, the United Democratic Army became the most powerful army that was at the CPC's disposal, and Manchuria became the main stronghold of the Party in its struggle for power, the main front of the Chinese civil war.⁸ If it were not for Soviet aid to the Communists, the Chinese Government would have had little difficulty in dealing with the CPC and its armed forces. Furthermore, the KMT could have protected their own power by themselves, without aid from the U.S., while "The Communist Party of China lacked capabilities for conduction of an armed coup, and had relied on the Soviet Union".⁹ Moscow demanded the U.S. halt all assistance to the Chinese Government, and they also exerted strong pressure on them, demanding that it not use force against the Communists. At the same time the Soviets were vigorously arming them. By the time the PRC state was established in 1949, 1,012 Soviet specialists and advisers worked in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China.¹⁰

From December 1946, immediately after the beginning of a large scale civil war between the CPC and the Kuomintang, massive Soviet shipments started to arrive to democratic peoples' regions of Manchuria.¹¹ These included food, manufactured goods, petroleum products, paper, medicines, equipment for hospitals, schools, etc.¹² Complete information about these shipments has not yet been made public.

5 Ledovsky, 2005, p.25–28.

6 Borisov and Koloskov, 1972.

7 Sapozhnikov, 1984.

8 Ledovsky, 2005, p.31.

9 Ledovsky, 2005, p.67.

10 Malinovsky, G. Thirteen years...

11 Ledovsky, 2005, p.31.

12 Borisov and Koloskov, 1972.

But even the information that was published in the open press pointed to the unprecedented scale of this aid. Soviet organizations helped the people's democratic institutions of Manchuria in the establishment of internal trade and finance. The USSR helped to restore communications that were destroyed during the war, the factories of the Urals and Siberia were repairing the aged rolling-stock of the CER, and the PLA railroad troops were undergoing training in Siberia and the Far East. During just one summer in 1948, over 4,600 different specialists were prepared.¹³

The Economic Committee of the Administrative Committee of Manchuria revised its requests for supplies from the USSR. This was done several times, with the requested quantity being continuously increased. Some examples of these requests included cotton fabrics up to twenty million meters, cotton up to thirty thousand tons, and motor oil up to 7,400 tons.¹⁴ During the period from December 1946 to January 1947, the value of goods delivered to the Chinese Communists in Manchuria from the USSR (including equipment, strategic materials, manufactured goods) amounted to 151 million roubles. In 1948 the amount was 335.4 million roubles. In 1949 it was 420.6 million roubles.

The internationally recognized Chinese Government (Kuomintang) tried to negotiate with the USSR on many occasions, and they asked them to at least mediate a dialogue with the CPC, but always unsuccessfully. In 1946, Chang Chingkuo, on behalf of his father Chiang Kai-shek, held talks with I.V. Stalin in Moscow. The talks ended in failure. Stalin refused to help normalize KMT's relations with the CPC, despite the enormous benefits that were promised by Chiang Kai-shek.¹⁵

The assistance the Soviet Union provided to the Communist Party of China grew with the expansion of the civil war. Deliveries of cars, tractors, oil and other industrial materials were made possible by reducing the supply of Soviet enterprises and organizations. This intensified post-war difficulties in providing the Soviet people with urgently needed goods.¹⁶ Production of certain machinery and equipment that was needed by the CPC was only possible after making foreign currency purchases abroad (e.g. natural rubber), despite the fact that Soviet Union had very little foreign currency at that time.

On the 8th September 1948, the Commander of the North-eastern Army, Lin Biao, wrote the following to I.V. Stalin: "We ask you to send a team for a comprehensive study of our economy and to draft our unified plan for recovery and operation of major industries".¹⁷ The subject of the matter was the north-east region of China. In his letter to Stalin (dated 8th of January 1949) Mao asked him to assist

¹³ Borisov and Koloskov, 1972.

¹⁴ Ledovsky, 2005, p.109–110.

¹⁵ Ledovsky, 2005, p.32–48.

¹⁶ Ledovsky, 2005, p.112–113.

¹⁷ In: Ledovsky, 2005, p.116.

in providing equipment, materials, engines, etc. in a form of credit, so as “to load it and send it to us as quickly as possible”.¹⁸

The following declassified report of A.Ya. Orlov, CC CPSU, (dated 10th of December 1949) could be used as a quick summary: “On July 2, 1949, in response to us congratulating him with the 28th anniversary of the CPC, he [Mao Zedong. – Author] clearly stated: ‘If there was no USSR, there would be no Communist Party of China.’ As of now, Mao Zedong puts all of his hopes on the USSR, the CPSU, and especially on the Comrade Stalin”.¹⁹ Also, as was noted by a prominent Soviet diplomat A.M. Ledovsky, who was working in China, “the Soviet Government took a great risk to subject their country to international sanctions for serious violations of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of August 14, 1945, the UN Charter and universally recognized international legal norms by providing the CPC with aid that included materials and military technology”.²⁰

In early 1949, A.I. Mikoyan passed Stalin’s advice to Mao Zedong: the national minorities should be given autonomy instead of independence.²¹ This was contrary to the principles of Marxism-Leninism (that proclaimed the right of nations for self-determination), but was in line with Mao’s plans. Generally, in early 1949 and after, Mao, together with Zhou Enlai and Liu Shaoqi insistently sought the advice and guidance of Stalin and the Soviet leadership on all matters of the Chinese revolution.²² For example, in June–August 1949, a report submitted by the delegation of the CPC Central Committee to the Politburo of the CPSU, stated the following: “If there is any dispute between the CPC and the CPSU on some issues, the CPC will express its point of view, but will comply and decisively implement all the decisions of the CPSU”. Stalin wrote “No!” on the margins and went on to express this sentiment in a diplomatic form during the negotiations. But after Stalin’s death, it came out that Mao considered Moscow’s advice to be “incompetent, inadequate and hampering the Chinese revolution” – a viewpoint he held since the time of Comintern. Apparently, Mao’s goal was to use Stalin’s trust to acquire Soviet assistance to seize power in China, and annex Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet.

While receiving Soviet aid, Mao interpreted the American aid that was given to the internationally recognized Kuomintang Government of China as interference with internal affairs of China, and he wrote that while being helped by the Kuomintang, the U.S. imperialists seized the sovereign rights over China’s territory, territorial waters, airspace, the right to shipping, trade privileges and even the privilege to kill people.²³ Later, he used similar interpretations with respect to Tibet.

18 In: Ledovsky, 2005, p.117.

19 In: Mao Zedong, 2008, p.166.

20 Ledovsky, 2005, p.112.

21 Andreev, 2006a.

22 Rakhmanin, 2005, p.116–117.

23 Mao, 1967.

Seeing the victories of the Communists, Lhasa began to fear that the Tibetan KMT mission could become a beachhead for China.²⁴ According to the Tibetans, in 1949, Chinese traders and members of the mission in Lhasa opened a restaurant in which communist propaganda was staged.²⁵ Therefore, in July 1949, the mission was deported, through use of a list of communist sympathizers and spies. All of the Chinese were also deported, Chinese schools were closed down and the Chinese radio station was shut down. This event is known in China as "an incident with the expulsion of the Han" and was opposed by the Communists and the Kuomintang alike. Both blamed the Indian mission in Lhasa, in particular its officer H. Richardson, to whom the idea was attributed. However, Richardson did not recollect himself coming up with such a plan, although he did not deny that he was constantly drawing attention to the danger posed by the Chinese mission.

After the mission left Lhasa, there was no Chinese influence there. The Tibetans that were suspected of sympathizing with the Communists were expelled together with the Chinese. One of them was the first Tibetan Communist Phuntsok Wangyal. Older Tibetans remember that people thought this was an expulsion of foreign representatives. On the other hand, the Communists used the expulsion of Chinese from Lhasa as a pretext for saying that Tibet was infiltrated by foreign forces that acted against them.

The American, L. Thomas, stayed in Lhasa from August until October of the same year under the guise of being an American radio commentator. He led negotiations for U.S. military assistance to Tibet. Around the same time, the U.S. Vice Consul General D.S. Mackiernan, F. Bessag and three former Russian White Guards fled to Tibet from Xinjiang, which was occupied by the Communists. The Tibetan Government notified its border posts about the expected appearance of these people. However, the post through which they wanted to cross did not receive the notice in time. The Vice Consul and the White Guards were shot. Lhasa authorities whipped the person responsible in the presence of foreigners.

In the summer of 1949, it became clear that the Civil War was won by the CPC and that the KMT were finally defeated. Mao's favourite military tactic was to "fight from villages, surround the cities". Previously, such tactics were used by foreign conquerors, and now by Maoists. Its idea was that the troops blockade a city until hunger forces the enemy (in this case KMT) troops to surrender. Of course, the main victims were the civilians who were not allowed out, and who died from hunger in the thousands in the cities and in the "no man's land" zone between the warring parties.²⁶

In accordance with the decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, issued on 5th September 1949, the Ministry of Commerce credited the Communist

24 Shakya, 1999, p.7-9.

25 Shakabpa, 1988.

26 Ledovsky, 2005, p.118-119.

Government of China with 500 km of rails at the price of 33.3 million roubles. A further decree on the 19th of September provided the PLA with military, training and transport aircraft, aircraft engines, anti-aircraft guns, and machine guns at a price of 125.8 million roubles. Another decree that was dated the 4th of November supplied training aircraft, aviation equipment and vehicles at a price of twenty-eight million roubles, etc.²⁷

These decrees were very helpful. On September 2nd, 1949, before the proclamation of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Xinhua Agency broadcasted the following message:²⁸ "The Chinese People's Liberation Army will liberate the whole of China, including Tibet, Sikang, Hainan Island and Taiwan. It will not allow a single inch of Chinese territory to remain outside from China". Tibet, a foreign state, was about to be "freed". Of the truly Chinese territories, only the ones that were controlled by the Kuomintang (Hainan and Taiwan) were to be "liberated". The colonies of Western countries that were standing on the age-old Chinese territories like Aomen (Macau) and Xiangang (Hong Kong) were not mentioned, although the Western imperialists came to own them under unequal treaties.

Claiming Tibet had not just been caused by the fact that the new democratic revolutionaries claimed all "heritage" of the Manchu's Qing Empire, it was also a question of "international prestige" of the PRC.²⁹ In addition, Mao Zedong said: "Tibet occupies a large territory but has a small population density. Its population should be increased from two or three million to five or six, and later on, up to ten million".³⁰ The other reasons were its strategic position and natural wealth. Premier Zhou Enlai stated after the annexation of Tibet: "There is a huge number of Chinese people and they are well developed economically and culturally, but there is not much arable land and natural resources in the regions that they inhabit when compared with those that are inhabited by their brotherly peoples".³¹ Thus, the lands of "brotherly peoples" were going to be converted into classic colonies.

The PRC was proclaimed on the 1st of October, 1949, in Beijing. U.S. assistance to the Kuomintang turned out to be less effective than the Soviet aid to the Chinese Communists. The overthrown (with help from the Soviet Union) KMT retained its power over Taiwan thanks to the United States. Mao Zedong's "liberation" of this island failed. For awhile, most countries recognized the legitimate government to be in Taipei, not Beijing. Then the situation changed in favour of Beijing. Right now the Government in Taipei is only recognized by twenty-three countries. In fact, however, this problem has no solution. After all, the KMT was established by one of the Chinese revolutionaries, Sun Yatsen, and they overthrew the legitimate Qing

27 Ledovsky, 2005, p.110–111.

28 In: Gurevich, 1958, p.93.

29 Shakya, 1999.

30 *Rénmín Ribào*, 22 11.1952.

31 *Tibet: the Truth*, 1993.

Monarchy, and the Republic of China was proclaimed while Sun Yatsen was in exile in the West, in imperialist France. In contrast to the revolutionary authorities, the Government of the Dalai Lama had undeniable legitimacy.

China’s new flag was red. This would not seem that surprising, as it was similar to the one of the Soviet Union. However, initially (from 1912 to 1928), the banner of the Republic of China had five colours, thus representing the number of nationalities. Equal-sized strips were placed horizontally, top to bottom: red for the Han, yellow for the Manchu, blue for the Mongols, white for the Hui and black for the Tibetans. It was abolished by the KMT. And then the banner was changed again. Only one colour remained: red, and there were four little stars around a large star (five yet again). We will not look for a hidden Han nationalist message. Formally, the five stars signify the four classes of workers, peasants, middle class and businessmen, which rallied for the construction of communism around the party, with the colour of the revolution being the background. According to another version, only the colour and the big star have formal interpretation.

So the CPC became the sole authority of the Chinese mainland, and its claims to Tibet were starting to be implemented. Within a month, the new 10th Panchen Lama, who was then only ten years old at the time, sent a congratulatory message from the Qinghai Province (formerly Amdo or Kokonor) where he was residing. The message was for Mao Zedong and Zhu De and stated the following: “One can count the days before Xizang (Tibet) is liberated”³². Similar letters were sent by several other high-ranking Tibetans from regions included in the Chinese provinces. Irrespective of explanations for this behaviour, the messages cannot be considered legitimate, since the necessary power at that time was held by the Tibetan Government. It responded to the Chinese claims. On November the 2nd, the Tibetan Foreign Affairs Ministry sent a message to Mao Zedong. It stated that Tibet has been an independent country since ancient times. The message called for negotiations on the return of Tibetan land, which was annexed by the previous governments of China.³³ It claimed that Tibet’s relations with Beijing were built on the “priest – patron” principle, Tibet had never been a part of China and no foreign power had any control over it.³⁴ The leader of the CPC ignored the opinion of the Tibetans. On November the 4th, 1949, Regent Taktra appealed to all states with a plea for help, but help never came.

The prediction of the 13th Dalai Lama started to come to life:³⁵ “It is possible that Tibetan religion and government will be attacked from the outside and from the inside. If we do not defend our country, it may happen that the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, the father and the son, and all of the revered protectors of

32 In: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.259.

33 Promises and Lies, 2001, p.24–30.

34 Shakabpa, 1988.

35 Dalai Lama, 1992.

the faith would disappear and become nameless. Monks and monasteries would be destroyed. The rule of law would be weakened. Land and property belonging to members of the government would be seized. They themselves would be forced to serve their enemies or wander around as beggars. All would be plunged into great distress and overwhelming fear; the days and nights would be full of suffering and go slowly by”.

Indeed, at the time of the invasion by China, Tibet had only a handful of officials who spoke English well, and no one was proficient in modern diplomacy and international relations, and the efficiency of the army was inadequate.³⁶ As was noted by M.K. Goldstein, “by trying to protect Tibet’s cherished Buddhist values and ideology from possible contamination by Western institutions, the monastic and religious conservatives created a set of conditions whereby the government was unable to defend and preserve those very religious values from the Chinese Communists”. When considering the external causes of the “Lamaist State’s” demise, he pointed to the refusal of traditional friends and neighbours of Tibet to offer effective diplomatic and military assistance. This external cause, of course, was more important (see Chapter 4).

On 23rd November 1949, Mao Zedong consulted Marshal Peng Dehuai on the CPC army’s plan to enter into Tibet from the north-west.³⁷ In this correspondence, the term “Tibet” was used to denote the territories controlled by Lhasa. Kham and Amdo were already under the rule of China. On the 30th of December Peng replied that sending troops into Tibet from Qinghai and Xinjiang would be very difficult, as it was hard to gather the required number of soldiers and food, and to build the necessary roads, so it would be more convenient to attack from the Sichuan and Kham with the 2nd field Army. It is known that this part of that army came to the border of Tibet as early as at the end of 1949,³⁸ where there were cases of border violations by the Chinese.³⁹

Mao Zedong received a telegram from Peng Dehuai during his visit to Moscow. He arrived there on an official visit on 16th December 1949. On 2nd January 1950, Mao sent a telegram from Moscow to the leaders of the South-west Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC and the South-western Military District: to Deng Xiaoping, Liu Bocheng and He Lung. In this telegram the Chairman pointed out that Tibet’s position on the international arena was very important, that it should be liberated and transformed into a Tibetan people’ democracy, and that it must be entered in April 1950 and liberated by October.⁴⁰ Mao suggested building a road that would connect Sikang with Tibet, and sending one army corps, or four

36 Goldstein, 2003, p.535.

37 Goldstein, 2007.

38 Tibet: the Truth, 1993; Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005. The northern border of Ü-Tsang is implied.

39 Dalai Lama, 1992.

40 Goldstein, 2007.

divisions with around forty thousand soldiers, since the Tibetan army was small. In addition, he offered to prepare new Tibetan cadres.

On January 7, Mao received a positive response, and sent another telegram on the 10th.⁴¹ The Chairman began by saying that the United Kingdom, India and Pakistan recognized the PRC and that this created favourable conditions. In order to control Tibet, a party committee had to be created which would immediately develop a plan and begin to implement it. Its primary tasks would be to train cadres and troops, build roads, and advance troops to the border of Sikang and Tibet. By mid-May they were instructed to take the border areas, as stated in the telegram, “to encourage the internal divisions among the people of Sikang”. In January 1950, the CPC Central Committee and the Military Council sent a directive to the South-western Bureau of the CPC Central Committee to start the campaign against Tibet. It planned to use the 2nd field Army. Its main force was the 18th Corps.⁴²

Mao Zedong didn't just receive telegrams from Beijing about plans of intervention against Tibet. During his entire stay in Moscow, the Chairman received one telegram after another from the CPC Central Committee with numerous requests to the USSR such as, asking about the restoration of Girin's largest power plant, training Chinese pilots for creating the PRC air force, and asking for an emergency dispatch of ninety-three tons of gasoline and lubricants etc.⁴³ All of these requests were carried out promptly, at a huge cost to the Soviet Union, whose economy had still not recovered from the war.

On January 22, 1950, at the end of their negotiations, Stalin asked Mao if he wanted to discuss something else. Mao forwarded another request: “I would like to point out”, –he said, “that the aviation regiment, which you have sent to us has been of great help. It transported about ten thousand people. Allow me to thank you, Comrade Stalin, for their assistance, and ask that you delay the air force Regiment's withdrawal from China, so that it can assist us in the transfer of food to troops of Liu Bocheng that are preparing to advance towards Tibet”. Stalin replied: “It's good that you are getting ready to advance. Tibetans need to be taken in hand. With regard to air force regiment, let me talk to the military and I will give you an answer”. Stalin had “spoken to the military” and had given his consent.⁴⁴ Indeed, there was a Soviet air regiment in China that was sent there at the request of the CPC Central Committee, who asked for assistance in the most difficult military operations against the Kuomintang troops, and especially, with the transfer of units of the PLA to Xinjiang.

A.M. Ledovsky recalls:⁴⁵ “Firstly, not only did the air force regiment consist of Soviet military aircraft, it was also only operated by Soviet military pilots, and since

41 Goldstein, 2007.

42 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

43 Ledovsky, 2005, p.149–150.

44 Ledovsky, 2005, p.155–156.

45 Ledovsky, 2005, p.156.

this aid was illegal, the Soviet pilots and airfield personnel were dressed in Chinese clothes; and secondly, in order to help the PLA in moving troops to Tibet and in occupying the Autonomous Region, the Soviet Government provided the largest and most powerful Soviet four-engine aircraft that could carry a heavy cargo and fly at high altitudes, as conducting military operations in Tibet involved overcoming very high mountains, and ordinary aircraft could not perform at such altitudes at that time”.

Shortly before the departure of the Chinese delegation from the Soviet Union, in February 1950, a “Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance between the USSR and the PRC” was signed. The Treaty was to run for thirty years, and then it was to be automatically extended every five years (although, the Chinese Government denounced it after its first period). Both parties were satisfied. The widely held view that Mao was not happy with Stalin’s refusal to give him nuclear weapons is wrong. In reality, this question was not even raised at the negotiations.⁴⁶

But the requests had not stopped. “Upon Mao Zedong’s return to Beijing, an even more intense flow of requests for large-scale and urgent assistance to overcome serious difficulties gushed from the CPC leadership”.⁴⁷ It was natural, as the country was in ruins after the Japanese aggression and the civil war between the two revolutionary parties, the CPC and the KMT.

Foreign aid started to be delivered to China on an even greater scale than before. Soviet troops repelled the Kuomintang air force raids on the towns of China, Soviet military equipment was used by the PLA, and in a short time, the Soviet Union helped to built some 250 enterprises, and carried out survey work, etc.⁴⁸ The USSR donated (free of charge) a military base in Port Arthur and the CER with all of its infrastructure and rolling stock to China. The PRC was delivered a large number of MiG-15 jet fighters. When the Chinese army entered the Korean War, the Soviet 64th Fighter Air Corps provided it with cover.

China accepted a loan of 1,200 million roubles (300 million dollars) from the Soviets at a fantastically low rate of 1% APR.⁴⁹ This was at the time when the Soviet Union itself had very little in terms of foreign currency reserves. And that wasn’t all. Over the duration of just two years, the Soviet Union delivered to China: 943 tons of ferrous metals (about 40% of China’s production volume), 1.5 million tons of petroleum products, including 506,000 tons of gasoline and 477,000 tons of kerosene.⁵⁰ China was also receiving more and more advanced technologies from the Soviet Union. Thus, during 1950–1953, the USSR donated to PRC 599 sets of scientific and technical

46 Nuclear weapons were discussed much later, in 1958, during negotiations between N.S. Khushchev and Mao Zetong (Fedorenko, 1992, p.101).

47 Ledovsky, 2005, p.165–166.

48 For example, Soviet military aid...

49 Borisov and Koloskov, 1972.

50 Borisov and Koloskov, 1972.

documentation on construction, machine building, technological processes and other topics. During 1954–1957, 6,447 sets of scientific and technical documentation were donated (only the cost of copying was reimbursed), and during 1958–1960, 7,307 sets were donated, mainly on heavy industry.⁵¹ Before 1966, as part of economic cooperation, the USSR sent a total of 8,089 experts to help with the construction and reconstruction of facilities (these statistics only cover civil purposes) in China.⁵² Soviet military technology was at the base of China's medium-range missiles "Dongfeng-1", the H-6 bomber, the fighter-bomber Q-5, and others.⁵³

Thus, the CPC did not only come to power through foreign assistance, but continued to receive such aid in large quantities. In those years, Mao Zedong was not shy of this fact:⁵⁴ "During the era of imperialism, a genuine people's revolution cannot win in any country without various kinds of assistance from various international revolutionary forces... This means that we not only needed help in the past, but need it now and we will need it in the future". Back then, the Soviet Union had not yet turned in the eyes of the Maoists into a "dark fascist state with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie".⁵⁵

Tibet did not have such a generous foreign benefactor. India explained to the Tibetans that it was prepared to recognize the suzerainty of China over Tibet, maybe on the basis of the Simla Agreement. Britain held a similar view and the U.S. chose to follow suit. They cancelled a visit by their mission to Lhasa, and decided against providing formal aid to help with the independence of Tibet.⁵⁶ The position of India was explained by the fact that Nehru believed their friendship with China to be critical for the new Asia and the new moral order in the non-Western world, and an independent Tibet was seen as dangerous for those plans.⁵⁷ Nehru did not know that the Maoists would soon put forward territorial claims against India, and that he himself would turn in their eyes into a "representative of the big landlords and the reactionary circles of India, whose interests are closely linked with the interests of the imperialists".⁵⁸

Radio in Lhasa started broadcasting in Tibetan, Chinese and English languages in January of 1950. Its main concern was confronting the Chinese propaganda. On January 31, Lhasa radio announced that Tibet had been independent since 1912 when it banished the Manchu garrison.⁵⁹ Kashag called for the UK, U.S. and

51 Filatov, 1980, p.13–32.

52 Filatov, 1980, p.55.

53 Glazunov, 2008, p.54–55.

54 From editorial of "Renmín Ribao", "With gratitude for Soviet Union's help", 16.09.53 — in: Borisov and Koloskov, 1972, p.64.

55 The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1970, p.8.

56 Van Walt, 1987.

57 Goldstein, 2003, p.537.

58 On the Sino-Indian Border, 1962, p.123.

59 Shakya, 1999, p.12.

India to support Tibet's entry into the United Nations. They received a reply that such an approach would not work as the USSR and China had veto powers in the Security Council. Then, the Tibetans decided to send a mission to Moscow, Hong Kong and Singapore, to negotiate with the Communists.⁶⁰ The leaders of one of the delegations were V.D. Shakabpa and Ts.T. Gyalpo. The credential letters that were issued by the Government of Tibet stated:⁶¹

“Tibet, the Abode of Snow, ruled by successive reincarnations of Chenrezig (Avalokiteshvara), is an independent and peace-loving country dedicated to religion. The country's peace is being disturbed and endangered by the possible infiltration of defeated Chinese soldiers during the civil war in China, and though the Foreign Bureau of the government of Tibet has addressed a letter dated the 12th day of ninth month of the Earth-Ox year to Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of Communist China, to use his authority to check Chinese troops crossing into Tibetan territory, the Chinese have kept the request unanswered. Instead, radio announcements from Xining and Beijing claimed that Tibet is a part of China, and instigated the people to the liberation of Tibet. The Delegation, with full authority to deal with matters concerning Tibet, is to proceed for negotiations on the following subjects:

1. Concerning the unanswered letter to Chairman Mao Tse-tung from the Foreign Bureau of the Government of Tibet;
2. Concerning the atrocious radio announcements from Xining and Beijing;
3. To secure an assurance that the territorial integrity of Tibet will not be violated; and
4. To inform the government of China that the people and government of Tibet will not tolerate any interference with the successive rule of the Dalai Lama, and they will maintain their independence.

The Delegation is instructed to negotiate on the above subjects with a Chinese representative at a place close to China”.

Having arrived with his delegation in Delhi, the Chinese Ambassador to India demanded recognition of Tibet as a part of China, an agreement on the transfer of its National Defence to China, and that Tibet conduct its political and trade relations with other countries via China.⁶² The Tibetan Government gave instructions to its delegates to reject these proposals.

Non-governmental organizations and representatives of ethnic minorities of the PRC began to hold demonstrations against “provocations of the imperialists in the Tibet region”.⁶³ The Lamas of Qinghai Province even “sent a request” to Beijing to “liberate” Tibet, destroy the reactionary elements and expel the imperialists. A

60 Van Walt, 1987.

61 Shakabpa, 1988, p.299-300.

62 Promises and Lies, 2001.

63 Gurevich, 1958, p.115.

delegation from the Tibetan population of Sikang arrived in China with a similar message. Its member, Wang Jia, invited the PLA to “liberate” on behalf of the Tibetan people at the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the South-western Military and Administrative Committee, Liu Bocheng was gathering troops in Sichuan to start the campaign. Liu Bocheng and Deng Xiaoping (then the political commissar of the South-western Military District of the PLA) decided to entrust the formation of the expeditionary task force to the young commander Zhang Guohua. Many soldiers and officers were afraid to go to Tibet for various reasons.⁶⁴ Hence, they gathered at rallies and explained their “sacred historic mission”. It was stressed that the conditions during of the campaign would be much less severe than those during the war with the Kuomintang.

On the 18th March 1950, troops of the 18th Corps moved from Sichuan into Kham and took Dartsedo (Kangding). On March 28th, thirty thousand soldiers from the front units reached Kardze.⁶⁵ Initially, it was very difficult to provide supplies for the troops, some cargo had to even be dropped from the aircraft. Roads and an airport in Kardze were being built at a great pace. Eyewitnesses saw long columns of U.S. and Soviet trucks delivering materials for building bridges. While the automobile roads were built, Tibetans of Sikang were encouraged to participate in construction, with thousands of yaks being used as a form of transport. According to one Tibetan Communist, motivation was not an issue as the PLA paid for labour with Chinese silver dollars of the Kuomintang era.⁶⁶ Some were applying to join the army. The media reported “full Tibetan cooperation” with the Chinese troops: boatmen, carpenters and blacksmiths worked day and night for the sake of the Chinese, herders provided their yaks, men and women formed teams to help carry weapons and equipment, build roads, and work as translators and guides.⁶⁷

Tibetans were mobilized into road and transport works regardless of their wishes, although the payment was adequate.⁶⁸ Local elites gained new positions and higher salaries. Thus, people worked for money and out of fear, but certainly not for the sake of “national reunification”. On the other hand, the Khampa were used to living alone and did not take the new relations between Beijing and Lhasa to heart. Also, at first there were almost no excesses. Chinese authorities ordered to treat the locals, their customs and religion with respect. China needed lots of working hands as well as a stable and reliable rear. People from different places told W. Smith the same version of events: the Chinese told them that they came to Tibet to help the Tibetans, and that they would leave when Tibet “gets better” and is able to govern itself.

64 Goldstein, 2007.

65 Smith, 1996, p.272–273.

66 Goldstein, 2007.

67 Gurevich, 1958.

68 Norbu, 1986 — in: Smith, 1996, p.273.

On the 10th May 1950, a Chinese detachment captured a strategically important point Dengo, which had a radio transmitter.⁶⁹ Governor-General Tsewang Dorjee Lhalu immediately reported this to the Kashag and suggested to start a counter-offensive. He was allowed only to retake Dengo. The detachment under the command of General Muja accomplished the goal.

The start of the Korean War in June 1950, the ongoing conflict with the Kuomintang, the active U.S. involvement in all of these events, it seems, forced Beijing to hurry. The manufacturing plants of Chongqing worked overtime to supply the army with clothing and equipment, and Sichuan and Yunnan enterprises worked in overdrive mode in order to supply food.⁷⁰

The Chinese tried to convince the Government in Lhasa to agree to a “peaceful liberation”.⁷¹ In June, a group of people disguised as traders arrived from Xining in Lhasa, and brought two letters with them: one for the Regent Taktra and the other for the Tibetan Government. The letters contained proposals to start negotiations and to send a delegation to Beijing. At about the same time, another group was dispatched from Amdo, accompanied by Chinese with a radio transmitter. The group travelled for three months and arrived after the fall of Chamdo, with the Chinese being refused entry into Lhasa. In July, the Chinese sent Gedak Lama from Kardze to Lhasa. Gedak had cooperated with the Chinese since 1936 (see Chapter 4). Governor Lhalu detained Gedak in Chamdo, and Gedak soon died under mysterious circumstances. Chinese propaganda claims that he was poisoned, but there is no direct evidence. The death of Gedak Lama was interpreted as Lhasa’s unwillingness to negotiate.

Shakabpa liaised with the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi. However, the negotiations were dragged on by orders from the Kashag. Perhaps the Tibetans had hoped that the Korean War would distract China’s attention from their country.

On July 29, Beijing radio broadcast a speech of General Liu Bocheng that proclaimed the main objective of the South-western Military and Administrative Commission was to “free Tibet” and that the PLA “had to attack”. But the Chinese were not ready to attack yet. This gave time to Lhalu and his officers to establish the defences around Chamdo. The road construction from Dartsedo to Kardze was only completed by the Chinese in August of 1950.⁷² The PLA immediately entered Amdo, established a base in Jekundo and began to build a road in the direction of Chamdo. Soldiers of the Sichuan warlord Liu Wenhui were integrated into detachments of the PLA, which were stationed in Kham, while Hui detachments of Ma Bufeng were incorporated into parts of the PLA that were in Amdo.

Despite their European arms and reforms, the fighting ability of the Tibetan Army was low. Their weapons dated back to the First World War and were mostly

69 Shakyas, 1999, p.38; Smith, 1996, p.274; Herold, K. An annotated...

70 Gurevich, 1958.

71 Smith, 1996.

72 Smith, 1996, p.273.

obsolete. According to the memoirs of H. Harrer, the State was only interested in the size of the army, but not in the troops' drill.⁷³ The military instructors that were trained in India did know how to use modern weapons. Team orders were given in a mixture of Tibetan, Urdu and English. The first decree of the new defence minister proclaimed that from then on all orders had to be voiced only in Tibetan. The national anthem of Tibet was composed and was played at parades. The officer's dress differed from that of a soldier by the presence of gold ornaments, the number of which depended on rank. There were no uniforms on many soldiers. Instead of awards and distinctions soldiers received higher pay. The victorious had a right to get part of the conquered trophies. This system was effective in fighting with robbers, but not in modern warfare. The Tibetan Government bought arms from India. One observer reported seeing from five hundred to two thousand mules, loaded with ammunition boxes and grenades.⁷⁴ The Tibetan Army had 8,500 soldiers and officers, fifty canons, 250 mortars, two hundred machine guns⁷⁵ and about thirty thousand rifles.⁷⁶

The Chinese had an overwhelming superiority in manpower and weaponry. They had forty thousand troops in Kham at the time of the invasion.⁷⁷ The massive advancement into Central Tibet began six days before the date when China was planning to join the Korean War (actually, the Chinese offensive in Korea began on the 25th of October). Obviously, these events were interlinked.

On the 7th of October 1950, the Chinese crossed the River Driчу (upper Yangtze) in three directions: north, central and south. The 54th Regiment crossed Driчу, north of Dengo, and moved towards Jekundo, so as to move from there towards the south, surround the Tibetan Army and cut off its retreat to Lhasa. The 157th Regiment of the PLA crossed Driчу and moved to Markham, so as to cut off the escape route to the north. In total, the Chinese attacked six places between Tsakalo and Dengo.

The main battles took place north of Chamdo. The Tibetans fought bravely. Here is one eyewitness account:⁷⁸ "Zhango Dora... had led the attack against the invading Chinese army, but the small Tibetan force was no match for them and soon Zhango, armed only with a long sword, found himself in hand-to-hand combat. <...> Zhango killed many Chinese soldiers, but he was exhausted and sat down to rest beneath a bridge. Blood trickled from the bridge on to his amulet, causing it to lose its protective power. Then a shell exploded near the bridge and Zhango was killed".

73 Harrer, 2002.

74 Gurevich, 1958.

75 Dalai Lama, 2000.

76 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.260.

77 Van Walt, 1987.

78 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.30.

The Dengo garrison that held the troops being led by General Muja, managed to repel the PLA back across the river.⁷⁹ However, being surrounded from the north, the general retreated, so as to hold onto Riwoche. The Chinese used their favourite tactic, the “wave after wave” attack, using their large numerical superiority. Both sides suffered significant losses. The Tibetans were able to hold out for a few days before the Chinese won. Places such as Rangsum, Markham, Dengo, Jekundo, Riwoche, and Gartok were all lost. Now Chamdo was almost defenceless, as it had only about three thousand soldiers who were inexperienced and armed more poorly than the Chinese.⁸⁰

There was no panic when Chamdo learned about the invasion on the 11th of October. Residents began to flock to the monasteries to pray for riddance from the enemy. Lhalu was no longer in power, and the Governor of Chamdo was Ngabo Ngawang Jigme. Prior to that he served in Kham and showed no great talent. In Chamdo, he liked to attend parties, during which he talked about his bravery and the strength of the PLA. Lhasa only learned about the “liberation” on the 12th of October. Ngabo requested directives from the Kashag, but received no quick reply. Ngabo decided to retreat.⁸¹ On October 17, he left Chamdo, ordering two Tibetan officers to destroy the arsenal and ammunition depots that were left behind.⁸² Then he ordered General Muja and his people to surrender.⁸³ On October 18, the northern group of the PLA, under the command of En Fatang, took Enda and cut off the Tibetans’ escape route to the west. The Chinese took Chamdo on October 19. There, they seized a radio transmitter with its British radio operator. On the same day, Ngabo told the Chinese that he wanted to surrender, which he did the following day. He demonstrated his lack of ability as a commander, and the Tibetans accused him of treason.

The surrendered officers and Ngabo were taken to Chamdo, their soldiers were given money and food and released after a lecture on socialism.⁸⁴ On October 22, the Chinese troops entered Lho Dzong, and on October 27 they entered Shopando.⁸⁵ According to the Chinese, the victory at Chamdo had been achieved because of help from the Tibetans, which included the delivery of food, providing yaks to transport goods, and assistance in crossing the river.⁸⁶ Transport assistance for the PLA was provided by 150,000 Tibetans and a hundred thousand yaks. The Khampa divided, many fought against the PLA, some switched sides and fought for the Chinese, and many Tibetan troops surrendered before the fall of

79 Herold K. An annotated chronology...

80 McCarthy, 1997, p.52–54.

81 Shakya, 1999.

82 McCarthy, 1997, p.54.

83 Herold, K. An annotated chronology...

84 Shakya, 1999.

85 Smith, 1996, p.279.

86 Wang and Nyima, 1997, p. 210.

Chamdo.⁸⁷ According to a Chinese source, the loss of Tibetans in terms of the killed, wounded and captured amounted to 5,738 people. Of them 180 were killed.^{87a} According to a Tibetan source, that was quoting Chinese data, during the period from seven to twenty-five of October 1950, the PLA "eliminated" over 5,700 Tibetan soldiers and put two thousand people into prisons in various areas of Eastern Tibet.⁸⁸

Only on the 25th of October 1950, the PRC published a declaration that the "People's Army units have been ordered to advance into Tibet to free three million Tibetans from the imperialist oppression and to consolidate national defenses on the western borders of China".⁸⁹ In response, a "Manifesto of the Leaders of Tibet" was issued, which stated that the word "liberation of Tibet" is an extreme insult, because a country of free people was conquered and occupied under the pretext of liberation. In a series of statements that were read over the radio it said that there were no imperialists in Tibet, that it had never been a part of China, and that the China had invaded Tibet.⁹⁰

India condemned the PRC's actions on the 26th of October. The wording was very cautious. But the answer was very straightforward: China has exercised its sovereign rights and "sacred duty... to liberate the Tibetan people and drive out foreign forces and influences to ensure that the Tibetan people will be free from aggression and will realize regional autonomy and religious freedom".⁹¹ This approach was reflected in the proclamation of the PLA on November 10, 1950:⁹²

"Chairman Mao Zedong of the Central People's Government and Commander-in-Chief Chu Teh of the People's Liberation Army are deeply concerned about the prolonged oppression of the Tibetan people by British and American imperialism and by Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary government and have accordingly ordered our Army to move into Tibet to help the Tibetan people shake off this oppression forever.

All the religious bodies and people of our Tibet should immediately unite to give the People's Liberation Army every possible assistance, so that the imperialist influence may be driven out and allow the national regional autonomy in Tibet to be realized; fraternal relationships of friendliness and mutual aid may be established with other nationalities in the country, so that a new Tibet within the new China may be built up with their help.

Now that the People's Liberation Army has entered Tibet, they will protect the lives and property of all the religious bodies and people, protect the freedom of religious belief for all the people of Tibet, protect all lamaseries and temples, and

87 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.260.

87a Ling, 1964, p.13.

88 A Survey of Tibet Autonomous Region, 1984 — in: *Tibet: the Truth*, 1993.

89 Shakabpa, 1988, p.301

90 Promises and Lies, 2001.

91 In: Van Walt, 1987, p.144.

92 In: Ling, 1964, p.8–9.

help the Tibetan people to develop their education, agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, and commerce, so as to improve the livelihood of the people.

The existing political system and military system in Tibet will not be changed. The existing armed forces of Tibet will become part of the national defense forces of the People's Republic of China. All members of the religious bodies of all classes, government officials, and headmen will perform their duties as usual. All matters concerning reform of any kind in Tibet will be settled completely in accordance with the wishes of the Tibetan people and through consultation between the Tibetan people and leadership personnel in Tibet. Government officials who were formerly pro-imperialism and pro-Kuomintang will remain at their posts and no action will be taken concerning their past actions, provided that... they do not carry out acts of sabotage and resistance”.

Moderation was necessary during this period in order to reduce the amount of discontent in Tibet and abroad, to gain time, and to establish full control over the country.

On the 1st of November 1950, the U.S. Secretary of State described the actions of China in Tibet as “the continuing aggression of the Communists in Asia”.⁹³ On November 6, China was condemned by the United Kingdom, who also urged China to withdraw its troops. Some British MPs proposed to liaise with other States of the Commonwealth, so as to arrange an airlift of troops into Tibet. At the same time, Britain handed over all of its contractual obligations with Tibet to India.

On the 7th of November, Tibet sent a statement to the UN Secretary-General in which China was urged to stop the aggression. The Tibetan Government officially stated: “The armed invasion of Tibet for incorporation of Tibet into communist China through sheer physical force is a clear case of aggression. As long as the people of Tibet are compelled by force to become a part of China against their will and consent, the present invasion of Tibet will be the grossest instance of the violation of the weak by the strong. We therefore appeal through you to the nations of the world to intercede on our behalf and restrain Chinese aggression”.⁹⁴

Two days before this event took place, the UN received confirmation of the entry of Chinese troops into Korea, and this issue also appeared on the agenda.⁹⁵ The delegate of El Salvador asked the UN General Assembly a question about Tibetan independence. He presented a paper titled “Invasion of Foreign Forces into Tibet”. The Soviet representative called to remove the Tibet issue from the agenda altogether. India offered to find a peaceful solution without resolving to

93 Gurevich, 1958, p.139.

94 In: Shakabpa, 1988, p.302.

95 Van Walt, 1987.

UN intervention. The Indian representative was concerned that discussion of the Tibetan issue would hinder Indian mediation efforts in resolving the conflict in Korea. Britain, which once provoked Beijing's subjugation of Tibet, now stated that after half a century of close ties with Tibet, Her Majesty's Government considered the status of Tibet to be uncertain and suggested deferring the Tibetan request.⁹⁶ It supported the Indian proposal with the U.S. soon following suit.⁹⁷ As a result, the discussion was postponed. Discouraged by such conduct of its "allies", Tibet sent a request to the UN, asking for an investigatory commission to be sent. Nothing was done in response.

On 16th November, 1950, the Canadian High Commissioner in India sent a message to Ottawa in which he gave a concise description of the status of Tibet.⁹⁸ He pointed to the failure of China's arguments for its "liberation". Firstly, China never ratified the agreement by which the Chinese suzerainty would have been consistent with Tibetan autonomy. Further, the suzerainty was hardly the same thing as sovereignty, especially when autonomy was part of the agreement. Had China been in full possession of Tibet, there would be no grounds for bilateral relations and dispatching the army.

On 21st November 1950, the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada sent a law department memorandum to the Canadian Embassy in Washington, this was in connection with the possibility of raising the Tibetan question in the UN. It said that even if Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was weakly expressed and existed until 1911, later it became a simple fiction. Practically, over the last forty years, Tibet regulated its external and internal affairs completely by itself. In such a situation, from the perspective of international law, it should be regarded as an independent state. The Government of Canada declassified these documents only in 2009.

On 17th November 1950, the National Assembly transferred all Tibetan secular and religious authority to the 14th Dalai Lama, who was then fifteen years old. His Foreign Secretary stated:⁹⁹

"Tibet is united as one man behind the Dalai Lama who has taken over full powers and there is no possibility of a fifth column operating in Tibet proper; we have appealed to the world for peaceful intervention in (the face of this) clear case of unprovoked aggression but should no help be forth-coming we are determined to fight for our independence; if necessary we are even prepared to remove the government and the Dalai Lama to other parts (in order) to continue the fight. Tibet is a large and difficult country regarding the terrain, and as we have men and ammunition we can continue the warfare indefinitely".

96 Goldstein, 2003, p.536.

97 Van Walt, 1987.

98 Secret: CTC releases documents...

99 In: Van Walt, 1987, p. 145.

On 24th November 1950, in Kham, the Chinese created the first Tibetan Autonomous Region of the Sikang Province. Its centre became the city of Dartsedo (Kangding). This region extended from the Yangtze River in the west to the Daduhe River in the east.¹⁰⁰ The Tianzhu (Pari) Tibetan Autonomous County in Gansu Province was created in May of that year.

China was engulfed in propaganda fever. Mass meetings expressed their support for the “liberation” of Tibet. The “backward” Tibetans who, in most cases, had not seen anything outside their own village, now suddenly demonstrated miraculous proficiency in politics. Throughout these meetings, they “fully supported” the Central Government, denounced American imperialism, “demanded to peacefully liberate” all of Tibet, and so on.¹⁰¹ Moreover, they opposed the U.S. aggression in Korea, the plans of U.S. imperialism in the Far East, re-militarization of Japan, and supported the signing of the Five Powers peace treaty. Here’s a typical example.¹⁰² A senior Chinese person asked a peasant for his thoughts on the new regime. The peasant replied that he was extremely happy. “Only one thing is annoying: the new tax”. – “What new tax?” – “The clapping tax. Every time the Chinese visit us, we all have to gather and clap”.

Some parts of Chinese propaganda reached as far as Nepal. For example, the Sino-Tibetan weekly had numerous pictures of “liberated” Tibetan people becoming acquainted with the Chinese: rows of smiling girls were cleaning cars; young people with banners were welcoming the leaders, etc. “It importunately reminded us that the giant under the name of ‘materialism’ is already at the door”.¹⁰³

Even some leaders of the recalcitrant Golok tribe established contacts with the Chinese authorities in 1951.¹⁰⁴ Since 1952, with their consent, “working groups” started to arrive and eventually formed a network. “People’s governments” were created, schools, hospitals, veterinary stations, and post offices were built. However, the Golok began to fear the growing influence of the Chinese and six years later they joined the uprising.

On 19th December 1950, the Dalai Lama followed the advice of his approximates and left Lhasa for Dromo, which is situated on the Indian border. He was escorted by several hundred soldiers under the command of Tsarong. He arrived on January 5, 1951. The Tibetan Government also settled there. The Dalai Lama made the Donkar Monastery his residence. Some quantity of gold sand and silver bars was taken from Lhasa to the border with Sikkim, nine years later this would prove to be vital.¹⁰⁵ The Dalai Lama’s departure caused panic

100 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

101 Gurevich, 1958.

102 Dalai Lama, 1992.

103 Stonor, 1958, p.139.

104 Horlemann B. Modernization efforts...

105 Dalai Lama, 2000.

in Lhasa.¹⁰⁶ Wealthy people loaded their goods onto mules and left for safer places. The Indian representative in Lhasa reported that the fighting spirit of the resistance disintegrated.

Meanwhile, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme and other Tibetan officials who were captured were being "re-educated" in Chamdo. They observed that the Chinese troops were behaving quite well there. According to Ngabo's memoirs, the troops settled in tents only, never stayed in the monasteries or homes of Tibetans, they did not take "even a needle" without permission, they assisted Tibetan workers, provided health care, and so on.¹⁰⁷ As a result, the imprisoned governor sent two letters to Lhasa, calling for negotiations to avoid a military invasion. He was also able to send a secret letter. In it, he reported that he could no longer act independently, had to agree on everything with his captors, and that the Tibetan Government should act as it saw fit without worrying about him and other imprisoned officials.¹⁰⁸ After some lengthy discussions, the Tibetan Government appointed a delegation of three people (including Ngabo) for negotiations in Chamdo.

The Dalai Lama and the Kashag gave Ngabo authority to negotiate.¹⁰⁹ The letter stated that he should insist on the independence of Tibet and oppose stationing of the PLA there. He was also given a statement consisting of five points, with which he was to start the discussion: (1) there was no imperialist influence in Tibet, there was only a weak liaison with the British as a result of the 13th Dalai Lama's visit to India; relations with the U.S. were purely commercial; (2) if a foreign imperialist influence came to Tibet, it would ask China for help; (3) Chinese troops that were stationed in Kham should be withdrawn; (4) the Chinese Government should not be influenced by the Panchen Lama and the Regent Reting's faction; (5) of the territories that were captured by Manchu China, the Kuomintang and the new China should be returned to Tibet.

When Ngabo stated these terms to the Chinese, they rejected them all, except the fourth one, and suggested regional autonomy for Tibet. Since the parties failed to reconcile their positions, Ngabo suggested that the Tibetan Government hold talks in Lhasa or Beijing.

Tibetan governmental circles started discussions on whether the Dalai Lama should go abroad or start negotiations in Beijing. The latter plan prevailed. In January 1951, the Dalai Lama withdrew Shakabpa's delegation from India. In February, the delegation was sent to Beijing for negotiations. It consisted of two groups: one was sent from Tibet, and the other from India. The delegation was headed by Ngabo Ngawang Jigme. Besides him, it included the Commander of the armed forces of Tibet, the personal secretary of the Dalai Lama and eighteen

106 Shaky, p.50–51.

107 In: Goldstein, 2007, p.85.

108 Shaky, 1999, p.50.

109 Shaky, 1999, p.62.

other officials and representatives of the monasteries; the Panchen Lama also left the Qinghai Province for Beijing.¹¹⁰

A written document with a list of participants was given to the delegation headed by Ngabo. It was instructed not to accept Beijing's sovereignty of Tibet, and also that the advice of Dromo should be sought on all important issues, and that radio communications between Beijing and Dromo must be established.¹¹¹ Although Ngabo was the appointed head of the delegation, he had no right to make decisions without prior consultation with the Kashag and the Dalai Lama. Members of the other part of the delegation, who were to arrive from India, were given new instructions by the Kashag. At first, the delegation should attempt to defend the independence of Tibet, but if negotiations were to come to a standstill they should accept that Tibet would become a part of China under the following conditions: (1) Tibet should have full internal independence; (2) there should not be any Chinese troops there; (3) the Tibetan Army should be responsible for its defence; (4) the Chinese representative in Lhasa, his staff and security should not exceed one hundred people; (5) the Chinese representative has to be a Buddhist.

Ngabo telegraphed Dromo that the Chinese would not accept such conditions. He received a reply that Chinese troops could not be deployed in Tibet, but that the Tibetan Army could be incorporated into the PLA for defence. On March 29, a part of the delegation with Ngabo at its head left Chamdo. Deng Xiaoping and other Communists were "educating" the delegation while it was en route.¹¹² Phuntsok Wangyal and his Chinese assistant also took part in the "education".

P. Wangyal (Phunwang) is known as the founder of the Tibetan Communist Party. During the mid 1940's, he, along with Ngawang Kelsang, established a small group in Nanjing, calling it the Tibetan Communist Revolutionary Group, which was turned into the Tibetan Communist Party in 1949 and became part of the CPC.¹¹³ During the 1950's, he became the main guide and supplier (of grain and animals) to the Chinese invasion force en route to Tibet, and he attempted to persuade the Tibetan Command in Chamdo and Markham to switch sides.¹¹⁴ In addition, he was responsible for the Chinese 18th Corps public relations. Unlike the delegates (and this included the captured Ngabo), Wangyal voluntarily cooperated with the Chinese. With their help, he wanted to "release his motherland from backwardness" because he believed the Tibetan Government to be ineffective. He served as a Chinese translator at the talks. This work was very important at the time as almost none of the Tibetans could speak Chinese. Subsequently, Wangyal felt remorse about the methods of democratic reforms that led to the uprising, and

110 For details see: Shakya, 2003, p.589–606.

111 Shakya, 1999, p.64–65.

112 Promises and Lies, 2001.

113 Shakya, 2005.

114 Norbu, J. March winds...

he regretted the Central Government's reluctance to understand the connection between Kham and Tibet.¹¹⁵ As a result, he was arrested and spent eighteen years in jail. He still preserved his Marxist ideals. More recently, his memoirs were published in the PRC.

Part of the delegation that departed Chamdo arrived in Beijing on the 22nd of April. On April 26, the other part arrived from Dromo. The delegates were met at the train station with a solemn reception of a kind that is usually reserved for foreign missions.

On April 28, the Tibetans were given a ten-article document, which the Chinese marked for discussion.¹¹⁶ The basis was the same as the Chinese had stated earlier. The following day, negotiations began. The Tibetans rejected the Chinese document and offered to move to their own document of five articles. The Chinese refused. Negotiations resumed on the 2nd of May. The Chinese stated that the sovereignty of China over Tibet was not a subject for discussion, only the ten points that they had put forward could be discussed. Permanent stationing of the PLA in Tibet was beneficial to its people and to the whole of the PRC, it would liberate the "minorities" and counter the aggression of the imperialists, it was an internal affair of China and was determined by the Central Government. If the Dalai Lama was to leave for India, he would be "dismissed" from his post.

Since the Tibetans continued to insist, the statements of the Chinese were becoming more threatening.¹¹⁷ On May 2, the Tibetans were told that the ten articles represented the unanimous decision of the Party that was adopted when creating the PRC. On May 7, they were not allowed to speak at all, and had to listen to the threatening monologues of the Chinese. On the 10th of May, they were told about Beijing's decision to establish a military-administrative commission in Tibet, which would become the highest political and military authority there. The Tibetans were told that they could return home any day before or after the "liberation" if they did not agree with what was offered. The Chinese troops were already inside Tibet. A single telegram from Beijing would suffice to bring them into action. Delegates were invited to decide whether they wanted a peaceful or an armed "liberation".

During the talks, the Chinese asked Ngabo on several occasions if he had the authority to sign the agreement. He replied affirmatively.¹¹⁸ If he was to say "no", the negotiations could have been suspended. It is unclear why he said so, because later he said that he could only sign the document after prior consultation with the Kashag and the Dalai Lama.

For three weeks after the arrival of Tibetans in Beijing, they were not allowed to contact their Government on the pretext that the negotiations were very

115 Shakyas, 2005.

116 Promises and Lies, 2001.

117 Promises and Lies, 2001.

118 Shakyas, 1999, p.70–71.

sensitive, and such communications would compromise their confidentiality.¹¹⁹ The Chinese said that the means of communication with Lhasa were inadequate. As a result, the delegates did not even know if the Dalai Lama was still in Tibet, or had already left.

At the meeting on 14th May, it became clear that if the Chinese terms were not accepted, the PLA would immediately move into Tibet. Tibetans had to agree to the demands of the Chinese as a preliminary. In return, they too set a condition: if the Government and the Dalai Lama would not accept the Agreement and if the Dalai Lama proceeded to leave Tibet, they needed assurance that his power and position would be restored if he came back within four or five years. The Chinese offered to make a separate secret agreement. At the same time they made a new proposal: to add to the Agreement the divergent views of the Tibetan Government and the Panchen Lama. Ngabo stated that this was an internal matter of Tibet, that he was ready to break off negotiations and that the Tibetan delegation would return home. Subsequently, the Chinese (aided by Wangyal's mediation) were able to come to an agreement with him about the Panchen Lama's status, which was added to the Agreement.

On 21st May, the Chinese prepared a draft of the Agreement and the secret supplementary document consisting of seven points.¹²⁰ The Agreement was about the same as the ten terms proposed by them earlier. Some of the points made in the secret document, as according to the request made by the Tibetan delegates, were as follows: if the Dalai Lama was to leave Tibet and return after four to five years, his authority and position would be saved; during this period, the Tibetan Government would provide for all his needs; twenty thousand soldiers of the PLA would be stationed on the borders of Tibet; the PLA troops in Tibet would be attached to two Tibetan ministers of the rank of deputy commander; the Tibetan Government would retain five hundred of the Dalai Lama's bodyguards and one thousand people in security forces in different parts of Tibet; the Tibetan Foreign Office would be merged with an office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China in Tibet. The Chinese let the Tibetan delegates know that the developed conditions were final and amounted to an ultimatum.

On 23rd May 1951, the "Agreement between the Central People's Government of China and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" was signed in Beijing. It became known as the "Seventeen Point Agreement", or "Seventeen Point Plan". Here is its text:¹²¹

"The Tibetan nationality is one of the nationalities with a long history within the boundaries of China and, like many other nationalities, it has done its glorious

119 Promises and Lies, 2001.

120 Promises and Lies, 2001.

121 <http://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/china/china3.html>. Names of Tibetan delegates in this book are corrected according to facsimile of the original.

duty in the course of the creation and development of the great motherland. But over the last hundred years and more, imperialist forces penetrated into China, and in consequence, also penetrated into the Tibetan region and carried out all kinds of deceptions and provocations. Like previous reactionary Governments, the KMT reactionary government continued to carry out a policy of oppression and sowing dissension among the nationalities, causing division and disunity among the Tibetan people. The Local Government of Tibet did not oppose imperialist deception and provocations, but adopted an unpatriotic attitude towards the great motherland. Under such conditions, the Tibetan nationality and people were plunged into the depths of enslavement and suffering. In 1949, basic victory was achieved on a nation-wide scale in the Chinese people's war of liberation; the common domestic enemy of all nationalities — the KMT reactionary government — was overthrown; and the common foreign enemy of all nationalities — the aggressive imperialist forces — was driven out. On this basis, the founding of the People's Republic of China and of the Central People's Government was announced. In accordance with the Common Program passed by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Central People's Government declared that all nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China are equal, and that they shall establish unity and mutual aid and oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the People's Republic of China may become one big family of fraternity and cooperation, composed of all its nationalities. Within this big family of nationalities of the People's Republic of China, national regional autonomy is to be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated, and all national minorities are to have freedom to develop their spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their customs, habits, and religious beliefs, and the Central People's Government will assist all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural, and educational construction work. Since then, all nationalities within the country, with the exception of those in the areas of Tibet and Taiwan, have gained liberation. Under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government and the direct leadership of the higher levels of People's Governments, all national minorities have fully enjoyed the right of national equality and have exercised, or are exercising, national regional autonomy. In order that the influences of aggressive imperialist forces in Tibet maybe successfully eliminated, the unification of the territory and sovereignty of the People's Republic of China accomplished, and national defence safeguarded; in order that 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 other nationalities in the country and develop their political, economic, cultural, and educational work, the Central People's Government, when it ordered the People's Liberation Army to march into Tibet, notified the local government of Tibet to send delegates to the Central Authorities to hold talks for the conclusion of an agreement on measures for the peaceful

liberation of Tibet. At the latter part of April 1951, delegates with full powers from the Local Government of Tibet arrived in Peking. The Central People's Government appointed representatives with full powers to conduct talks on a friendly basis with delegates of the Local Government of Tibet. The result of the talks is that both parties agreed to establish this agreement and ensure that it be carried into effect.

1. 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.
2. The Local Government of Tibet shall actively assist the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defenses.
3. In accordance with the policy towards nationalities laid down in the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government.
4. Central Authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet. The Central Authorities also will not alter the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama. Officials of various ranks shall hold office as usual.
5. The established status, functions, and powers of the Panchen Ngoerhtehni shall be maintained.
6. By the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama and of the Panchen Ngoerhtehni is meant, the status, functions and powers of the 13th Dalai Lama and of the 9th Panchen Ngoerhtehni when they were in friendly and amicable relations with each other.
7. The policy of freedom of religious belief laid down in the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference will be protected. The Central Authorities will not effect any change in the income of the monasteries.
8. The Tibetan troops will be re-organised step by step into the People's Liberation Army, and become a part of the national defense forces of the Central People's Government.
9. 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.
10. Tibetan agriculture, livestock raising, industry and commerce will 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 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.

12. 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.
13. The People’s Liberation Army entering Tibet will abide by the above-mentioned policies and will also be fair in all buying and selling and will not arbitrarily take even a needle or a thread from the people.
14. The Central People’s Government will handle all external affairs of the area of Tibet; and there will be peaceful co-existence with neighboring countries and the establishment and development of fair commercial and trading relations with them on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territory and sovereignty.
15. In order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the Central People’s Government will set up a military-administrative committee and a military area headquarters in Tibet, and apart from the personnel sent there by the Central People’s Government it will absorb as many local Tibetan personnel as possible to take part in the work.
Local Tibetan personnel taking part in the military-administrative committee may include patriotic elements from the Local Government of Tibet, various district and various principal monasteries; the name list is to be prepared after consultation between the representatives designated by the Central People’s Government and various quarters concerned, and is to be submitted to the Central People’s Government for approval.¹²²
16. 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 Local Government of Tibet should assist the People’s Liberation Army in the purchase and transportation of food, fodder, and other daily necessities.
17. This agreement shall come into force immediately after signatures and seals are affixed to it.

Signed and sealed by delegates of the Central People’s Government with full powers: Chief Delegate: Li Weihai (Chairman of the Commission of Nationalities Affairs); [Delegates]: Zhang Jingwu, Zhang Guohua, Sun Zhiyuan; Delegates with full powers of the Local Government of Tibet: Chief Delegate: Ngawang Jigme Ngabo; [Delegates]: Sonam Wangdue Khemey, Thupten Tendar, Thubten Lekmon, Tenzin Dhondup Sampho”.

The signing ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister Zhu De and Li Zishan, Vice-Premier of State Council Chen Yun, Dong Biu, Guo Mozho and others, as well as representatives of the *kanbu* Council of the Panchen Lama.

¹²² The last paragraph of the point 15 is absent from the Russian translation of this Agreement taken from official Chinese website (reproduced in Russian version of this book on p.189).

Tibetan delegates did not have official governmental seals that were required for signing an agreement with Tibet. According to the 14th Dalai Lama, state seals remained with him in Dromo.¹²³ Only Ngabo Ngawang Jigme had a seal of the Governor of Eastern Tibet, but he did not affix it. The delegation members possessed personal seals, but denied that fact to the Chinese. Then the Chinese carved seals from wood with the names of the delegates, and attached them to the Agreement.¹²⁴ A document from Kashag also stated that the seals that were attached to the Agreement were made on site in Beijing.¹²⁵ This was a forgery, instead of the original seals, duplicates were used. Furthermore, because the Chinese were not familiar with the Tibetan script, the name of one delegate on the fabricated seal was printed with a grammatical error.¹²⁶ The Tibetans warned the Chinese that they were signing the Agreement purely on their own behalf, and did not have the authority to sign it on the behalf of the Dalai Lama, or the Kashag.¹²⁷ Consequently, they exceeded their authority by signing the Agreement.

The preamble to the Agreement contains ideological clichés that do not correspond to reality. Tibet was an independent state. Thus, the subordination between the “central” government of China and the “local” one of Tibet was not appropriate. Moreover, the Central Government’s legitimacy was disputed by two of the central governments of China: one in Beijing and the other in Taipei. Furthermore, the role of the imperialists in Tibet was clearly exaggerated (see below). Perhaps, the idea of the “liberation” of Tibet from foreign imperialists is rooted in I.V. Stalin’s speech about the prospects of the Chinese Revolution (1926). He said that a foreign imperialists’ intervention in China would not necessarily involve bringing in their troops, it could also be achieved through support of the local counter-revolution movement.¹²⁸ It is unlikely that the Tibetan delegates understood what the “imperialist forces” were and whom and on what grounds Tibetans should banish. Moreover, the preamble stated that these forces had already been driven out of Tibet. But because the Chinese insisted, they agreed: “If they are there, then you send them out”.¹²⁹

Those who wanted to add Tibet to China were the ones who tried to create a split in the Tibetan nation, as in other “minority nationalities”. Indirectly, this is indicated by the phrase about the Communist Central Government being against “their own public enemies”. On the other hand, the “unpatriotic attitude” of the Government of Tibet was natural: they were patriots of their own motherland

123 Dalai Lama, 1992, p.66.

124 Promises and Lies, 2001; Cao, 2007, p.111–114; Kitaev, S. How Tibet became...

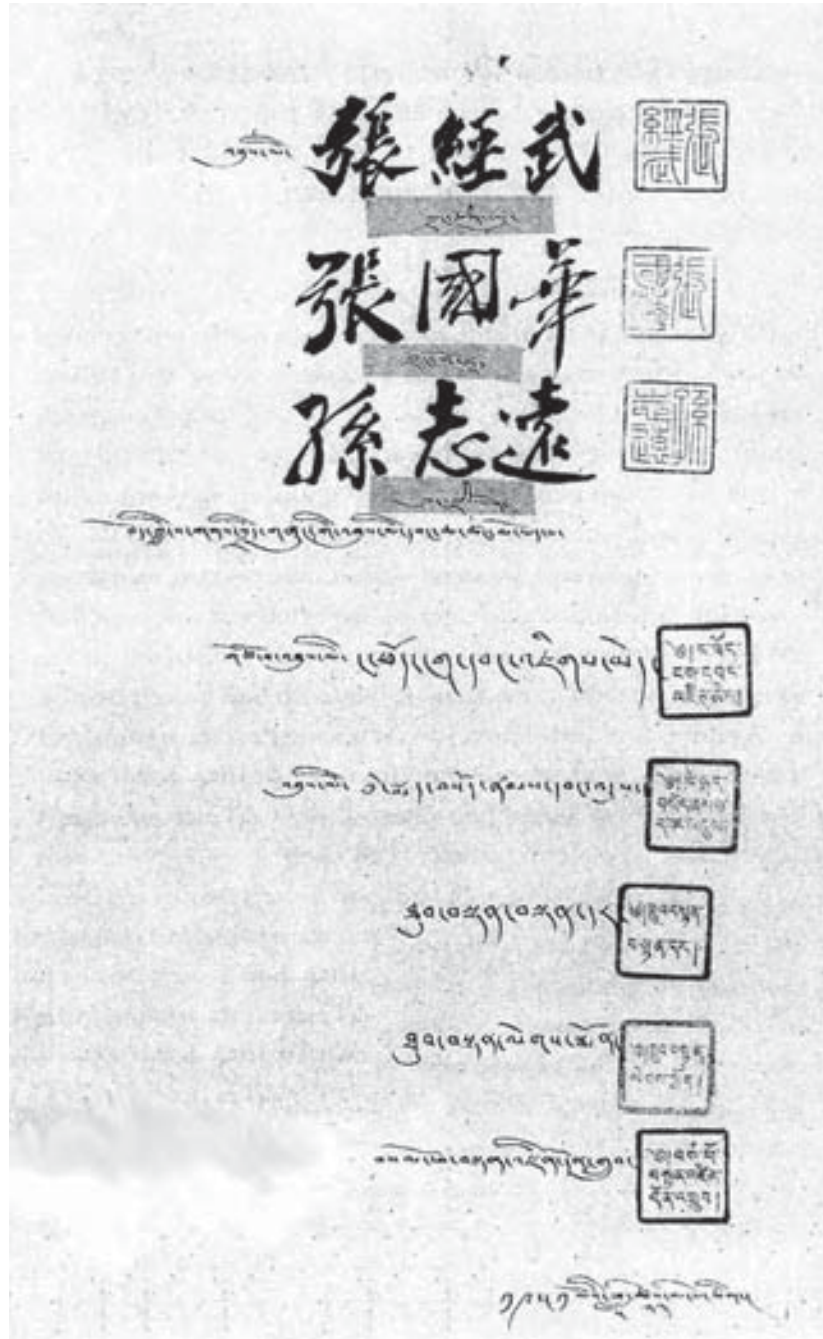
125 Van Walt, 1987.

126 A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

127 Promises and Lies, 2001.

128 Stalin, 1948, p.357–374.

129 Goldstein, 2007, p.101.



Facsimile of a page from the 17 Point Agreement with seals of the Tibetan delegates (*Facts about the 17-point "Agreement"*, 2007, p.129). These seals are not authentic. They were manufactured by the Chinese in Beijing. The last seal was made with an error: the name Sampho Tenzin Dhondup was erroneously prefixed with འ

(Tibet), and not of someone else's (China). Indirect recognition of this fact is contained in the phrase that the Tibetan people should "return to the big family of the People's Republic of China". If they were already part of it, why would they have to return back into it?

It is not clear what constituted the *assistance* of the Central Government to "national minorities" in the development of policy, economy, culture and education, *since* which they have "gained liberation". Furthermore, the Government ordered detachments of the PLA that entered Tibet to command the "local" government to send their people for negotiations with the Centre. It turns out that the contracting parties indirectly acknowledged this in the preamble, and the agreement was signed under a military threat.

Point 2 was also related to one sentence from the preamble: the "voluntary" Agreement implied that the Tibetan Government would assist a foreign army on its territory. But Tibet was acknowledged to have its own troops (Point 8), an important attribute of statehood. Point 15 contradicted Point 4, since the establishment of the Chinese Government's military-administrative committee and the military area headquarters had not only military but also political significance.

The Agreement was drawn up in such a way that a number of terms were ambiguous and allowed for different interpretations by the Chinese and the Tibetans. First of all, it did not indicate the borders of territory to which it applied. Unlike the Chinese, the majority of Tibetans understood "Tibet" as not only what was actually subordinate to Lhasa in 1951, but the Tibetan land that was annexed to the provinces of China. This allowed the Chinese to consider themselves free from the Agreement on half of Greater Tibet. In addition, the Chamdo district and lands, which formerly belonged to the Panchen Lama, were taken from the jurisdiction of the Tibetan Government.¹³⁰ It is unclear what was meant by the Chinese and the Tibetans in the separation of "Tibetan nationality and people". Also, the "national regional autonomy" term lacked a precise definition.

The Agreement recognized Tibet as part of China. But the Tibetans did not consider China to be their motherland. Therefore, they could not adhere to Point 1. They were accustomed to being dependent on neighbouring states. Even many members of the elite believed that independence was not a subject of an international legal status, but that of lifestyle and culture.¹³¹ Tibetans believed that the Agreement was a way to protect their traditions, while the Chinese thought that it was their mandate for owning Tibet. It is probable that the majority of Tibetans embraced the new document within the framework of past forms of dependence, especially since they had been promised autonomy, which they understood in a different way to the Chinese. Perhaps because of that, even some of the lamas and the feudal lords

130 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

131 Shakya, 1999, p.90.

supported the Agreement. Furthermore, the kind of "reforms" the Chinese had in mind had not been defined.

The text contains an internal contradiction: the "local government" *should* carry out reforms of *its own accord*. It is also unclear who should have settled the demands through "consultation". Finally, the last point, about the affixing of seals, was adhered to by the Chinese in a highly unusual way to say the least (see above).

The Agreement was beneficial to the Chinese, although it contained compromises. An ancient Chinese stratagem "Sacrifice the Plum Tree in Place of the Peach" reads as follows: "There are circumstances in which you must sacrifice short-term objectives in order to gain the long-term goal".¹³² All the concessions made for the Tibetans' sake were temporary and related to particulars. The main point was that Tibet, for the first time in history, was proclaimed as a part of China and subject to reform. Neither communism, nor socialism was explicitly mentioned in the Agreement. Such reforms were postponed for the future: when China was firmly established in Tibet. The form of presentation and forceful methods were that of the Communists trademark style. Undoubtedly, the final version of the text came out from their editorship.

On the following day after the signing, Mao Zedong gave a lengthy speech with protestations of love to the Tibetans. He called them to forward complaints (when necessary) about the local Chinese governmental officials directly to "them" in Beijing, and he said that the Agreement was a source of pride for the Tibetans and the Chinese alike, and that the Tibetans would be able to become presidents of China, to control Beijing, and so on. The Tibetans turned to Zhou Enlai with a request to unite all of Tibet, that is, to return the Tibetan territory, which was incorporated in the Chinese provinces, back under the jurisdiction of Lhasa. This was refused, on the pretext that the time was not right, and a few years later it could be done through dialogue between the parties.¹³³ Of course, the Chinese leaders were not planning for a "dialogue". And in the 2000's, they stated that Greater Tibet did not exist.

In general, the agreement "was a brilliant success of the Communist Party of China and its Chairman Mao Zedong".¹³⁴

The Communists were in a hurry to sign the Agreement, as it was important to them to quickly announce the "peaceful liberation" to the world. The Tibetan delegation sent a telegram about the signing to Dromo.¹³⁵ On 27th May 1951, Beijing Radio broadcasted the full text of the Agreement. It was then that the Dalai Lama and his Government learned of its content for the first time.¹³⁶ The Dalai Lama recalled that they were shocked and dismayed. At the same time, he decided to postpone public

132 Thirty-six Strategies...

133 Promises and Lies, 2001

134 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.233.

135 Shakya, 1999, p.70-71.

136 Promises and Lies, 2001

rejection of the document until he had received the full text. The Kashag immediately sent a telegram to the delegates asking them to send the text of the Agreement and the secret annex immediately.¹³⁷ The delegation was supposed to remain in Beijing and wait for further instructions. But the Chinese offered to the Tibetans to bring the document to their Government personally.¹³⁸ Ngabo had to respond to Dromo that he could not give an answer on radio because of the secret nature of the supplementary document, but if Kashag was not satisfied with the Agreement it should send a new delegation to Beijing.¹³⁹ The delegates departed in two groups. Ngabo went back through Chamdo, because the Chinese said that they were concerned for his safety. In fact, they feared that the ex-governor could remain in India.

On 9th September 1951, the Canadian High Commissioner in India sent a secret letter to the Deputy Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Canada. He noted that the Tibetan delegates, having returned after the signing, said that they did not want to sign it without prior approval of the Dalai Lama.¹⁴⁰ According to the Commissioner, this could render the Agreement invalid in the future because it was signed under duress. A similar conclusion was arrived at by a Canadian Government Trade Commissioner in Hong Kong in his message dated June 23, 1959 to the Department of Foreign Affairs of his country: the Seventeen Point Agreement was the same type of unequal treaty that Western countries imposed on the Qing Empire. Nevertheless, Ngabo later said that this was an “internal” Chinese agreement, it was legitimate, signed voluntarily and in a friendly atmosphere.¹⁴¹ But could he have said otherwise when he was a high-ranking official of the PRC at that time?

On 8th August 1951, the representative of the Chinese Government, General Zhang Jingwu, arrived in Lhasa, having previously fruitlessly tried to persuade the Tibetan ministers and the Dalai Lama to send a telegram to Beijing with approval of the Agreement.¹⁴² Now he was expecting the first two ministers for a reception. But instead, the Kashag sent two junior officials, so that he would get the message that Tibet did not consider herself to be part of China. The general did see the First Ministers, but did not achieve his aim.

On 17th August, the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa. On the 9th of September, three thousand soldiers of the PLA arrived there. The troops marched in a long column, with much fanfare and accompanied by drumming, above them swung a sea of red banners and posters of Mao Zedong and Zhu De.¹⁴³ Ngabo Ngawang Jigme and Phuntsok Wangyal arrived with them. The main Chinese forces were also

137 Shakya, 1999, p.70–71.

138 Promises and Lies, 2001.

139 Shakya, 1999, p.70–71.

140 Secret: CTC releases documents...

141 For example, Arpi, 2007, p.78–81; Ngapoi, 1991, p.5, 10–12.

142 Promises and Lies, 2001

143 Dalai Lama, 1992.

closing in. Now the Tibetans could no longer, and the Chinese no longer wanted, to discuss any additional conditions. The Tibetan leadership lost its power. It could only agree with what was dictated from the other side, and hope to avoid the worst through following the Agreement.

Having listened to the Tibetan delegates, the National Assembly suggested that the Kashag accept the Agreement on the following terms:¹⁴⁴ “There should be a



The PLA enters Lhasa

144 Promises and Lies, 2001, p.29.

limit to the number of PLA troops to be stationed in Tibet and that the soldiers should not converge on Lhasa but proceed directly to the borders. The Tibetan Government should have the right to raise with the Chinese authorities such points as are found to be unacceptable in the course of implementation. The powers of Military Administrative Commission should be confined to the maintenance of the PLA discipline. Matters relating to developmental activities (e.g. mining), and border security should be decided according to the situation in Tibet. Whenever the Chinese Government violates any provision of the Agreement, the Tibetan government should have the right to intervene”.

Based on these recommendations, the Kashag told Zhang Jingwu that he could radio its acceptance of the Agreement, providing China agreed with three positions:¹⁴⁵ “The powers and functions of the Military and Administrative Commission should be defined vis-a-vis the powers and functions of the Dalai Lama. Only a limited number of the PLA troops should be stationed in Tibet; the responsibility for defending the important borders should be entrusted to the Tibetan Army. All the Tibetan-inhabited areas should be united under the Tibetan Government; Chamdo and other areas of the Kham should be returned to the Tibetan Government”.

Zhang Jingwu ignored the first two points, but said the following about the third one: it should be decided later, by referendum of the Tibetans from Sichuan, Gansu, Yunnan and Qinghai.¹⁴⁶ Needless to say, that “later” the referendum never took place.

On 24th October, on behalf of the Dalai Lama, Zhang Jingwu sent a telegram to Mao Zedong with confirmation of the support of the Agreement.¹⁴⁷ There is evidence that Ngabo Ngawang Jigme simply came to Zhang Jingwu and said that the Tibetan Government agreed to send a telegram on the 24th of October.¹⁴⁸ This document is in a handwritten form and its Chinese translation is on the Internet.¹⁴⁹ Both were not sealed by the Dalai Lama, and in those days in Tibet, any document, even one drafted somewhere in the backwoods, was not complete without a seal! The draft version of this telegram was written in Tibetan and translated by one of Beijing’s negotiators.¹⁵⁰ But Zhang Jingwu refused to use certain terms (for example, “China and Tibet”, because it was “one country”). Apparently, he was actively involved in the telegram’s formulation before sending.

All this cannot be considered as a legitimate act of ratification. More so, considering that the Dalai Lama, having acquired an opportunity to freely express his will, refused to accept the Agreement (see Chapter 11).

145 Promises and Lies, 2001, p.29.

146 Promises and Lies, 2001.

147 Promises and Lies, 2001.

148 Le, 1985 — in: Goldstein, 2007, p.225–226.

149 Origin of the title...

150 Blondeau and Buffetrille, 2008, p.68.

The influx of troops continued. On October 26, in came the main forces.¹⁵¹ On October 29, troops headed by generals Zhang Guohua and Tan Guansen entered Lhasa.¹⁵² Crowds of Tibetans took to the streets to see the Chinese troops. Some correspondents depicted this as a "rejoicing of the people". On November 1, 1951, the Chinese National Committee of People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) elected the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and Ngabo Ngawang Jigme as its members. On November 15, the PLA entered into Gyantse and Shigatse. Chinese troops occupied the important cities of Rutok and Gartok. Now the troops from Sichuan, Yunnan and Xinjiang were in full control of the Tibetan territory. The commanders of the troops entered Lhasa, requisitioned the houses that they wanted, took over a large square to establish a military camp near the summer residence of the Dalai Lama (Norbulingka), and demanded food and equipment.¹⁵³ According to eyewitnesses, the Chinese soldiers were very poor. Food shortages and other difficulties arose due to problems with supplies that were in turn caused by the absence of roads. Food was scarce. Nevertheless, discipline was good. Soldiers were prohibited from taking anything from the Tibetans without their consent.

Lhasa's population at that time was about thirty thousand people. An influx of more than eight thousand soldiers over three months (September to early December) created difficulties, even though the troops were quartered in tents.¹⁵⁴ The troops were dislocated into different cities. In the absence of good roads from China it was impossible to deliver enough food, so it had to be found on the spot.

Shortages began, and the soldiers were put onto starvation rations. Although the Chinese paid for everything that they took, supplies were irregular. The Tibetans did not accept Chinese currency as it could not be exchanged in India, with which they traded.¹⁵⁵ Then the Chinese began paying with silver KMT dollars. These were in short supply. Then the Chinese began to collect and melt silver ornaments and religious objects in China and mint coins from them. There was a special centre in the Chengdu town that was created for this purpose. These coins were made exclusively for Tibet.

Calculations showed that the future TAR had enough grain to feed the Chinese troops for some time and that the food shortage was created on purpose.¹⁵⁶ The reason behind it was not just a reluctance to feed the occupants (many Tibetan aristocrats made good money by selling grain). Tibetan agriculture was long characterised by low productivity (see Chapter 6). Stockpiles of grain were needed in case of crop failures and natural disasters. The Government could not allow them to be squandered.

151 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

152 Shakabpa, 1988; Promises and Lies, 2001

153 Dalai Lama, 1992, 2000.

154 Goldstein, 2007, p.244.

155 Shaky, 1999, p.95.

156 Goldstein, 2007, p.252.

The command demanded to borrow two thousand tons of barley and other kinds of food. The influx of silver, combined with a shortage of food, led to inflation. Grain prices soared by ten times, prices of oil by nine, other products by two to three times. Tensions escalated between the Tibetans and the Chinese. Tibetan leaflets that demanded the removal of troops started to appear. Chinese officials and commanders declared this to be a “reactionary activity”. They began to visit monasteries and conduct meetings with abbots and the senior lamas.¹⁵⁷ At the same time they tried to win the “hearts and minds” of the people, and sometimes made offerings to the monasteries.

Problems with the supply of troops showed the instability of the Chinese presence in Tibet. In an attempt to partially cover their need for grain in 1952, they ploughed a field near Lhasa. A delivery of rice from India was organised, which was very expensive. Thus they had to rely on the main route from Sichuan. From 1951 to 1954, seventy-one million pounds of goods were delivered through Chamdo into the future TAR.¹⁵⁸ 69,900 animals and 15,600 employees were used for that purpose. Cattle and drovers were also needed to transport goods from other places, including India and Amdo.

The Chinese initially paid the prices for services, but then they started to pay less. Sometimes, the Tibetans had to carry Chinese goods at their own expense. Because of this, many became impoverished. This was how the Chinese adhered to Point 16 of the Agreement.

In January 1952, the People’s Liberation Committee of the Chamdo district was founded. It started to perform the functions of the local government that was subordinate to Beijing. On February 10, 1952, the PLA’s Tibet Military District was established. Tibetan detachments started to be integrated into the Chinese Army. From 1952 until 1958, the Tibetan Army had two banners: the Tibetan one (with a snow lion), and the PRC’s.¹⁵⁹ Han General Zhang Guohua was appointed as the District Commander, his deputies were two Tibetans and one Han. The political commissar was also a Han. On February 23, a representative’s office of the Dalai Lama was opened in Beijing, with the Central Government of China’s office simultaneously opening in Lhasa. The Panchen Lama returned to Tashilhunpo monastery on June 23, 1952. The *kanbu* Council was then organised and was handed authority over the Tsang territories with a population of about one hundred thousand people.¹⁶⁰ This Council, in fact, was subordinate directly to Beijing. That violated Point 5 of the Agreement.

The Chinese leadership started to implement its plan of ethnic regional autonomy in Tibet. If Communists did allow for federal structuring of China before

157 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.43.

158 Goldstein, 2007, p.253.

159 Goldstein, 2007, p.302–303.

160 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

they came to power, then now the situation changed.¹⁶¹ Mao and his supporters began to build a unitary state. The program of the CPPCC, that was adopted in September 1949, proclaimed equality for all nationalities, their friendship and cooperation in overcoming the great (Han) and the narrow (small nationalities) nationalism, the prohibition of ethnic discrimination, and oppression and actions that were aimed at splitting national unity.¹⁶² Areas that were densely populated by “ethnic minorities” were proclaimed ethnic autonomous areas with self-governance bodies, with freedom of language, literature and religion. In 1952, the “Basic Principles for the Implementation of the Regional National Autonomy” were adopted.

Two years earlier, after the defeat of the KMT at the hands of the CPC, the Sikang Province was divided along the Yangtze River. The western part became the territory of Chamdo, with the east part remaining as Sikang. In 1955, the Sikang Province was abolished and it became part of Sichuan. Its Tibet Autonomous Region was renamed into Ganzi Autonomous Prefecture of the Sichuan Province, and its centre was moved from Dartsedo to Kardze, or Ganzi (for modern division, see Chapter 1). The list of the created Tibetan autonomies is as follows. Qinghai: prefectures Yushu (December 1951), Hainan, Haibei and Huangnan (December 1953), Golok (January 1954). Sichuan: the Aba Prefecture (January 1953). Gansu: the Gannan Prefecture (October 1953), the Muli Prefecture (May 1953). Yunnan: the Diqing Prefecture (1957).

In 1954, the Constitution of the PRC reaffirmed the basic principles of national policy that was developed by the CPC. Autonomies had three kinds of ranks: the region (with the rank of a province), prefecture and county (subordinated to the province). Since then, all attempts to raise the rank of an autonomy, or to fuse several autonomies, have always been foiled by the Chinese officials.¹⁶³ This system ensured the unity of the PRC and gave the Han a genuine, albeit undeclared advantage over the other nations. “Creating micro-autonomies in the form of autonomous counties also serves the great power aspirations of Mao Zedong: dividing nations, preventing their consolidation”.¹⁶⁴ Having introduced divisions into “minorities”, the Maoists always cared about their unity with other nations of the PRC, particularly with the Hans. This suppressed national consciousness and promoted assimilation. As was pointed out by Mao Zedong, “the unity of the state, the unity of all peoples, the unity of all nationalities in the country — this is the main guarantee that our cause will certainly win”.¹⁶⁵ However, crushed into multiple autonomies, the Tibetans continue to consider themselves as one nation.

161 Rakhimov, 1968.

162 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

163 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

164 Rakhimov, 1968, p.73.

165 In: Jiang Zemin, 2004, p.204.

The Chinese leadership sought from the outset to use the elites of “minority nationalities” to implement its decisions. The “united front” policy served to this end. Its essence lies in that influential members of “minorities” are incorporated into the administration. However, these administrations have always been controlled by the Han Communists that fulfilled the directives of the Han Party leadership. In such circumstances, the concept of self-management is fiction. And in this way the Chinese authorities have violated Points 3 and 4 of the Agreement.

On 31st March 1952, mainly around Lhasa, Mimang Tsongdu, or the People’s Unions, were created.¹⁶⁶ They included peasants and soldiers of the Tibetan Army, which were being integrated into the PLA. These were the first social organizations of the people in Tibetan history. In spring of 1952, the People’s Unions organized rallies, demonstrations and petition signings, demanding the withdrawal of Chinese troops. On the 31st of March 1952, representatives of the people from Chushul Village came to Lhasa and handed the petition to the Kashag and General Zhang Guohua. Over a thousand Tibetans surrounded the General’s house, demanding the withdrawal of troops. On April 1, at the house of Ngabo, there was an incident involving firearms between the Tibetan and Chinese soldiers.

On April 6, 1952, a directive regarding Tibet was issued by the CPC Central Committee. It stated that there were very few Han people in Tibet, so the society needed to be transformed gradually and that support of the masses had to be established.¹⁶⁷ It was prescribed not to reorganize the Tibetan Army, not to create a military sub-district or a military and administrative committee, the PLA was to be supplied from China and India so as not to lower the standard of living of the local people. The directive said that time was on the Central Government’s side, as its position was strengthening, and the position of the Tibetan ruling class was weakening.¹⁶⁸

However, Zhang Guohua demanded dismissal of the two First Ministers of the Tibetan Government, Lukhangwa and Lobsang Tashi, who were linked with the organized protests. Moreover, Lukhangwa explicitly stated to Zhang Jingwu, that the Tibetan people did not accept the Seventeen Point Agreement.¹⁶⁹ The First Ministers were very popular amongst the people. The more they were condemned by the Chinese, the more popular they became. But the Kashag had to remove the two First Ministers, to declare the dissolution of Mimang Tsongdu and to temporarily arrest six of their leaders. That is how these organizations were assessed by the Chinese military authorities in Lhasa in their order, issued on the 11th of April 1952:¹⁷⁰ “Since 31 March, imperialist invaders, Kuomintang spies, and

166 Shakya, 1999; Promises and Lies, 2001.

167 Mao Tse-tung, 1977, p. 73–76.

168 Shakya, 1999, p.106–107.

169 Promises and Lies, 2001

170 Goldstein, 2007, p.352.

a minority of the Tibetan upper hierarchy, together with Tibetan army soldiers, hoodlums, traders and a monk-organized reactionary "people's association" (formed a) "Lhasa liberation team".

After his dismissal, Lukhangwa fled to Kalimpong (India), and the monk Lobsang Tashi returned to religious duties. Their resignations were approved by Mao and the CPC Central Committee. But the planned military-administrative committee was not installed.

Schools and classes for studying Marxism-Leninism opened in Tibet. The CPC and the New Democratic Youth Union of China (that later turned into the Chinese YCL) also appeared. Also, the Cultural Association of Patriotic Youth and Women's Patriotic Federation of Lhasa (1953), and the Studying Committee for Representatives of Local Authorities in Gyantse (1956) were all created.¹⁷¹ Later, "patriotic federations" went on to appear in other cities of Tibet. In schools, the best students were enlisted into the young pioneers. The children of aristocrats willingly became young pioneers as well.¹⁷² The very first Cadres School was opened in January 1952 for Tibetans who served in the PLA.¹⁷³ They were to be converted into cadre employees. This school also taught the Tibetan language to the Chinese soldiers. It had a total of eight hundred students.

In January 1953, the Chinese conducted the first Party Conference of the Tibet Military District.¹⁷⁴ This was the first step towards the creation of the Communist Party in Tibet. Among those present were the Chinese Communists and the Tibetans who joined the Communist Party in Kham and Amdo. They worked as translators in the future TAR. The Conference discussed the achievements of Tibet over the previous two years and supported the national policy of Beijing.

Back in the summer of 1952, Chinese representatives in Lhasa offered to send a delegation of Tibetan officials and other people to China, so that they would witness first-hand how people lived there under the new regime. Delegates visited a number of cities in China and Inner Mongolia. Opinions were divided: some started saying that the Chinese propaganda leaflets were a lie.¹⁷⁵ Others, on the other hand, went to China and, having witnessed the "miracles" of technology, started to consider that country to be a "paradise on earth". Some started to put figurines of Mao on home altars.¹⁷⁶ The authorities continued to send new groups of merchants, clergy and young people into China. By mid-1950, more than a thousand people visited there. Many young Tibetans were sent to schools in Beijing, Chongqing and other Chinese cities.

171 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

172 Norbu, 1999, p. 126.

173 Goldstein, 2007, p. 309–310.

174 Shakya, 1999, p.118.

175 Andrugzang, 1973, p.33–35.

176 Norbu, 1999, p.126.

In 1959, in the Central Institute of Nationalities in Beijing there were nine hundred Tibetan students.¹⁷⁷ Most Tibetans were unhappy about sending their young people to China.¹⁷⁸ However, those who enrolled into this institution during the years 1952–1956, were received very well.^{178a} They were fed very well with Chinese food three times a day (each meal having four courses), had a temple opened for them to worship, had national Tibetan food delivered to them and were paid a good stipend. Even the two tier bunks were converted into one tier beds, so as not to desecrate the sacred objects which Tibetans wore around their neck. Chinese was the main language, since it was “the most revolutionary”. After Mao declared the campaign of “Let a hundred flowers bloom” in May – June of 1956, the Tibetan students of the Institute of Nationalities in Beijing started to put out banners condemning the Seventeen Point Agreement, to specify to the Chinese teachers that they distorted history when they taught that Tibet was always a part of China, etc.¹⁷⁹ By mid-1957, the “hundred flowers” Campaign ended sharply, as it turned out to be a trap. The “delinquent” students now stood for two hours on a bench and were criticized, all the while having to wear a “shameful cap” on their head (made of paper with words “local nationalism” written).

The Communist Party tried to take control over religious life in the country. On October 8, 1952, Mao declared that the CPC had adopted a policy of “protection of religion”.¹⁸⁰ In June 1953, the Chinese Buddhist Association, a council of which included twenty-nine Tibetans was established in Beijing. The Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama were made its honorary chairmen. In October 1956, the Tibetan branch of this association was set up in Lhasa. Following the dismissal of the first ministers, their ministerial post was abolished. This deprived the Dalai Lama of the Chief Judge’s functions, reducing his role to an ordinary head of a “local government”^{180a}. This violated points 4, 6 and 11 of the Agreement.

In September of 1954, the 1st session of the NPC started its work in Beijing. On September 20th, the Constitution of the PRC was adopted by a unanimous vote. The Dalai Lama, his family members, two of his mentors, three kalons, representatives of the largest monasteries, the Panchen Lama all took part in the session.¹⁸¹ The Dalai Lama recalled that he could not decline the invitation by Mao: no state in the world had shown support for the independence of Tibet, the Communists were free to do anything.¹⁸² He hoped that cooperation with China would facilitate the fate of his people. But the Constitution of 1954 only permitted

177 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

178 Ginsburgs and Mathos, 1964, p.95.

178a Norbu, 1999, p.130-140; Smith, 1996, p.371-372.

179 Shakya, 1999, p.164.

180 Ling, 1964, p.44.

180a Bogoslovsky, 1978.

181 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

182 Laird, 2006, p.321.

“regional autonomy”. The Dalai Lama could not participate in the development of this Constitution, as the discussion was in Chinese.¹⁸³

However, the Tibetan delegation did participate in meetings and the adoption of the Constitution. The Dalai Lama was elected Deputy Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee and the Panchen Lama as its member. In Beijing, the Dalai Lama met with Mao Zedong, Zhu De, Zhou Enlai, as well as with Soviet leaders, N.S. Khrushchev and N.A. Bulganin, and the Prime Minister of India J. Nehru.¹⁸⁴ The Chinese leaders emphasised their respect for the Tibetans, their religion and customs, and they promised to take all of their interests into account. They were received very well. The highest lamas and aristocrats were provided with personal transportation, the rest were taken together in cars and buses, spending money was given, they were well fed, had a tour of the country organized for their benefit. After the visit of the Dalai Lama, Mao was especially interested in his impression about the aid the USSR provided in the reconstruction of the north-east of China. On January 19, 1955, in Beijing, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama signed an agreement on settling the contentious issues between them: the distribution of taxes, labour conscription, expenditure on the army, etc.¹⁸⁵

The Dalai Lama started to prepare for the journey home. Before his departure, Mao Zedong said: “I understand you very well, but, of course, religion is a form of poison. It has two drawbacks: first, it inhibits the growth of the population and secondly, it inhibits the development of the country. Tibet and Mongolia have been poisoned by it”.¹⁸⁶ The only explanation for this confession is that Mao misinterpreted the interest of the Dalai Lama towards science and progress.¹⁸⁷ The saying of Mao was just a paraphrase of Karl Marx’s “religion is the opium of the people” (in Tibet, little was known about opium).

Nevertheless, on the whole, the Dalai Lama had enjoyed his trip. He noted the positive aspects of socialism, its similarity with religion.¹⁸⁸ The Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa on June 29, 1955. The people greeted him warmly. The monks were holding prayer flags and formed a long line, the Tibetan Army conducted a parade.¹⁸⁹

The representative of the Chinese Government in Tibet stated that during the 7th plenary session of the State Council on March 9, 1955, according to the instructions of Mao, with the changes that happened in Tibet, such a structure as the military-administrative committee was no longer needed.¹⁹⁰ Instead, it should have been replaced by the Preparatory Committee for the establishment of the Tibet

183 Shakya, 1999, p.123.

184 Shakabpa, 1988.

185 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

186 Dalai Lama, 2000, p.113.

187 Dalai Lama, 1992, p.101.

188 Goldstein, 2007.

189 Andrugzang, 1973, p.37.

190 Ling, 1964, p.107–108.

Autonomous Region (PC TAR), which would unite the local Tibetan Government, the *kanbu* Council of the Panchen Lama and the People's Liberation Committee of the Chamdo region. Accordingly, this PC was created in Beijing. On December 30, 1954, the Chinese Government was sent a report with the results of its work.

The "Resolution to Establish the PC TAR" was adopted on March 9, 1956 by the State Council of China. Accordingly, prior to the formation of TAR, this Committee was to carry out functions on the Government's authority and to report directly to the State Council of China.¹⁹¹ This was an important step toward changing the structure of authority in Tibet. And yes, it was supposed to remain unchanged according to the Seventeen Point Agreement.

The creation of the PC TAR was announced on the 1st of May, 1956. The meeting (by a unanimous decision, of course) sent a telegram to Mao Zedong. It, *inter alia*, stated: "Creating the PC TAR is a critical step for implementation of the regional autonomy by the Tibetan people, on the road to socialism <...> On this day of common joy, we understand even more deeply, that people of Tibet can achieve prosperity only under the wise leadership of the Communist Party, the Central People's Government and the beloved Chairman Mao Zedong".¹⁹² The telegram was sent at a time when a revolt was spreading among the people of Kham who were against this very "wise leadership". There will be more on this in the next chapter.

The PC TAR that was subordinate to the State Council of China, was to cover the Tibetan territories that were not included in the Chinese provinces by that time. The Dalai Lama became its Chairman, the Panchen Lama and Zhang Guohua his deputies, and Ngabo the executive secretary. At its first meeting, Marshal Chen Yi, the representative of Mao, made a speech, in which he declared the need for reforms against "backwardness", to raise the level of the Tibetan people up to the "headmost" plane of the Chinese nation.¹⁹³ Chen Yi stated that the development of Tibet and the friendship between Tibetans and Chinese would benefit from uniting all the ethnic Tibetan counties into the TAR region.¹⁹⁴ That is, he expressed about the same wish as Zhou Enlai a few years earlier (see above). Of course, no unification followed.

The creation of the PC TAR angered the Tibetans, and not just the elites. Their rallies adopted resolutions, which were then sent to Kashag and to Chinese officials. The Tibetans argued that the composition of the PC needs to be agreed with the Tibetan people, and that the Dalai Lama was not obliged to participate personally in the PC's work or to be present at rallies that were convened by the Chinese.¹⁹⁵

191 Valiakhmetov, 1958, p.36.

192 In: Valiakhmetov, 1958, p.35–36.

193 Dalai Lama, 1992, p.107.

194 Goldstein et al., 2004, p.206 — in: Fifth International Conference, 2008, p.102.

195 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.39–40.

Another popular demand was not to abolish Tibetan currency. Under pressure from the Chinese, the Dalai Lama and his Government issued a proclamation that banned the rallies, and they also requested that people refrain from anything that could damage relations between Tibet and China.

On the 26th September 1956, the NPC Standing Committee adopted a "Brief Resolution on Subject of the PC TAR". It made a number of significant changes to the "Resolution", limiting the rights of the Tibetan Government.¹⁹⁶ Thus, the Tibetan administration was divided into three parts: the Dalai Lama's Tibetan Government (in Lhasa), the Panchen Lama's Kanbu Council in Shigatse, and the People's Liberation Committee of the Chamdo district. This division weakened the Tibetan Government and strengthened the role of Beijing's emissaries. Practically all senior officials in Tibet were given posts at the Committee office.

The Committee became a facade made of Tibetan representatives, while the real power remained with the Chinese.¹⁹⁷ The 14th Dalai Lama said that he could not do anything in his role as Chairman. This meant his powers, according to points 4 and 6 of the Agreement, were violated. Instead, the Preparatory Committee gave way to the local CPC committee (whose members were all Chinese) as far as making decisions on important issues were concerned. The size of the Preparatory Committee expanded gradually, decreasing the power of the "local" Tibetan Government. By the end of September 1956, the PC TAR already comprised of fourteen departments and commissions.¹⁹⁸ The set goal was to create its offices in all prefectures and counties. By August 1957, these were set up in fifty counties and eight special districts of Tibet.¹⁹⁹ In practical terms, a parallel hierarchy of power was established. This violated Point 4 of the Agreement.

On 29th April 1954, in order to confirm its control over Tibet at an international level and also to improve its supply, Beijing signed an agreement on Trade and Relations between the Tibetan Region and India, which was based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence. Indian trading agencies in Yatung and Gyantse were to continue their business, with another new agency being installed in Gartok. Chinese trading agencies were opening in Delhi, Calcutta and Kalimpong. The rules of trade, pilgrimage and travel between India and Tibet were agreed upon. In the same year, India withdrew its remaining troops from Tibet. All postal, telegraph and telephone services that were owned by India in Tibet were handed over to China.

In September 1956, an exchange of notes took place between the Foreign Minister of Nepal and the Chinese Ambassador in that country. The two sides expressed a willingness to develop relations on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence and signed agreements on trade and communication. The

196 For more details see: Bogoslovsky, 1978, p.65–68.

197 Shakabpa, 1988.

198 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

199 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

following year, detachments of Nepalese armed guards were removed from Tibet. For the first time in history, only Chinese troops remained there.

In order to avoid resistance of Ü-Tsang residents, the Government of China sent them food caravans in 1951. Soldiers of the PLA helped farmers make metal picks, hoes, harrows, axes and plows.²⁰⁰ They organized four demonstration enterprises: carpenter and tailoring shops, a saddlery and a wool-knitting group. Coal mining started and an agro-technical station was created near Lhasa. On its experimental fields, Chinese soldiers began to grow wheat, potatoes, flax, soybeans, cucumbers, watermelons, peppers, aubergines, cotton, tea and oilseeds. Works on irrigation



A statue just opposite the Potala Palace showing the Tibetans working hand in hand with the Chinese, building a better nation (photo: Ray Kreisel)

and tree planting started. In 1951–1954, the Chinese Government issued loans to the sum of 1.7 million yuan to Tibetan farmers so they could buy tools, seeds and other goods. Live stock raisers were issued with 0.1 million yuan worth of loans. With help from the Chinese State, by 1954 farmers developed 3,300 hectares of new arable land. In 1953, training courses for agronomists and zoo technicians opened in Lhasa.²⁰¹ Thanks to new veterinary measures, in 1953 alone, more than nine hundred thousand head of cattle were inoculated and cured. Tibetans who were working for the Chinese were paid with silver coins, which also drew in the people.²⁰² To ease the food shortage, the Chinese created a grain supply Bureau. Its task was facilitated by roads, which were built forcibly.

Some people in Lhasa and Sakya became enthusiastic about the presence of the Chinese. According to Chinese media reports, people referred to the red stars on their military caps in the following way:²⁰³ “These soldiers are as kind as *bodhisattvas*. They have a red light shining from their heads”.

Of course, propaganda was not limited to the above. In December 1951, the political department of the 18th Army Corps issued a “Guide for the military

200 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

201 Valiakhmetov, 1958, p.17.

202 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.37.

203 In: Tibet: 1950–1967. 1968, p.491.

offensive”.²⁰⁴ It emphasized the need to respect the customs and the religion of Tibetans. It was forbidden to take money from them, or to use them for forced labour. Propaganda was permitted only with prior approval of the Party committee, but it was forbidden to talk about the class struggle, land reforms, and to campaign against “superstitions”. It was forbidden to spit, fish, hunt, etc in the vicinity of the monasteries.

Propaganda was conducted in the following way.²⁰⁵ Chinese propagandists came to a settlement without arms and gathered its inhabitants for a show in the open air. Being accompanied by a thunder of drums and cymbals, dancers, dressed in PLA uniforms, the soldiers portrayed how they help the poor to harvest, or free a girl from the clutches of an evil landlord. Then a Chinese officer climbed onto a box, and gave a long speech about how he and his men had been sent by Chairman Mao to help Tibet, and after having done that, they would return to China. Communism was not mentioned. Groups of soldiers travelled to villages and gathered big crowds by showing films about the PLA’s victories over the Kuomintang and the Japanese. Sometimes Tibetans asked why the Japanese never managed to win. Older Tibetans told me that in those days, people came up with a song, the essence of which was “do not give us the land, but leave us as we are”.

At that time, the Chinese did not try to improve the “class consciousness” of the peasants.²⁰⁶ They hoped that the common people would understand class interests and support the Communist Party in the future. In the meantime, they tried to put their solutions through traditional Tibetan authorities. A witness from Sakya recalled that in 1950–1959, ordinary Tibetans were used in construction, and nobody tried to impress new ideas upon them.²⁰⁷ Instead the Chinese attempted to inculcate the elites with Mao’s ideas: the aristocrats and the merchants. They hoped to make them a vanguard of the revolution, after which the illiterate masses would follow.

Some members of party leadership in Tibet came up with an idea to implement a split between the main hierarchs, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama.²⁰⁸ They felt that confidants of the Panchen Lama supported the reforms and that the Dalai Lama was surrounded by reactionaries. Therefore, the democratic reform was to be accelerated in the territories which were in the jurisdiction of the Panchen Lama, and it was even desirable to separate the territories administratively. Then, the peasantry would demand for such reforms on the Dalai Lama’s lands too. However, this approach did not get the support of Mao Zedong.

“After the resolution of implementing democratic reforms in Tibet was suggested and passed last year (1956) at the inaugural meeting of the preparatory committee

204 Goldstein, 2007, p.181–184.

205 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.36–37.

206 Shakya, 1999, p.134.

207 Norbu, 1999, p. 112–121.

208 Goldstein, 2007, p.430–438.

for introducing regional autonomy to Tibet, facts have proved that only a few of the upper-strata personages support it while the majority still harbor varying degrees of doubt and are actually against it; and that although a small portion of the masses enthusiastically demand reform, the large portion of the masses still lack such enthusiasm. On this account, conditions for the reform are still inadequate at present”.²⁰⁹ Therefore, the CPC Central Committee decided not to conduct reforms within the next five-year period (1958–1962), and hoped that circumstances would be more favourable in the future.

During the 1st and the 2nd of China’s five-year plans (1953–1957 and 1958–1962) the Government was developing the railway network in potentially hostile but geo-politically important regions: Qinghai, Yunnan, Guangxi, Fujian, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia and Gansu.²¹⁰ Railroads were built by mostly Chinese workers and the Tibetans were used for auxiliary operations. As early as November 27, 1954, traffic was flowing along the Sikang – Tibet Highway and the Qinghai – Tibet Highway.

In 1955, new roads that connected Lhasa – Shigatse, Shigatse – Gyantse, Gyantse – Yatung became operational. During the first years of operation tens of thousands of tons of goods were brought from China: equipment, machinery, manufactured goods, etc. In March 1955, at a meeting of the State Council, it was rightly pointed out that the main value of these highways was that they linked Tibet with inner China.²¹¹ After all, means of transportation are an essential condition of territorial control, especially so for control over the mountainous territory. Construction of further new roads was planned. These were built by the PLA, which also oversaw labour of Chinese political prisoners and attracted Tibetan labourers.²¹² Technical staff, maintenance crews and equipment were transported from the PRC. The Chinese attracted the Tibetans with good wages, they created a spirit of competition, arranged rallies with treats for all people, and expressed gratitude to those who worked well, especially the women.²¹³ Some people were given badges with pictures of Mao, and groups of people were presented with banners.

In 1952, a postal-telegraph service between Lhasa, Shigatse and the Chinese city of Chongqing was opened, then in 1953 telephone lines connected Lhasa with Beijing. In 1955, radio stations were set up in Lhasa, Shigatse and Chamdo, and in 1956, a hydro-electric power plant was built near Lhasa, and the first airport in Damshung was built. In 1959, ships began circulating between Lhasa and Tsethang, and a kiln for the manufacture of bricks, a cement factory, a car repair shop, and a sawmill were all opened in Tibet for the very first time.

209 In: Ling, 1964, p.206–207.

210 Tibet under the Rule of Communist China, 2001.

211 Ling, 1964, p.60.

212 Shakabpa, 1988.

213 Goldstein, 2007, p.417–418.

The State Trading Company of China established large-scale exports of Tibetan wool and medicinal herbs. During 1954 to 1955 alone, the volume of exports tripled and reached one million yuan, and this company became a monopoly in Tibetan trade with central China. As a result, the interests of Tibetan merchants, officials and monasteries that engaged in trade were all affected.²¹⁴ At the same time, the state reduced prices on imported teas, and raised prices on wool, which was purchased from the Tibetans. All wool, and not just wool of the highest quality that was previously purchased by Tibetan traders, was bought from then on. This further worsened the situation of the traders. This violated Points 7 and 10 of the Agreement. Although, in March of 1955, Ngabo noted that “a few cadres and officers and men of the People’s Liberation Army developed some minor shortcomings and committed some small misdemeanours in trade and transport work. But the shortcomings were immediately overcome and the mistakes corrected”.²¹⁵

New medical facilities were put in place in Lhasa, Shigatse, Chamdo and Gyantse.²¹⁶ In 1953–1955, more than four hundred Chinese doctors and nurses were sent to Tibet, and 170 Tibetan doctors were trained. By the end of 1958, there were eighteen new medical institutions in Tibet, and mobile teams of medics roamed the country. China opened secular schools in Tibet. In order to attract Tibetan children into the Chinese schools, picnics were arranged, silver coins were handed out, and children from poor families were given clothing.²¹⁷ But the majority wanted Tibetan schools. By 1957, there were already seventy-eight primary and one secondary school. Tibetan teachers were few in number. Therefore, ex-monks were attracted instead of them. Classes began with recitation of prayers. The monks taught children the basics of religion.²¹⁸

The 1951 seizure of Tibet by China is called “liberation”. Who was this “liberation” from? This is a riddle. They say, from the “imperialists” and the “serf owners”. There were six people who were “imperialists” in Tibet: three Britons, two Austrians and a Russian.²¹⁹ Foreigners appeared in Tibet before these times as well. The country was not controlled by them or anybody from abroad, but only by the legitimate Government in Lhasa. No one from abroad put forward claims to Tibet, except for China. Foreign aid that came into Tibet (from the UK and the U.S.) was not significant, in contrast to the CPC, which came to power with foreign help (the USSR) and continued to receive it in large quantities. The foreign aid that was provided to Tibet was done so

214 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

215 Ling, 1964, p.118.

216 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

217 Khetsun, 2008.

218 Tibet through the eyes of Tibetans, 1995, p.19.

219 Dalai Lama, 2000.

legally, as to a sovereign country. It was natural that, in the absence of other support, the Tibetan Government hoped for help from Western countries. This opened up possibilities of political pressure on China for the latter.

As we can see, one cannot speak about the “liberation” in a literal sense when applied to that context. But the “liberation” of the people from its own “feudal lords” was indeed taken upon by foreigners — the Chinese. This came about without prior questioning whether that was something that the Tibetans needed. Such “liberation” is known throughout history. Such an explanation was (and is) used to account for the aggression of Western imperialists and globalists.

Tibetans lived in a closed society for centuries and started to move their state onto the world stage at too late a time and in too inconsistent a fashion. Having a poor grasp of diplomacy, geo-politics and international relations in the mid-20th century, their leaders were unlikely to have guessed the consequences of signing the Agreement on “peaceful liberation”. Assuming autonomy to be a sort of relations with the former Qing Empire, they were unlikely to understand that their negotiating partners were planning the annexation of their country with a complete scrapping of traditional society. The Agreement was signed under duress and through use of counterfeit seals. Several of its provisions allowed for different interpretations. From the very beginning it was violated by the Chinese side.

Such agreements were not signed with other “liberated” territories of the PRC. The sheer fact of its signature indicates that Tibet was forced to abandon its right for self-determination. Apparently, Mao Zedong wanted to show the “voluntary” return of an “integral part of China” to the bosom of the PRC (that is to legitimize the intervention) to the world as well as avoid the costs of a military campaign in a remote mountainous region with an absence of good roads. In addition, the Chinese troops needed a respite after the capture of Chamdo.

At the same time, Mao realized that the Agreement and a contingent of troops were not sufficient to hold the territory. This also required a supply and communications infrastructure, the apparatus of loyal local staff. Time was needed to create such a system. In the report of the Working Conference on Tibet of the CPC Central Committee on February 10, 1954, the following was stated:²²⁰ “Tibet has become part of the great motherland. For the past two years, the patriotic forces among Tibetans have been increasing under the nurturance of our party’s organizations and entering troops. These forces are gradually playing an important, or even a decisive, role in Tibetan politics. However, the roads are not completed, we are not self-sufficient in our production, the Tibetan upper class still has many worries and concerns about us, and the gap between Tibetans and Han is still very deep. So we still have not gained a solid standing in Tibet. We have not reached an unconquerable status”.

220 Goldstein, 2007, p.439.

This was what caused the apprehensive attitude of the Party leadership, a policy for a "united front", and the delay of democratic reform in Central Tibet. The Tibetans did not know what this reform would imply. They lived, as always, without knowing the future. "Moving about in the darkness and shadows, occupying isolated places, or hiding behind screens would only attract suspicious attention. To lower an enemy's guard you must act in the open, hiding your true intentions under the guise of common everyday activities".²²¹ This is the meaning of the ancient Chinese stratagem "Fool the emperor to cross the sea". According to another stratagem, "Charm and ingratiate yourself to your enemy. When you have gained his trust, you move against him in secret".

Seeking to gain the Tibetans' trust, the Chinese authorities were able to find out that the reforms from within their society would not succeed. Territories which were subordinated to Lhasa, were necessarily subject to revolutionary destruction, and that was democratic reform. In other parts of Greater Tibet, Kham and Amdo, where the Communists "gained a solid standing", this had already started.

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CHAPTER 8

From the People's Uprising to the Cultural Revolution



As was mentioned above, the Chinese authorities tried to win over the “hearts and minds” of the Tibetan population. They promised all kinds of improvements and, initially, paid well. But the Tibetans of Kham (the Khampa) and Amdo (the Amdowa) were accustomed to a free life. Isolated clashes began as early as in 1949, shortly after the PLA's entrance.¹ At the same time there were cases of arrest and confiscation of goods from “foreign imperialists” that were brought in by Tibetan traders.² Construction of roads also caused discontent.³ People said that they wanted to live independently from China. In 1950–1954, there was an uprising in Gyelthang (south of Lithang) under the leadership of Aku Lemar; in Hormukha and Nangra (Amdo) under the leadership of chiefs (the *pons*) Choeje and Wangchen.⁴ A few thousand people took to arms. There were several battles. According to Tibetan figures, 631 Tibetans were killed or wounded, and the Chinese lost 1,140 people. Tibetan women took the places of their killed husbands. In 1951, Chinese troops came in with about seventy thousand soldiers. Following a series of battles, they captured Hormukha and Nangra.

The rebels fled to the mountains. For three years, the Chinese fought guerrilla attacks, censusing the population and running continuous searches throughout the territory.⁵ More Chinese reinforcements arrived. The guerrillas were defeated and dispersed, having lost another three hundred people. The Chinese lost at least five hundred people.⁶ Many of the guerrillas surrendered. The “struggle sessions” started to gather, with about ten people being shot after each one. Some of those who fled from Nangra managed to reach India, but most of the people who fled were killed or arrested en route. A few people remained in the villages: the blind, the crippled,

1 Norbu, 2003, p.613.

2 Andrugzang, 1973, p.11.

3 Klinov, 2000, p.318.

4 Tibet under the Chinese, 1976, p.14; Norbu, 2006.

5 Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960.

6 Tibet under the Chinese, 1976, p.14–21.

the elderly and children. In 1954, Choeje and Wangchen were placed under house arrest. Nothing has been heard of them since.

Initially the situation was such that while there was discontent among monks, tribal chiefs and feudal lords, some representatives of the “lower classes” voluntarily worked on road constructions. In 1953, Chinese Communists began destroying monasteries in Amdo.⁷ At the same time, Tibetans were being forced to build roads and provide pack animals for detachments of builders and the PLA for the first time, and the inhabitants of bordering villages became obliged to supply food to construction workers.⁸ These obligations extended to monasteries as well.

In China, the transition towards socialism was taking place in two stages: through democratic reform and socialist transformation. The reform was concerned with redistribution of land, the suppression of land-owners and counter-revolutionaries, and the start of class divisions and class struggles.⁹ By the mid-1950s, China had almost completed the first phase of this transition. In 1955–1956, an accelerated collectivization began, proclaimed by Mao. Mao believed that “national minorities” should follow the same path as the Han to keep up with them, and that implied full-scale democratic reform. Up to that point, the only exception to this ruling was the territory that was subordinate to Lhasa. Apparently, the “historical conditions” of the Tibetan lands in Chinese provinces were quite different because “reforms were already being demanded by the population”.

However, the real reason was different: it was about the effective control of the Chinese Government. After all, the territories under the “Committee of Liberation of Chamdo” also started to reform. In 1956, this territory was joined to the future Tibet Autonomous Region, and in August 1957, it was announced that reforms in Chamdo would move forward. But by that time the uprising in the district was already ablaze.

The democratic reform was not supported by the Tibetans.¹⁰ “The Tibetans saw the reforms first and foremost as an attack on their value system. Whether rich or poor, they were united in their beliefs in Buddhism and their support for the religious institutions, and could not envisage any reform that could mark the end of these religious institutions, which still formed the centre of their world view”.¹¹ In some areas, clergy constituted 11%–20% of the population. According to a secret report that was submitted by the Department of National Defence of Canada to its Government on October 6, 1950, even the peasants in Tibet were suspicious

7 Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960.

8 Klinov, 2000, p.318.

9 Smith, 1996, p.387.

10 Klinov, 2000, p.318.

11 Shakya, 1999, p.143.

of any doctrine that was able to disrupt the status quo.¹² “Their cultural heritage, handed down through the centuries, was – and is – extremely precious. A simple, peaceful people, contented with their lot, engrossed in religious ritual and taking delight in traditional forms of recreation, all they asked for was to be left alone in their isolated valleys and hilly plateaus”.¹³

This did not suit the Communists. Back in 1950, Deng Xiaoping stressed that the reform in territories of “minority nationalities” should be conducted by the elements of these very “minorities”.¹⁴ He pointed out that reform was necessary because without it, it would be impossible to get rid of “poverty and backwardness”. Nevertheless, it could not be conducted until the conditions had ripened. Thus, firstly the local cadres and the “patriotic strata of society” had to be established.¹⁵

The first Tibetan members of the CPC appeared in Ü-Tsang in the first half of the 1950s. On October 5, 1957, it was reported in Tibet that it already had more than five thousand revolutionary cadres, one thousand party members, more than two thousand members of the YCL, more than six thousand members of the Patriotic Youth Cultural Association and more than one thousand members of the Patriotic Women’s Association.¹⁶ According to Chinese statistics from another source, in 1952, the future Tibet Autonomous Region had 877 Communists, 14,830 Communists in 1965 (on the eve of the Cultural Revolution) — of which only 7,153 were from “national minorities” (including Tibetans), and in 1989 seventy thousand Communists with fifty six thousand from “minority nationalities”.¹⁷ Ts. Shakya suggests that a small number of Communists were also present in Eastern Tibet, and that this data may be stored in archives of the Sichuan Branch of the CPC. Indeed, initially, all Tibetan Communists were from Eastern Tibet. According to the official figures, in October 1954, the total number of Tibetan cadres (not just the Communists) in Qinghai comprised of more than fifteen hundred people.¹⁸

Old Tibetans have told me that most people in their country were against the power of the Chinese, and only a few cooperated with them. Most Tibetans were religious and perceived the Maoists as invading armed atheists. They were used to living in a closed society without foreigners, and wanted to carry on living like that. Almost all of them trusted their elite. Disagreements with the latter concerned only

12 Secret: CTC releases documents...

13 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.31.

14 Wang and Nyima 1997, p.232.

15 Klinov, 2000, p.318.

16 Ling, 1964, p.224.

17 Shakya, 1997.

18 Ling, 1964, p.86.

minor details. During those years, the Tibetans characteristically composed songs that mocked the Chinese authorities, but not the Tibetan feudal lords. This was an indication of the people's attitude.

Thus, the leftists are mistaken when they say that "the resistance had a rather narrow base within Tibet".¹⁹ In reality, it was the CPC that had the narrow base.

During his return from Beijing in the spring of 1955, the 14th Dalai Lama visited his native village of Taktser in Amdo. Democratic reform had already started there. When he started talking to the people, they all said that they were happy under the leadership of Mao and the Communist Party.²⁰ However, during private conversations, he learned that China had started to introduce collective farming, and peasants were resisting this move desperately. Tensions grew. The Chinese were becoming more assertive and suspicious, and ignored the feelings of the people. Right along the road through the border areas of Eastern Tibet, the Dalai Lama witnessed the growth of bitterness and hatred by the Tibetans towards the Chinese, because of the increase in cruelty of the Chinese.

Uprisings had not started in these areas yet, but they were already taking place elsewhere. At the end of 1955 and 1956, they engulfed the whole of Kham, and additional large army detachments were sent there.²¹ Violent battles broke out. To scare the Khampa, the Chinese began shelling and aerial bombing settlements and monasteries, and they initiated massive repressions. Tibetans called the Chinese soldiers "*tendra*", "the enemies of the faith", and the guerrilla Khampa were called "*tensung*", "defenders of the faith".²²

Lithang became a major epicentre of the revolt. The Communists arrived there in 1950.²³ They spent the next five years showing restraint, trying to persuade people to comply with their democratic reforms. In 1952, an intensive propaganda campaign was started. Residents were given lists of assets that they had to give up. Then they began to gather donations towards ensuring that the Americans would not drop the atomic bomb on the Chinese. Those who had no money, had to give up twenty-five livestock. In 1954–1955, the Chinese began to gather the poor and give them food, clothing and money. These poor people then had to walk round and tell everyone that the clergy exploited people. The rich were also damned. Finally, seeing that the propaganda was useless, the Chinese said: "The white path is the road to communism; the black path will lead to the destruction of all that you possess: your lives, property, religion, and social structures. Choose what you want". Many chose the so-called "black path".

19 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

20 Dalai Lama, 2000.

21 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

22 Butterfield, 1979.

23 The Question of Tibet, 1959, p.206; Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960, p.42–253.

In February 1956, the villagers, who participated in clashes with the Chinese, took refuge in the large Changtreng Sampheling Monastery. A plane appeared and scattered leaflets with calls for surrender. No reaction followed. Then the aircraft bombed the monastery, which had about three thousand people inside. Hundreds of people died.²⁴ Some of the remaining people surrendered to the Chinese, and others fled.

Having learnt this fact, the Tibetans went to defend the main monastery in Lihang.²⁵ This monastery, Ganden Thubchen Choekhorling, was founded in the 16th century by the 3rd Dalai Lama. It accommodated several thousand Tibetans. This was not just due to the revolt, but also the celebration of the Tibetan New Year, during which pilgrims went to the temples.

The Chinese besieged the monastery for a long time, and attempted to take it several times with infantry attacks and artillery shelling. In response, the rebels attacked Chinese military camps. The Chinese once again conducted bombings from the air. All people in the monastery were told to surrender. The besieged were led by young Sonam Wangyal, Yunru Pon. He died a hero's death, having shot a Chinese commander in full view of his soldiers.²⁶ This was during the second day of Tibetan New Year. The monastery was bombed from a plane that took off from the Chengdu air base in Sichuan. There is evidence that it was a twin-engine Il-28 bomber that was supplied by the Soviet Union.²⁷ The killed and wounded Tibetans were, according to one source, in their hundreds, and according to another source, in their thousands.

Punitive expeditions conducted intimidation operations. One lama was shot.²⁸ Lihang Monastery's abbot, Lama Khangsar, was hanged with his legs chained



Yunru Pon Sonam Wangyal (Norbu J. March winds...)

²⁴ Shakya, 1999, p.140.

²⁵ Garri, 2009.

²⁶ Norbu, J. March winds...

²⁷ Smith, 1996, p.410.

²⁸ Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960, p.42, 235.

together, a pole placed across his chest and arms, and his arms bound with wire. He was suspended by a heavy chain around his neck and hanged. Another monk, the prayer reciter, was stripped and had his thigh, chest and under armpits burned with a two-finger thick iron pin. This was repeated for three days, and between the “sessions” his wounds were treated by applications. A rally gathered, with two ex-abbots being publicly shot (but not to death). Then boiling water was poured over one and he was strangled. The other was stoned and hit over the head and shoulders with an axe. The crowd was told that they were exploiters of the people.

There is evidence of bombing not only of these two monasteries, but also of some others.²⁹ Bombing gave new impetus to the rebellion. Rebel ranks were being continuously replenished. Women joined guerrilla squads, some of them even became leaders. There were cases of daughters stepping up to replace their deceased mothers. As elsewhere, the PLA used the “waves” attack tactic where the place of the fallen was immediately taken up by new waves of soldiers.³⁰ As a result, Chinese casualties were considerable. Tibetans say that they were buried in their tens of thousands, although this seems to be an exaggeration. Some of the monasteries that were destroyed were Serta, Dalak Tengchen, Tekhor Tanko, Ba Chhoti and Markham Lo.³¹

People became the target of repressions. The Tibetans say that this caused the population of Lithang to be reduced by half. Only the women with children under thirteen years of age remained. In their search of guerrillas, the punitive squads broke into homes, killed dogs and sometimes children. Food was taken away and crops were destroyed, so as not to be left for the guerrillas. People began to starve. Some women with children threw themselves into the rivers, unable to endure the suffering.

The Khampa began arriving in Central Tibet. An eyewitness from the city of Sakya recalls that at first they referred to themselves as “pilgrims”, but in fact, some were refugees and others were guerrillas.³² When engaged in an open conversation, they advised local Tibetans to sell their property, take all the silver and go to India before it was too late. At first locals did not believe the stories of the refugees about what the Chinese were doing in Kham.

In Central Tibet, people also did not welcome the reforms. In February 1956, during the Monlam Festival, leaflets appeared in Lhasa with demands for the Chinese to leave Tibet, and similar petitions were also sent to the authorities. The

29 Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960; Message from the American Embassy in Karachi to the State Department, 06.09.1956, National Archives 793B.00/9-656 — in: Smith, 1996, p.410.

30 Norbu, 2006.

31 The Question of Tibet, 1959, p.37.

32 Norbu, 1999, p.145-146.

papers were signed by the name Mimang Tsongdu (People's Union), the same organization which the Chinese repressed in 1952.³³ It consisted of merchants and minor officials. The Union was led by an influential trader, Alu Chontse Tsering Dorje, and two officials. Financial support was provided by Kalon Surkhang Wangchen Gelek, with the support of the high lama Tsatul Rinpoche. The organization sponsored ritual offerings to the Dalai Lama, spoke out against the Chinese presence, and for the restoration of the Dalai Lama's rule, Tibetan currency and the army. Later Mimang Tsongdu created the "Welfare of the Poor" organisation, which helped not only the refugees but also the poor of Lhasa who were affected by rising prices. The organization provided them with care and medicines, and it demanded that the Government allow the poor to use water mills free of charge for making barley flour. It extended its activities outside of Lhasa and into Shigatse and in Gyantse.

Mao Zedong underestimated this activity. In Beijing, he told the Tibetan delegates, headed by Lhalu, that it was caused by economic difficulties, and that once these were over, the discontent would end too. Nevertheless, after Monlam Festival, Chinese authorities threatened Kashag with military action and demanded that it too cease the activities of Mimang Tsongdu, and to arrest its three leaders. The Chinese incriminated them with the Kuomintang and the U.S, but no supporting evidence was produced. One of them died in prison. This caused such strong dissent that on August 25, 1956 the Chinese decided to release the other two on the condition that they would not engage in campaigning.³⁴

The Chinese continued with democratic reform in Kham and Amdo. Forty thousand soldiers were transferred to the areas of the uprising.³⁵ In April 1956, the chiefs of Western Kham gathered in Chamdo to convince them to "demand" reforms.³⁶ The majority voted in favour of these reforms being postponed or cancelled altogether. The chiefs were dismissed. In April or May, some of them were gathered in Jomda (north-east of Chamdo), and surrounded by soldiers of the PLA they were told that reforms would begin immediately. The chiefs expressed their consent. But when the guards lessened their vigilance, they fled and joined the rebellion. The Nyarong uprising was led by Dorjee Yudon, the wife of a local chief, who was at the Dartsedo meeting at the time. The uprising broke out there, after the killing of women and the children of another official who was also away at that meeting.

Chinese authorities condemned and repressed the "serf owners" and "slave owners", large estates were confiscated, and their land was redistributed at the

33 Shakya, 1999, p.144–147.

34 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.40–41.

35 Andrugtsang, 1973.

36 Smith, 1996, p.407.

discretion of the Chinese. Some landowners were executed.³⁷ New taxes were imposed on homes, land, livestock and property of monasteries.³⁸ According to the refugees, the Chinese started demanding the public hand over silver under the pretext that money was needed for military purposes in Ü-Tsang.³⁹ The authorities needed silver coins to pay the residents there. People of Kham and Amdo, who did not have money, were forced to sell their livestock and grain because of this. In order to pay taxes, some had to sell their clothes and even their drinking cups.⁴⁰ Mass roundups of nomads were initiated. In the opinion of the Communists, nomadic life is barbarism.

The Chinese authorities held numerous rallies at which they explained the policy of the Central Government, denounced the rich peasants, landlords and lamas as enemies, and tried to get the “lower classes” to “criticise” them. According to Tibetan exiles, people were driven to these meetings by threats. Few poor people cooperated with the CPC with regard to conducting reforms. The majority of participants were forced to take part.⁴¹ The population was divided into “serf owners” and “slave owners” on the one hand, and “serfs” and “slaves” on the other.⁴² If “serfs” and “slaves” refused to participate in the reforms, the Chinese administration tried to force them into doing so or just conducted the reform regardless. Occasionally, peasants were offered financial assistance or a salary.

Schools of different types, centres of education, and associations all tried to recruit many young Tibetans.⁴³ The International Commission of Jurists gathered a lot of field reports (mostly from Amdo, less from Central Tibet) during the 1950s, on how Tibetans had their children taken from them and sent to China. Parents were forced to give up their children through persuasion, money and coercion. Children from thousands of families were forced to go to China where they were brought up in the spirit of struggle with their own traditions, in the spirit of struggle with independence of their motherland. There, they were not provided with a good education. This split their families and the society. Many never returned, with parents knowing nothing of their fate. Sometimes, the authorities forced marriages between Han men and Tibetan women.⁴⁴

The International Commission of Jurists also collected dozens of testimonies about how the Communists closed the Tibetan monasteries in the second half

37 Dalai Lama, 1992.

38 Dalai Lama, 1992.

39 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.37–38.

40 The Question of Tibet, 1959, p.38.

41 Klinov, 2000, p.319.

42 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

43 The Question of Tibet, 1959, p.53; Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960; Secret: CTC releases documents...

44 Klinov, 2000, p.319.

of the 1950s.⁴⁵ The destruction of religious images and temples, which were transformed into Chinese barracks and offices, the arrest of senior lamas, the forcing of monks to build roads and barracks, the forced marrying or living with women, the confiscation of their property, and the poor elderly people that were expelled from monasteries, were all common practices. Eyewitnesses recalled how wealthy people and peasants were driven from their homes, the clergy from the monasteries, their properties seized, and signs put on their doors: "Confiscated by the Party. No entry".⁴⁶

In 1954, women were herded to the front of a Chinese building near the Phuntsokling Monastery and monks were ordered to choose one of them.⁴⁷ They refused. Then one of the women from the poor class, who was well-fed and paid money by the Chinese, accused old lama Lobsang Choeden of having had intercourse with her. The lama denied the accusation. He was asked whether he preferred marriage or death. The Chinese made him kneel on broken stones for fifteen minutes, then on thorns for an hour. Then the Chinese, along with the woman, slapped him and pulled his ears, and pricked his head with sword-points. The lama was chained, the next day beaten again for two hours, and he died. In 1955, the Shiwa Monastery in Amdo was raided by armed Chinese who herded horses and Khampa women into the temple. The monks were ordered to take these women, but they refused. Scriptures were turned into mattresses, and used as toilet paper. When the lama named Trulku Sungrab began to protest, the Chinese cut off his arm above the elbow, stating that God should grow it back. The Chinese explained to the monks that there is no such thing as religion, the practice of which was a waste of one's time, and because of religion people did not work. In March 1955, the Chinese ordered the Nyarong (Amdo) monks to marry.⁴⁸ Those who refused went to prison, and twelve lamas were crucified by being nailed to crosses. For refusing to preach against religion, the lama named Gumi Tensing was pricked through the thigh with a pointed instrument, until he died. Many monks and peasants fled.

Typically, the lamas were tortured by the Chinese, because even the Tibetan Red activists usually refused to participate in such actions.⁴⁹ This was atheistic propaganda: its aim was to show the impossibility of summoning divine powers. For example, some lamas were tied to horses that dragged them along the ground until they died.⁵⁰ Monks were locked in their cells without food, and told to procure food through miracles. Food did not appear. This was declared as "proof" of atheism.⁵¹

45 Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960.

46 French, 2004.

47 Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960, p.38, 43–44.

48 Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960, p.43–44.

49 Smith, 1996, p.404.

50 Trikamdas, 4 June 1959.

51 Secret: CTC releases documents...

Communists forced the high lamas to translate and spread Marxist books and articles. Many monks were banished to settlements in China. In some monasteries, a tax on every statue, every religious image was imposed.⁵² All this was accompanied by propaganda. Instead of feudal morality its communist counterpart was instilled. Sometimes, prostitutes were brought to the temples so that they would bring out ancient knives, swords, etc., that were kept as offerings to deities.⁵³

In some cases poor Tibetans agreed to rob the wealthy and middle class of their property. During rallies in Amdo, “serf owners” were “unmasked”, and some were immediately shot and killed. In reality, many of them simply had servants or hired workers whom they employed. In the Doi area of Amdo, the Chinese gathered people for a public execution of a hundred of the wealthy citizens.⁵⁴ During the meeting, people of the poorer classes, who had been paid by the Chinese, went among the crowd and told them that if they did not agree to the execution of the wealthy people, they themselves would be shot. Thus, the question was decided in the affirmative. A former beggar, named Lhawang Thondup, became the local head.

Former local leader and the richest man in Dartsedo, Chakla Gyabo, lost all his property, and was put into prison with his wife and children.⁵⁵ Fourteen members of his family were thrown into a river. In Minyak, someone by the name of Wangtok was accused of opposing reforms. The reformists demanded gold, but he had none. Then the local people were herded to watch him being tortured. First, the accused was beaten with sticks and had boiling water poured onto his head. Then he was tied and slung up by his thumbs and big toes. Straw was burned under him and he was asked where his gold was. He could not answer. A red-hot copper nail was then hammered into his forehead, the nail being between 3/4 to 1 inch long. He was then carried into a truck and driven away.

In August 1956, the uprising spread amongst the Tibetans in Amdo. One nomad recalled:⁵⁶ “They wanted to seize our land. We had no choice but to fight. The same thing happened with other tribes in Amdo. After that, Amdo was ruined. <...> In our group, there were about forty of those who attacked the soldiers of the Liberation Army at the earliest opportunity. We were cruel because we knew that if we were to get caught, we would be shot immediately. There were also other groups in Amdo, mainly nomads and young women, who did the same thing. <...> I was wounded in the thigh, and a bullet went into my abdominal cavity, leaving a big hole. Warriors usually fought on an empty stomach, so that they would have

52 Secret: CTC releases documents...

53 *The Question of Tibet*, 1959, p.38.

54 *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic*, 1960, p.196

55 Samsara: personal testimony...

56 French, 2004, p.187–188.

a better chance of survival in case of an injury to their belly. My entrails started to fall out, so I shoved them back in and tightened my belt, trying to keep them inside. <...> My “brother”, my spiritual friend was able to put me across his horse, although I told him to leave me”.

In villages, women and children of families whose men went to the guerrillas were shot down with machine guns.⁵⁷ Women were often raped.

Communist torture methods and executions were much more sophisticated than those of feudal times. The International Commission of Jurists gathered a lot of testimonies on this subject. In addition to shooting and hanging, Tibetans were beheaded, beaten to death, drowned, burned, cut to pieces, buried in the ground, starved, suffocated, hanged (sometimes upside down), sliced open, tied to a horse's tail before making it gallop, cast out to be devoured by hungry dogs, and had their limbs cut off.⁵⁸ The killings were performed publicly. Whippings and executions were attended by family members, and little children were even forced to shoot their parents.⁵⁹ People were killed without a trial on mere suspicion for the sake of money or because of social status, and so on. Monks were killed using special methods. Before subjecting them to torture, it was common to try to humiliate them, especially the old and most respected ones. They were harnessed to ploughs, ridden like horses, beaten with a whip, etc. There is evidence that by June 1959, 250 monasteries were destroyed in Kham, and practically all of the high lamas were arrested or killed.

The 9th Panchen Lama wrote that, if the atrocities in Qinghai were put into a film, it would have shocked its audience.⁶⁰ For example, in Golok, many people were killed, their bodies were thrown from the mountain into a big ditch. Chinese soldiers ordered all the members of their families and their relatives to celebrate the destruction of the “rebels”. They were even forced to dance on the bodies of those killed. After that, they were all mowed down with machine guns and buried in the same place. In Amdo and Kham, people were shot in groups of ten to twenty. As a result, the population shrunk markedly. According to the Panchen Lama, the villages and towns of Qinghai each contained three to four thousand Tibetans. Of those, eight hundred to one thousand people were arrested, and about half died in custody. Most were innocent. In areas that were severely affected by the uprising, only women, children and the elderly remained, with the young to middle age men and authority figures almost all perished.⁶¹ In their fight against the Goloks, the PLA used twenty-eight Soviet MiG-15C jet

57 Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960, p. 87; Dalai Lama, 2000.

58 Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960; Dalai Lama, 1992, 2000; Courtois, S. et al. The Black Book...

59 Dalai Lama, 1992, 2000.

60 His Holiness the Panchen Lama...

61 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.67.

fighter-bombers, which were based in Chengdu.⁶² These aircraft were also used elsewhere in Tibet.

The Golok population decreased from 130,000 in 1956 to sixty thousand people in 1963.⁶³ In 1986, the Panchen Lama found only a small handful of people



The Soviet MiG-15 fighter belonged to the Chinese Air Force in Lhasa, April 2004 (Creative Common License / uploaded on 7 May 2008 by nathanialfreitas)

in Qinghai who were related to the uprising. Later, some ex-members of punitive squads served in the Tibet Military District and the Chengdu Military District. They confessed to the Panchen Lama that they should not have done what they did.⁶⁴

However, in those years, some were not averse to completely eliminating the insurgent nation. One of the Tibetans, who collaborated with the Maoists and then went into exile, reported that the Chinese colonel explained to him:⁶⁵ “We are to exterminate them all, even the women and children... if you crush the nits, there will be no more lice”. Another Tibetan, who had escaped from a Chinese prison and who knew the Chinese language, heard the Chinese soldiers frequently vow to completely eliminate the Khampa, for if at least two survived, they would organize sabotage and great destruction.⁶⁶

Director of the Agriculture Work Department of the Qinghai Committee of the CPC, Liu Zexi, without even noticing it, admitted that the people of Amdo did

62 Ardley, 2002, p.31.

63 China Spring, 1986, June, in: Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

64 His Holiness the Panchen Lama...

65 Norbu, J. March winds...

66 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.88–91.

not want the class struggle, and that it was instead fuelled by the Communists:⁶⁷ “In this violent class-struggle, after a campaign of propaganda and education was deeply carried out and after contrasting the old and new societies, the class-consciousness of the vast laboring herdsmen was rapidly promoted. After they perceived the reactionary essence of the feudalistic exploiting class, they were all greatly surprised and rose up with set teeth to accuse the exploiting class of their heinous crimes, and they voluntarily bound the counter-revolutionary elements and bad elements and handed them over to the government, asking for them to be punished”.

Not surprisingly, the repressions caused an effect opposite to the one that was sought. The “lower classes” in their majority expressed solidarity with the “upper classes”, as they were the most respected people in Tibetan society.⁶⁸

Contrary to the Marxist dogma, Communist actions that were aimed at creating a split in the nation, did not induce a class struggle, but consolidated the “oppressors” and the “oppressed”. At the same time, the gap between the Communist Party and the people continued to increase. This is still not understood by those who cite Maoist propaganda: “What upset the Tibetan lords and lamas in the early 1950s was that these latest Chinese were Communists. It would be only a matter of time, they feared, before the Communists started imposing their collectivist egalitarian schemes upon Tibet. The issue was joined in 1956–57, when armed Tibetan bands ambushed convoys of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army”.⁶⁹

Sometimes, Beijing criticized practices of Chinese cadres in Tibetan areas. They were criticized about irregularities in land reform, tax collection, the maintenance of land and livestock of monasteries, the inadequacy of the religion policy, cases of great Han chauvinism, and the lack of education of Tibetan cadres.⁷⁰ Some officials were punished. But the people did not want reform. Therefore, repression remained as the main means of carrying it through.

Such an approach did not contradict Mao Zedong’s ideas. “We must first understand what 'people' are and what their 'enemies' are. At this stage, the period of building socialism, the people include all classes, strata and community groups who agree with the cause of socialist construction, support it and participate in it; the enemies of the people are all those social forces and groups which resist the socialist revolution, who are hostile to the construction of socialism and who undermine it. <...> Eradication of counter-revolutionaries is a struggle, caused by contradictions between us and our enemies”.⁷¹ Therefore, all those who did not want socialism are not the people. The people are only those who follow Mao.

67 In: Tibet: 1950–1967. 1968, p.326.

68 Klinov, 2000, p.319.

69 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

70 Ling, 1964, p.192–194.

71 Mao, 1966, p.47–48, 51.

Consequently, a rebellion against the Maoists could not be a people's rebellion, as it could only be caused by "enemies", who had to be eradicated.

There were plans to step up democratic reforms in Central Tibet as well. On July 1, 1956, the Tibet Work Committee of the CPC headed by Zhang Jingwu and Zhang Guohua, proposed CC CPC to start the reform in the winter of 1956 to the spring of 1957, in a few places first, and then extending it to the entire region.⁷² A proposal was made to organize the public security police force, which was to have four to six thousand people, to increase the people's police and economic police to 2,400 people, to increase the number of Tibetan cadres to forty to sixty thousand, to enrol 20,000 to thirty thousand Tibetans into the CPC and thirty to fifty thousand into the Communist Youth League, and to send another six thousand Han cadres to Tibet.

The uprising put the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in a difficult position. They sympathized with the rebels, but had to advise them to lay down their arms and submit, since the Chinese forces were far superior. At the same time, the rebels were preparing for further combat and were aided by their countrymen in Lhasa. Chinese leaders were forced to reckon with the reality. They chose not to force events in Central Tibet.

On 20th September 1956, Zhang Guohua delivered a speech at the 8th Congress of the CPC, which reported on the five-year Chinese rule over the future TAR. The General noted that the "feudal and serf" system was present in Tibet, the lives of workers were difficult, and the economy was backward. According to him, in order for the reforms to succeed it was necessary that:⁷³ "1) the workers demanded changes, and representatives of the upper strata had sincere support for them; 2) a method of transformation based on the scientific examination of the social and economic status of Tibet was developed and agreed upon with representatives of all strata of the population; and 3) a certain number of national cadres were in place". The General believed that this would take a long time. He stressed the need to involve upper Tibetan society, and to provide religious freedom and protection of religion.

His opinion is very valuable. It shows that workers did not demand changes, the upper strata did not support them, and the way changes were conducted was neither designed for, nor agreed with, the people. The people showed such unity that even local supporters of the CPC were not enough to change the status quo.

As far as the guerrillas were concerned, there was an objective necessity to coordinate their actions. Gonpo Tashi Andrugtsang (1905–1964), a merchant from Lithang, attempted to make steps in that direction. He proved himself to be a brave and talented organizer and commander. Subsequently, he managed to escape to India, where he died from wounds he received during the battle at Dregung Mashung.

72 Dangdai zhongguo de Xizang, p.225 — in: Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

73 In: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.268–269.

In December 1956, Andrugtsang sent the guerrillas of South-Eastern Tibet the following message:⁷⁴ “For some time you people have been rebelling against the Red Chinese. The time has now arrived to muster all your courage and put your bravery to the test. I know you are prepared to risk your lives and exert all your strength to defend Tibet. I also know that the tremendous task that you have undertaken is a noble cause, and that you will have no regrets despite the ghastly atrocities committed by the enemy. In this hour of peril, I appeal to all people, including government servants, who value their freedom and religion, to unite in the common struggle against the Chinese. Messages are being sent to people in other parts of Tibet and in neighboring countries such as India, to explain that the Tibetans now have no alternative but to take up arms against the Chinese”. Isolated rebel detachments have started to unite.

At the end of 1956, the Communist Phuntsok Wangyal convened meetings with Kham's traders in Lhasa.⁷⁵ There he said that the reason for the war was Tibetan ignorance of the Chinese policy, and if they were to return home, the Chinese Government was ready to help them rebuild their businesses. Wangyal also tried to mislead the lamas about the situation in Kham. Andrugtsang refuted his statements, and in particular reminded them of the violation of the Seventeen Point Agreement by the Chinese.

Two thousand and five hundred years since the Buddha's Parinirvana was celebrated in India in November 1956. Following an invitation from the Indian Government, two Tibetan delegations arrived there: one was headed by the Dalai Lama and the other by the Panchen Lama. According to the American Consulate in Calcutta, the plane with the two hierarchs did not bear the Chinese flag, and was only adorned with the Indian flag and their personal flags. In India, the Dalai Lama ignored the instructions of the Chinese and made a speech, in which he said that small independent nations were being destroyed by their strong and large counterparts.⁷⁶

At the end of that year, the PLA launched an offensive against the rebels. Learning of this, the Dalai Lama wished to remain in India until the Tibet issue was resolved peacefully. Mao Zedong stated the following regarding this matter at the plenum of the CPC Central Committee on November 15, 1956:⁷⁷ “Our Working Committee and the troops in Tibet have to prepare, to build fortifications and to stock more food and water... Let them attack first, and then we will counter-attack and completely destroy the attackers. Why should I be sorry if one Dalai escapes? Add another nine to go with him... even if ten Dalais run away, I will still not be sorry”. However, after Nehru's advice to follow the Seventeen Point Agreement and assurances of Zhou Enlai (empowered by Mao Zedong's directives) that the reforms

74 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.42–43.

75 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.48–49.

76 Shakabpa, 1988.

77 Iliin, 1978.

would be postponed and would only start following a request from the Tibetans, the Dalai Lama decided to return.⁷⁸

On 27th February 1957, Mao said:⁷⁹ “According to the Agreement, consisting of seventeen articles, that had been negotiated between the Central Government and the local Government of Tibet, the reforms of their social system will certainly be implemented, but the decision on timing of reforms may be made only when most of the people of Tibet and their leaders recognize this to be possible; one must not be hasty with this”. Apparently, this statement became another argument for the Dalai Lama’s return. On April 1, 1957, he returned to Lhasa. In the summer of 1957, the PC TAR meeting was convened. The participants demanded an increase in the representation’s number of Tibetans to 90%, to dissolve several committees (including the economic, public safety and justice ones) and local administrations, and reduce the number of the stationed PLA forces.⁸⁰ Thus, the plan of administrative integration of Tibet into China had failed.

Meanwhile, big businessmen of Kham and Amdo were collecting money for the Grand Enthronement Ceremony, an offering to the guardian deities of Tibet for the granting of a long life and well-being to the Dalai Lama. But this activity also had another aim, which was the creation of the Chushi Gangdrug union that was later responsible for organizing an extensive guerrilla movement.⁸¹

Chushi Gangdrug is Tibetan for “Four Rivers and Six Mountain Ridges”. This is the traditional name for Kham and Amdo. The organizer of the Chushi Gangdrug was G.T. Andrugtsang. With him, chiefs from various areas of Eastern Tibet were involved in secret preparations.⁸² They asked the Dalai Lama to bestow the Kalachakra initiation and received his consent. Since the same request had been made by a group of Tibetans from Amdo previously, they decided to unite with the Chushi Gangdrug at the same time. Residents of Lhasa also joined in. The ceremony was held on July 4, 1957. It symbolized the enthronement of the 14th Dalai Lama as the ruler of the whole of Greater Tibet, and confirmation of faith in him as a supreme being. It was agreed that a similar ceremony would be held annually, during which the Dalai Lama would sit on his throne and have an audience with the people. The rest of the time, the throne would be kept in Potala.

In early 1958, Chinese authorities deported fifteen hundred Chinese traders (who had lived there for several years) from Central Tibet to China.⁸³ They were suspected of anti-communist sentiments and the transfer of information to the Tibetans. Along with them, several hundred Khampas were banished as well. The

78 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

79 Mao Zedong, On the question of the right solution...

80 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

81 Dalai Lama, 1992.

82 Brief introduction of Chushi Gangdruk...

83 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.55.



The Chushi Gangdrug guerrillas (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)

population considered this to be a sign that the authorities were going to force reform. Shortly after, Andrugtsang organized a meeting of twenty-three groups of guerrillas. Thus the regional resistance movement of Chushi Gangdrug was transformed into the national Tibetan movement, Tensung Danglang Magar (the Voluntary Force for the Defence of the Faith). They began to stock up on weapons and horses, and established a relationship with two officers of the Tibetan Army, and monks. So the Khampas put old feuds and enmity behind them, and united against the invaders.

The origin of the name of the movement is unclear. There are a few versions.⁸⁴ Avedon believes that the Volunteer Army was an alliance of Chushi Gangdrug with Mimang Tsonqdu. Andrugtsang called the reorganized movement Volunteer Freedom Fighters, apparently deriving the name from the title of this army. According to J. Norbu, this name replaced Chushi Gangdrug because in Lhoka, the movement was joined by the majority of the guerrillas from Kham.

Some Chinese did not support the actions of their Government. Indeed, the Han artillery colonel Cheng Hoching defected to the Tibetan division Hadang Dashi.⁸⁵ With him, he brought a few rifles and ammunition. This officer, who took a Tibetan name, fought on the side of the guerrillas for nine months, and then was smuggled into India, into the town of Mussoorie.

A large number of guerrillas gathered in the Lhoka Prefecture to the south of the Tsangpo River, where they were ousted by 150,000 Chinese troops in 1957. There they

⁸⁴ Ardley, 2002, p.31.

⁸⁵ Andrugtsang, 1973, p.60.

had easy access to India to escape to, and to procure supplies. On June 16, 1958, in the Lhodam Dham Dzong area, a meeting was held, and their forces were reviewed.⁸⁶ Four experienced people were chosen as higher commanders, five as liaison officers, another five as quartermasters. A secretariat and a department of finance were created. In total there were eighteen field commanders, and every group of ten guerrillas also had a commander. The tasks were divided, locations for intelligence gathering were established, the monasteries, estates and provincial *dzongs* (castles) for maintaining contact and providing assistance were identified.⁸⁷ The Twenty-seven Point Code of Conduct was adopted, and later expanded.

An important part of the Code was to protect the public from the criminal elements. Chinese propaganda emphasized that the guerrillas engaged in looting, and that there were quarrels between them.⁸⁸ In fact, they tried to identify groups which under the pretext of protecting the country, were looting the population. In areas where such robbers were known to operate, Andrugtsang sent teams of fifty to a hundred guerrillas with orders to arrest or destroy the bandits. In Kham, some 120 guerrillas deserted to act at their own discretion.⁸⁹ Most of them, having formed two gangs, became robbers. Andrugtsang committed four units of a hundred people against them. Leaders of the bandits were sentenced to death, gangs were disarmed and the loot was returned to its original owners.

The Chinese tried to use the gangs to create a split among the Tibetans. Marauders were to disguise themselves as freedom fighters during their raids on the general population, but at the same time to gather information about the real guerrillas. However, these activities were stymied from the outset. The Chinese had to abandon the plan. Nevertheless, in some places, a split in the population was created. For example, in Pala (Eastern Tibet), some of the nomads joined the rebels, but others refused.⁹⁰ Insurgents began to make punitive raids. In came the troops, and the rebels were defeated. Reforms began to be carried out, although gradually, and the confiscation and redistribution of land took place, but the creation of communes was postponed.

Under pressure from the Chinese, the Tibetan Government sent a letter to the Lhoka guerrillas with a request to cease military action, followed by a representative who was sent with the same request.⁹¹ The guerrillas refused. At the request of the Tibetan officials, they wrote to the Kashag, explaining their reasons for this. The representative returned to Lhasa.

86 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.62–66; National uprising...

87 Brief introduction of Chushi Gangdruk...

88 For example, Wang and Nyima, 1997, p.244.

89 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.91.

90 Goldstein, 1994, p.93.

91 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.69–70.



Members of the Volunteer Army of National Defence in Lhoka (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)

The first battle with the Chinese occurred in August 1958 near Nyemo Dukhak Samdo village.⁹² The Chinese blocked the road, dug in and, when the guerrillas showed up, opened fire with canons, machine guns and rifles. The Tibetans retreated in groups of ten and took up strategic positions on the tops of mountains and behind a river. After two days of shooting, with their ammunition having run out, the Tibetans took their swords and engaged in hand to hand combat. Two hundred Chinese were killed, and an unknown number were wounded. Forty Tibetans were killed, sixty-eight were wounded, and fifty of their horses and mules were lost also. The road was opened.

Abiding by the Seventeen Point Agreement, the Government of Tibet ignored a call from the CIA offering them request for formal assistance to the resistance. Thus, Andrugtsang lead a detachment to Shang Gaden Chokhor, which had a storage of weapons and ammunition belonging to the Government of Tibet.⁹³ Groups of fifty to one hundred people were sent to the surrounding areas to report on the movements of the Chinese troops. Andrugtsang later recollected that the storage guards surrendered, following long negotiations. They had orders from the Tibetan Government not to give up weapons to the guerrillas, but they sympathized with them.

The guerrillas were armed mainly with light weapons.⁹⁴ These were mainly British, German, Czechoslovakian and Soviet rifles from the Second World War. They had also seized some arms from the Chinese, some were acquired from the raid on the above-mentioned weapons storage facility, and some were bought at their own expense. The CIA delivered arms and money to Tibet by aircraft. In order to deceive the Chinese, the supplied weapons were not of American origin. Instead, the planes dropped a few poorly made bazookas and old British rifles that were used in India and Pakistan. The air-dropped weaponry tended to break and became almost useless. China's foreign arms were of much higher quality, and in much larger quantity. An American camp trained Tibetans in guerrilla warfare.

A series of new battles between the guerrillas and the PLA took place. The largest were in Uyug, Nyemo, Nyemo Shol, Nyemo Karkhang at the Kangsyung airfield, Kogche Pass, the Dikhung Dugong Monastery, in Jang Moishung, Rabten Gon, Chungpo Tenchen, and Po Tamo.⁹⁵ Near the city of Po Tamo that was built by the Chinese, there was a big battle that lasted for fifteen days. More than 550 soldiers were killed, with the guerrillas losing no more than twenty people, and nine were wounded. According to the memoirs of Andrugtsang, in three other battles the Chinese lost 176, seven hundred and two hundred, and the Tibetan

92 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.72–73.

93 Brief introduction of Chushi Gangdruk...

94 Dalai Lama, 1992, p.127.

95 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.70–91 and map.



Tibetan guerrillas check seized Chinese weapons (Andrugsang, 1973)

losses were smaller. The Tibetans seized weapons, ammunition, equipment, food and medicines. Chinese vehicles were burned because they were of no use.

As a result, Lhoka Prefecture was liberated from the Chinese, with the exception of Tsethang, which was protected by a two thousand man garrison entrenched in a network of underground tunnels.⁹⁶ Later, guerrilla detachments were forced to retreat with battles to the north and the north-east, as the roads to the south were blocked by the Chinese Army. Large losses were inflicted on the guerrillas by bombing and shelling from the air. The Chinese were well informed about their strength and location,⁹⁷ and operated even more successfully in Kham and Amdo.

Meanwhile, the number of refugees in Ü-Tsang was growing rapidly. There is evidence that by the end of 1957 the influx of refugees from Kham to Ü-Tsang included fifteen thousand families.⁹⁸ This was due to the fact that since the summer of 1957, the CPC mobilized “the masses throughout the country to fight against right-wing bourgeois elements”.⁹⁹ And in 1958, China announced the course of the Great Leap Forward. This course (which is now known to have failed) implied a radical reform in all spheres, in order to build communism quickly. The most important

96 Brief introduction of Chushi Gangdruk...

97 Andrugsang, 1973, p.92.

98 Dunham, 2004, p.256.

99 Xu, 1958, p.24.

prerequisite for the Great Leap Forward was technical and cultural revolution, such as the elimination of illiteracy, and cultural work with the masses.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, it was projected that, in fifteen years, China would catch up and overtake England in terms of the main types of industrial products, but the CPC urged even faster achievement of this: “Several years of hard work, ten thousand years of happiness!” The conducting of the democratic reform in Kham and Amdo adopted a more radical approach still.

The Chinese intimidated the Tibetans, many of whom had not seen modern weapons before. For example, a former PLA pilot recalled:¹⁰¹ “In the summer of 1958, Western China experienced instability. <...> From the beginning we tried to implement the party’s minorities policy, carrying out thorough work to the best of our ability in order to impel them. But repeated efforts had little effect. <...> At that time, we discovered a few top people in the vicinity of Xining — lamas, living Buddhas, nobles, headmen, etc. — were getting ready to launch a violent attack. One afternoon, the PLA unit stationed there rounded roughly a hundred of them up in three military trucks and, using a reinforced battalion, drove them to the Xining airport under the pretext of taking them to “attend” an air show. <...> That day, we were standing about fifty meters from the southern end of the runway with twenty barrels of gasoline filled to the brim, arranged in a target with a radius of ten meters or so. After the Tibetan leaders arrived, they were taken to the center of the airport to “watch the battle”. First two Lavochkin La-11s from the Air Force’s 26th Division flew up to one thousand meters, then turned around. When they were roughly two thousand meters away from the runway, they began a fierce dive while strafing the oil barrels with their machine guns. All you saw was the tongues of fire coming from the planes’ guns and suddenly the oil barrels exploded into the sky with a vicious roar. The La-11s each took turns flying around the airport and spraying the ground with bullets, then they landed to make way for two Du-2 bombers,” which accurately hit their targets with 250-kilogram bombs. This sight frightened the Tibetans, who had never seen anything like it, to such an extent that they immediately expressed their trust towards the PLA, and some started to chant Maoist slogans.

According to secret Chinese documents, from 1952 to 1958, their army had suppressed 996 rebellions in Kanlho Prefecture (Gansu Province) alone, destroying ten thousand guerrillas in the process.¹⁰² In August 1958, in Kanlho, farmers and herdsmen of different nationalities quickly raised “their class consciousness”.¹⁰³ They started “a fierce struggle against the counter-revolutionaries wearing the cloak of religion, reactionary elements and wicked elements in religious circles, feudal prerogatives, and the exploitation in monasteries and various unlawful activities”.

100 Shcherbakov, 1958, p.9–15.

101 Jiang, D. Popular history...

102 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

103 Ling, 1964, p.248–251.

This struggle was aimed at completely scrapping old traditions, even ones relating to preserving the environment, for example, against bans on digging mines and collecting plants on the sacred mountains. Massive “struggle sessions” were organized where people from the highest circles were accused of “crimes”, and they “exposed the ugly truth about the so-called living Buddhas”. The accusers, having “smashed the chains around their necks”, swore that “Chairman Mao is like our father, fair and reasonable”. By November 1958, reforms were in full swing in Kanlho.¹⁰⁴ Herdsmen communes were created everywhere. The “minorities” were already represented by 1,500 cadres, 1,200 Communists, 2,200 Youth League members and twenty-six primary Party organizations. They served as the driving force behind anti-traditionalism. By November, almost all the herdsmen of Amdo were put into communes.

By the end of 1958, reforms were also fully conducted in Sichuan. As was noted by the Deputy Governor of the Province, by the autumn of 1958, reforms were victoriously completed for 90% of the Tibetan population of Sichuan, and were planned to be completed by the end of the year in the Prefecture of Kardze.¹⁰⁵ According to the Deputy Governor, society could not be divided along class lines without reforms. Reforms were the “violent, sharp and most complicated class struggle”. The revolution was particularly needed for “backward” people: Tibetans and Hui (Chinese Muslims). After they quickly underwent the next socialist reforms, they would jump straight out of slavery into socialism.

Now, apart from Sichuan and Qinghai, uprisings began in nomadic areas of Southern Gansu. During the punitive raids on the steppes of Amdo, the PLA cavalry was widely used. In some places almost no male population remained.¹⁰⁶ According to an eyewitness report, most of the inhabitants of the Mongolian area of Sokpo to the east of Machu were killed. Religion was destroyed above all other priorities. There were cases where monks were gathered in temple courtyards and shot with machine guns. The great Labrang Tashikyil Monastery was closed and devastated, despite not being involved in the uprising. Two thousand out of three thousand monks were arrested, and six hundred of them were sent to prison camps in Xinjiang.

In 1958, the Chinese demanded that monks of the Nangsang Monastery (Ba) get married.^{106a} Some monks fled, and some were killed. Just above the monastery, there was a hermitage with images of protecting deities, where Derkong Chozey, a monk, read prayers. The Chinese came and told him not to stay there saying prayers but to get married and go to work. He refused. Then they removed all metal religious items, broke all the clay ones, burned the prayer books, and shot the monk with a machine gun in front of a crowd.

104 Ling, 1964, p.322, 332.

105 In: Tibet: 1950–1967. 1968, p.322–323.

106 Smith, 1996, p. 442–443.

106a Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960, p.43-44.

The Chinese also came to the Dzogchen and Shechen Monasteries in Kardze, where they took the abbots as hostages and gathered a rally.¹⁰⁷ The monks were told that they had to give up their vows and marry. During the two months that followed, they were forced to do labour and “criticize” each other. Sacred images were thrown to the ground and, at gunpoint, the monks were forced to trample on them. Finally, they demanded that the monks participate in a “struggle session” against the abbots and lamas. This led to an uprising. All the Chinese were killed along with about fifty monks. Those who survived joined the guerrillas. The Dzogchen Monastery (founded in 1675) was destroyed. It was one of the six main monasteries of the Nyingma sect.

The Chinese communists took to immoral propaganda in the press. In November 1958, Kardze, Dartsedo and Xining newspapers that were published in Tibetan contained serious attacks on religion, and the Buddha was declared a reactionary.¹⁰⁸ For example, Karze Nilare Sargyucer (Kardze Daily) of 18th of November 1958, stated: “The monasteries always conspire with the feudal lords and dairy owners, some of them even with the imperialists and Kuomintang reactionaries. They (the monasteries) made attempts to set up a provincial government so as to divide the motherland. <...> There are 390 monasteries in Karze District which are engaged in lawlessness and sabotage. All the monasteries are reactionaries under religious guise. They are all instruments of exploitation, the stronghold of aristocratic feudal lords who stand in the way of progressive socialistic production, and they are the center of rebellions against the reform. If they (the monasteries) are completely destroyed, then the aristocratic feudal oppression and exploitation can be destroyed”.¹⁰⁹

On November 22, there appeared a long article entitled “The Black Wickedness of the Deceiving Reactionaries Belonging to Religious Establishments is Quite Intolerable”. The tone was set by using phrases like: “These reactionary lamas, wearing the cloaks of religion are more deadly poisonous than poisonous snakes, more ferocious than wild animals”. Further, in the Maoist tradition, it was followed by an excursion into history: allegedly, the kingdom of the Buddha’s father led wars of aggression against neighbouring countries, that during the Buddha’s reign his subordinates turned against him, and after defeat he went into a forest and began to preach pessimism and laziness to reduce the courage of the people and restore his power over them.¹¹⁰ As usual, the Maoist propaganda declared lies to be facts that were clearly recorded in history. This was followed by a standard set of charges against the church, with accusations of exploitation, wealth, superstitions etc. The source of these lies was disclosed in the final phrase: “The god I believe is Communism”.

107 Kolas and Thowsen, 2005, p.47.

108 Shakabpa, 1988.

109 The Question of Tibet, 1959, p.41–43.

110 Trikamdas, 5 June 1959; The Question of Tibet, 1959, p.43; English translation is present in the book: Tibet and the Chinese People’s Republic, 1960, p.21, 59–63.

Meanwhile, by the end of 1958, an army of eighty thousand freedom fighters already controlled all of the districts of South Tibet as well as its Eastern part. Volunteers were gathering in Drigungthang.¹¹¹ They were able to organize attacks against the PLA on a broad front in Kham, as well as in Western and Northern Tibet. The news about the defeat of the Chinese was distributed in the form of flyers in Lhasa. The Chinese Government demanded Kashag's help to crush the rebellion with military force. But the Tibetan Government was split and could not come to a decision.¹¹² Its officials were afraid to entrust their opinions to each other.

In January 1959, it was announced that Tibetan cadres would be sent to China to study people's communes. This was a preparation for democratic reform.

"The great monasteries" were discontented with repressions against the numerous "filial" monasteries in Kham and Amdo.¹¹³ On February 16, one of the Khampa leaders demanded that the Dalai Lama and the Kashag support the uprising. However, the Tibetan Government was not strong enough and, not wanting to be in conflict with Beijing, rejected this demand and banned the Tibetan Army from supporting the insurgents. Many people from Eastern Tibet resented this.¹¹⁴ However, Lhasa had not taken any real steps to help Beijing.¹¹⁵

An increasing number of Tibetans joined the rebels. In the beginning of 1959, the Khampa detachments attacked the three thousand strong Chinese garrison in Tsethang (200 km south of Lhasa) and captured the town.¹¹⁶ By the end of February 1959, the guerrillas of Lhoka decided to go to Lhasa.¹¹⁷ Convoys of five hundred people went towards the capital with food, equipment and ammunition. The advance was slow. Before reaching Lhasa, they learned from an Indian radio broadcast about an uprising in the city. However, they only found out about the flight of the Dalai Lama in April, after his arrival to India.

On January 22, 1959, Mao Zedong gave the following instructions:¹¹⁸ "In the Tibetan area over the next several years, the enemy side and our side will compete for the (support of the) masses and test the ability of the armed forces. After several years—for example, three to four years, or five to six years, or seven to eight years—it is inevitable that a great showdown will occur. Only then can the problems be thoroughly resolved. Initially, the military forces deployed by the Tibetan rulers were quite weak, but now they command a rebel force of ten thousand whose combat spirit is relatively high. This is a dangerous enemy for us. But this is not

111 Norbu, J. *March winds...*

112 Shakya, 1999, p.185.

113 Bogoslovsky, 1976, p.263.

114 Shakya, 1999, p.488.

115 Klinov, 2000.

116 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

117 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.95.

118 In: Jian, Ch. *The Tibetan rebellion...*

necessarily a bad thing; rather, it could be a good thing because it enables (us) to resolve the problem through war”.

Mao watched as the rebellion grew, and always commented on it in about the same way, for example:¹¹⁹ “Rebellions like these are extremely favorable for us because they will benefit us in helping to train our troops, train the people, and provide a sufficient reason to crush the rebellion and carry out comprehensive reforms in the future”.

In March 1959, in Eastern Tibet, twenty-three guerrilla detachments were in action, and in Southern Tibet sixteen. There were possibly one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand freedom fighters in total.¹²⁰ According to Kuomintang data, the PLA losses (both killed and wounded) after battles with the Khampa amounted to sixty-five thousand to seventy-five thousand.¹²¹

During the Monlam Festival, which took place at the beginning of March 1959, tens of thousands of refugees joined numerous pilgrims, as well as groups of armed insurgents in Lhasa. According to some reports, up to one hundred thousand people gathered. The situation was becoming increasingly tense. Observers from the Chinese military were on the roofs of some of the houses. Rumours were spread among the Tibetans that the Dalai Lama was going to be forcibly taken away to Beijing for the NPC session, which opened in April. The rumours were supported by the fact that in March, Beijing announced the impending arrival of the Dalai Lama, though his consent was not yet announced.¹²² And then suddenly, the Chinese invited the Dalai Lama to the headquarters of the military district for a theatre performance to be played on March 10. His head of security was told that the hierarch had to come unaccompanied.¹²³ This violated the protocol and spoke in favour of kidnapping plans. Most Tibetan cadres later claimed that they knew nothing about the invitation to the Dalai Lama until the 9th of March, but Chinese sources claim that the Dalai Lama was invited on March 7th.¹²⁴ According to these sources, neither the CPC officials, nor the PLA commanders in Lhasa knew that this invitation would cause an uprising.

Nevertheless, Tenpa Soepa, a former official of the Tibetan Government who was in Norbulingka during those days, told me that people thought this invitation to be hasty: after all, such invitations were usually sent in advance, usually approximately a month before an event. Hence suspicions were raised. There were cases when Chinese commanders sent similar invitations to religious leaders to attend celebrations, and then these leaders disappeared. Several senior lamas were killed in such way: Sharkelden Gyatso and Konchok Lhundup in Amdo, famous

119 In: Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

120 Patterson, 1965 — in: Bogoslovsky, 1978.

121 Shakya, 1999, p.489.

122 Dalai Lama, 2000.

123 Shakabpa, 1988

124 Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

lama Pandita Shi Chen in Kham, with another lama Katok Situ being arrested.¹²⁵ According to Tenpa Soepa, suspicions were intensified by two incidents that occurred earlier. In 1958, a Chinese man was arrested when he tried to sneak a bomb in while visiting the Dalai Lama. In January 1959, another Chinese was caught when trying to smuggle in a pistol.

On March 9, to prevent the capture of the Dalai Lama, a crowd of Tibetans began to gather at the Norbulingka Palace. According to some sources, about ten thousand people gathered,¹²⁶ and other sources claim thirty thousand gathered.¹²⁷ People were armed mainly with sticks and knives, but some had



A crowd of Tibetans at Norbulingka, March 10, 1959 (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)

125 The Question of Tibet, 1959, p.13.

126 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2004.

127 Shakabpa, 1988.

firearms.¹²⁸ Some Khampa guerrillas even brought machine guns and mortars. A detachment of Tibetan soldiers changed their Chinese uniforms for Tibetan ones. The soldiers stated that they were on the side of the Dalai Lama and their homeland. The participants held posters for Tibetan independence and the expulsion of the Chinese.¹²⁹ Representatives of the three “Great Monasteries” urged the Dalai Lama not to leave the palace, not to participate in meetings with the Han and, after the proclamation of independence of Tibet, to elect the spiritual and civil administration officials, representatives of “the Great Monasteries”, the army and people, in order to discuss problems that were being faced.¹³⁰ The rebels sent two telegrams to their compatriots in Kalimpong, India. They reported an uprising against the “Red Communist Party of the Han people”, and the restoration of Tibetan independence. The rebels asked for India’s assistance and the dispatch of UN observers. Tibetans, living in India, tried to persuade the authorities there to intervene. The only immediate effect was wide publicity of the Tibetan uprising in Indian newspapers.

On the morning of March 10, some members of the family of the Dalai Lama, both of his teachers, ministers and some religious leaders and aristocrats arrived at the headquarters following an invitation.¹³¹ They tried to peacefully resolve the conflict and explain that the Dalai Lama could not attend because of the demonstrations held by the “uneducated masses”. It turned out that the Chinese were not prepared for an uprising in Lhasa, and the same applied to the Tibetan aristocrats,¹³² for whose benefit a magnificent reception was organized at the headquarters. At the time, the crowd that gathered around Norbulingka elected representatives and a Committee on Freedom made up of seventy people. They were supported by leaders of the three “Great Monasteries”, dozens of lower-level officials, officers of the Dalai Lama’s guards, and some Tibetan soldiers. The Committee declared the Seventeen Point Agreement to be invalid, since it was signed by the “traitor Ngabo Ngawang Jigme” and was violated by the Chinese.¹³³ The Committee made a declaration demanding immediate Chinese withdrawal from Tibet. On March 10, one of the ministers was beaten by a crowd near Norbulingka, and spent the following days in hospital.

On March 12, the ministers, having left the headquarters for Norbulingka, participated in a meeting with the insurgents. They tried to persuade their leaders to stop the demonstrations. As a result, the ministers were placed under house arrest.

128 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.96.

129 Jiang, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

130 For text see: Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.187–190.

131 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

132 Shakya, 1999, p.194.

133 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

The Chinese garrison in Lhasa was much smaller than the rebels' forces, and had about one thousand people. But it was much better armed, and had the PLA behind it. Therefore, both sides adopted a waiting attitude. The acting Representative of the Chinese Government, General Tan Guansen and the Dalai Lama exchanged letters during the period from 10th to 16th of March. Judging by their content, the General tried to neutralize the Tibetan leaders, to thwart the support of the rebels, and the Dalai Lama tried to settle the matter peacefully.¹³⁴

The fear of insurgents caused six hundred to seven hundred Tibetans to take refuge in the Preparatory Committee of Tibet Autonomous Region and in the quarters of the PLA in Lhasa.¹³⁵ They helped the Chinese to defend these institutions. According to the same source, the Chinese were supported by a number of Tibetans from the higher strata. Hence, we cannot say that all "exploiters" revolted. Society did not divide along class lines.

At this time, Mao Zedong was not in Beijing. He was conducting an inspection tour of Wuhan. The primary responsibility for resolving the crisis was taken over by Liu Shaoqi. On the evening of March 11, he had a meeting with the CPC leaders Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Peng Zheng, Peng Dehuai, Chen Yi, Yang Shankun and Xu Bin.¹³⁶ They considered the crisis as not much of a danger, but rather as an opportunity to identify reactionary elements and create the conditions for reform that were already so delayed. According to Chinese data, they hoped that the PLA would not engage so much in punitive actions, but would enhance control and combat readiness.

The Dalai Lama's peacemaking efforts were not successful. The Tibetan Government did not control the situation. There were cases of shops being looted in the city. The rebels tried to organize rallies and demonstrations in other parts of Tibet in order to get help from there, and they created fortifications on the road between Lhasa and the airport. They appealed to all missions in India and Nepal with a request to inform the whole world about events in Tibet.¹³⁷ On March 12, in Lhasa, thousands of women took part in the protests. Subsequently, two women leaders were executed in prison by the Chinese.¹³⁸

On 12th March 1959, in Beijing, a second meeting of the leaders of the CPC took place.¹³⁹ They again declared that the PLA should keep defending and not be the first to open fire. It was decided to bring in reinforcements. Mao approved these decisions. He pointed out that there was no need to delay the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, and that he must be allowed to go to India. The Chinese took a very

134 For text see: Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.30–35.

135 Wang and Nyima, 1997.

136 Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

137 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

138 Norbu, J. March winds...

139 Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

short time to concentrate large forces around Lhasa, which included tanks and artillery. On the morning of March 14, Tenpa Soepa saw a convoy of military trucks with machine guns being followed by tanks.¹⁴⁰ Convoys were headed to the Chinese military camp to the east of Norbulingka. The Chinese sent agents to the monasteries where monks were creating militia units. They said that the residents of Lhasa captured the Chinese camp and that the monks had to remain in the monasteries.¹⁴¹

The State Oracle of Tibet advised the Dalai Lama to flee from the country. On the night of March 17, 1959, The Dalai Lama, his mother, brother, sister, teachers, four ministers, officials and bodyguards secretly left Lhasa at night, and they headed to India in small groups. Upon reaching the southern coast of Tsangpo, the Dalai Lama and his companions were placed under the protection of the guerrillas.¹⁴² The flight of the Dalai Lama gave rise to absurd stories. One of them was that the CIA, by extrasensory means, transferred instructions to the oracle, specifying the exact path of escape. The reality, however, was more prosaic. Two Tibetans, who were trained in the CIA camp, had a radio transmitter. However, as was stated by the Dalai Lama himself, the CIA was not involved directly in his escape, and the oracle had no connection with the organization. The CIA, through its residency in Calcutta, learned of the Dalai Lama's escape only on the 19th of March. In a couple of days, the two Tibetans mentioned above caught up with the fugitives and started sending daily messages to the CIA.¹⁴³

Beijing hosted a meeting of the Politburo of the CPC on March 17. Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping pointed out that, because the upper strata of Tibetan society participated in the uprising, there was no other choice but to begin reforms, and be ready to subdue the uprising.¹⁴⁴ The same day, the Chinese shelled Norbulingka in violation of official instructions from the Politburo, one of the low ranked officers from a transport station (to the north of Norbulingka) had lost his nerve. He ordered people to fire at the rebels who attacked the station.

Meanwhile in Lhasa, the rebels mobilized men aged from eighteen to sixty years.¹⁴⁵ They issued a manifesto:¹⁴⁶ "Since the Communist Party wanted to extinguish our religion and our nation, the whole of the people of our snowy region who eat *tsampa* and chant *mani*¹⁴⁷ must unite, take up our weapons and strive for independence, in order to protect our own religion and our own nation".

140 Tenpa Soepa, 2008, p.21.

141 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.52.

142 Shakabpa, 1988.

143 Liu, M. When heaven shed blood...

144 Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

145 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.5.

146 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.4–5.

147 That means all Tibetans. "Mani" – a reduction of the most popular mantra in Tibet, the "Om mani peme hung".

The uprising was coordinated by the Tsongdu Assembly, which consisted of about three hundred members. But soon the power was taken by the monk-official Kenchung Lobsang Tsewang and the first commander of the new Tibetan Army, Dasang Dodul Tsarong, who was already an old man.¹⁴⁸ He arrived a few months before, wanting to protect the Dalai Lama. After the uprising was suppressed he surrendered and died in prison in Lhasa.

The insurgents distributed the few remaining units of the Tibetan Army amongst strategic positions across the city.¹⁴⁹ Separate detachments controlled Norbulingka, Shol, Potala, Chakpori, as well as areas of Jokhang, Lubu and Ramoche. According to Chinese sources, on the night of March 19, the rebels attacked the Chinese headquarters in Lhasa,¹⁵⁰ and the Working Committee of the CPC Tibet Autonomous Region and other institutions, but they were repulsed. At 2 am, on March 20, having discovered the disappearance of the Dalai Lama, the Chinese began shelling Norbulingka.¹⁵¹ The Tibetans who were there responded with rifle fire.¹⁵² By the end of the day, the Chinese had entered the semi-destroyed palace complex and began to inspect bodies, trying to identify the Dalai Lama. The two hundred to three hundred Tibetan survivors were captured.

On the morning of March 20, the CPC leadership convened another meeting on Tibet. It decided to send additional troops there. At 9:30 pm, the CPC Central Military Commission forwarded a telegram to the PLA commanders in Lhasa. It gave the “green light” for a full-scale suppression of the uprising.¹⁵³ The PLA was ordered to take control of all strategically important points, to cut the enemy's lines of retreat to the north and south, and to make sure the main rebel forces remained in Lhasa so they could be completely destroyed after the arrival of reinforcements. By order of the Chinese, Ngabo appealed to the residents of Lhasa, calling for them to surrender, otherwise the capital would be turned into a heap of stones.¹⁵⁴

The shelling of the capital continued. The city, temples and closest monasteries were bombarded. According to eyewitnesses, the entire Potala was shrouded in smoke and dust, and it looked like it had been completely destroyed. Some buildings at Sera Monastery and Chakpori Medical School were also destroyed, the golden roof of the Jokhang temple was perforated, the west wing of the Potala was severely damaged, etc. After subjecting Drepung to shelling, all of the monks who remained there were arrested.¹⁵⁵ Many Tibetans died while crossing the river to the south of Norbulingka.

148 Norbu, J. March winds...

149 Norbu, J. March winds...

150 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

151 Dalai Lama, 1992, 2000.

152 Tenpa Soepa, 2008, p.29–31.

153 Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

154 Shakya, 1999, p.203–204.

155 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.53.

The following day, Liu Shaoqi convened another meeting of party leaders in Beijing. “Decisions on several policy issues concerning the implementation of democratic reforms by stifling the rebellion in Tibet” were published on its results”.¹⁵⁶ According to this document, the uprising was to be suppressed in conjunction with the reforms.

On March 22, in Lhasa, the loudspeakers called for disarmament. Leniency was promised to people who would surrender. Tibetans who barricaded themselves inside the Jokhang were warned that if they did not give up, the temple would be destroyed.¹⁵⁷ The Chinese started the offensive, and by March 23, they had already occupied the whole of Lhasa. An official of the Indian Consulate in Lhasa recalled:¹⁵⁸ “I walked through the streets filled with Chinese soldiers, they yelled and were shooting indiscriminately. Canons were shooting at Potala. I thought that the Potala Palace would soon disappear from the face of the earth... For two hours, the Chinese did not stop firing. After that, monks started to run down the hill from Potala, thus forming an easy target for the Chinese with machine guns. I remember well how two women and one man walked down the street leading to the centre of the city. They walked openly, with flowing white scarves, a sign of peaceful intentions, then there were four or five shots and all three of them fell and remained on the roadway, still holding their white scarves. Near the monastery that was close to Potala, I saw Chinese soldiers who were holding thirty Tibetans with their hands up at gunpoint. The soldiers searched them and found no weapons. I thought that all of them would be released, but no, all of them were shot on the spot”.

For the first time in history, the Chinese flag was raised above Potala. On March 30, 1959, Xinhua News Agency made a broadcast from Lhasa:¹⁵⁹ “The Chinese National Flag, symbol of light and happiness, flutters in the breeze over Lhasa, greeting the re-birth of this ancient city”.

But in the meantime, the streets of this city were littered with the corpses of dead men, women and children. Some stayed there for several days and were eaten by dogs and vultures. People came out from their houses with white katas, wandering among the dead, trying to identify relatives and friends. Others were trying to extinguish the fire in the Ramoche Temple. The Chinese were looking for “insurgents”. Groups of four to five soldiers, sometimes accompanied by a Tibetan translator, searched through the houses.

The rebels’ losses were great, as they mostly had no military training and had no experienced commanders.¹⁶⁰ According to Tibetan estimates, ten to fifteen thousand were killed and a further twenty thousand Tibetans were captured. It was said that

156 Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

157 Tibet under Chinese, 1976, p.31.

158 Odeli, 2005, p.178.

159 In: Smith, 1996, p.451.

160 Khetsun, 2008.

most of the men and many women were arrested in Lhasa.¹⁶¹ “Confessions” were sought from the captured. The arrested bodyguards of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetans in whose homes weapons were found, were publicly executed. According to Chinese data, before March 23 more than four thousand rebels were taken as prisoners, more than eight thousand rifles were seized, along with eighty-one light and heavy machine guns, twenty-seven mortars, six mountain guns, and ten million rounds of ammunition.¹⁶² Judging by the quick victory, the numbers of seized weapons, ammunition and prisoners taken, the Chinese seized the arsenal of the Tibetan Government.¹⁶³ The Tibetans obviously used fewer weapons when actually fighting. This agrees with the information that came from the Tibetan (the majority of the insurgents did not even have firearms) and Chinese (in Lhasa, the rebels had about seven thousand people, while the PLA had one thousand soldiers) sides.¹⁶⁴

On March 25, an extended meeting of the Politburo took place in Shanghai. For the first time since the beginning of the uprising in Lhasa, all the leaders of the CPC gathered together. Deng Xiaoping proclaimed that during the previous eight years, the Central Government and the PLA sincerely followed the Seventeen Point Agreement, while the upper strata clique “tore up the Agreement, betrayed the motherland, used force to resist the Central Government, and attacked the People’s Liberation Army”.¹⁶⁵ Deng stated: “Our slogan now is to construct a new Tibet of democracy and socialism”.

Building on their success, by the 28 of March, the Chinese took Ngari, Gyantse, Paro, Yatung, Netong, Linji, Chamdo and Chayuem. On the same day, the State Council proclaimed that the Dalai Lama had been forcefully abducted by the rebels. The Panchen Lama was appointed as the Acting Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. A pursuit party was sent to capture the Dalai Lama, but the Tibetans were able to delay it. The people always helped the Dalai Lama’s convoy by giving oil, barley flour and other products. The Dalai Lama’s departure caused them great grief. Later, many of them were accused of supporting the resistance. In reality, this assistance was religious, and their offerings were a sign of respect.¹⁶⁶

Neither the CIA nor the Tibetan exiles in Kalimpong were involved in the organization of the uprising or the Dalai Lama’s escape.¹⁶⁷ Neither they nor the guerrilla detachments were prepared for what happened in Lhasa. Now, the Chinese (three hundred trucks of soldiers) attacked guerrilla convoys that were en route to

161 Smith, 1996, p.452.

162 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959.

163 Shakya, 1999, p.204.

164 Wang and Nyima, 1997, p.246–247.

165 Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

166 His Holiness the Panchen Lama...

167 Shakya, 1999, p.201–202.

the capital,¹⁶⁸ and they were defeated. The area under their control shrunk. On the 12th of April, they lost one of the main bases, in Tsona; this was a particularly severe loss. According to Chinese sources, at a time when the PLA was suppressing the uprising of Tibetans, the USSR supplied China with important intelligence data about the movements of the guerrillas.¹⁶⁹ In March 1959, the Chinese authorities informed the Soviet leaders about the ongoing suppression of the uprising.

Some monasteries, institutions, large houses and Norbulingka were turned into temporary prisons. Most of the arrested members of the Tibetan Government and heads of monasteries were placed into the Chinese headquarters.¹⁷⁰ Subsequently, most of them were sent to build a railway in Gansu, with some being sent to various prisons and camps.

On March 28, Premier Zhou Enlai signed the order of the State Council with regard to the uprising in Tibet.¹⁷¹ It said:¹⁷² “Most of the kalons of the local Tibetan Government and the reactionary clique of the Tibetan elite have entered into an agreement with imperialists and, having gathered rebel bandits, staged a revolt, harmed the people by taking away the Dalai Lama, tore up the Seventeen Point Agreement on arrangements for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, and on the night of March 19, led a broad offensive of local Tibetan troops and rebels against detachments of the People’s Liberation Army in Lhasa”. This order disbanded “the local Tibetan Government”, eighteen Tibetans were removed from the PC TAR and were ordered to be punished by the law as “traitors”, and sixteen people (five of them Chinese) were enlisted into the PC. The party leaders called the PC TAR and “the clergy and the civilian population of Tibet headed by them” to help the PLA “in most rapid liquidation of the insurgency, in strengthening of public defence, in restoring of public order”. Finally, Tibetans were called to “fight for the construction of a new, democratic and socialist Tibet”.

The same day, the Xinhua Agency promulgated a message about the rebellion in Tibet, further explaining the point of view of Beijing.¹⁷³ It stated that among the Tibetan ministers there were two “patriots”, one of whom was wounded by the “insurgents”. Of the remaining four ministers one fled to Kalimpong in 1957, and three others committed “treason to the motherland”. Before the uprising in Lhasa these “traitors” supposedly united the reactionaries, and helped the uprising. Allegedly, from May to June 1958, on orders from “the local government and the reactionary Tibetan elite”, the rebels began to create disorder in Nagchu, Lhoka and other areas. The Central Government repeatedly called for “local government” to

168 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.102–103.

169 Ji Youcuan, 1993, p.87 — in: Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion..., p.91.

170 Smith, 1996, p.480–482.

171 For text see: Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.1–3.

172 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.1

173 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.4–17.

punish the rebels, but they did not do so. In the end, “having concentrated much of their forces in Lhasa, they tore up the Seventeen Point Agreement on March 10”. Such accusations against the Tibetan Government and the Dalai Lama are repeated even today.¹⁷⁴

These accusations are unfounded. Andrugtsang noted the lack of help the rebels received from the Dalai Lama and the Kashag in his memoirs. In fact, three Tibetan ministers, whom the Chinese announced as the main instigators of the uprising, tried to find a compromise between the warring parties, and the fourth was abroad and could not perform governmental functions. “The upper echelons of Tibetan society, with a few exceptions, have remained distant from the anti-Chinese actions in Eastern Tibet. <...> The Chinese requirements of the Tibetan Government to suppress the uprising by use of the Tibetan Army were generally not feasible, as the army was dominated by anti-Chinese sentiment. <...> There is good reason to doubt that ‘the local Tibetan Government’ was one of the main initiators of the rebellion. <...> The Dalai Lama... not only was not an instigator of the uprising, but he was the most active mediator. <...> Ministers (*kalons*) of the local Government by no means could have been initiators and leaders of the uprising”.¹⁷⁵

Thus, the CPC leadership did not accept the malignancy of their democratic reform, nor the fact that it was the people who rebelled, and not the “reactionary elite”. Instead, by wrongfully accusing the Tibetan Government of disrupting the Seventeen Point Agreement, the party leadership thus sought to legitimize its own rejection of the Agreement. The “local Tibetan Government” was disbanded. Its functions were transferred to the PC TAR. That is, the Chinese completed the previously started changes in Tibetan Government and untied their hands for carrying out the democratic reforms.

Either way, on the 28th March 1959 the PRC authorities deprived themselves of the opportunity to appeal the Agreement that was previously imposed by them, and since then, it ceased to be in effect (by their own initiative). Thus, the situation returned to what it was before the Agreement, i.e. to Tibetan independence. Thus, the “Serf Emancipation Day”, that was appointed to March 28 in 2009, has a rather ambiguous subtext.

Breaking of the Seventeen Point Agreement was fixed in subsequent Chinese documents. On April 8, 1959, the “Decision of the PC TAR Firm Implementation of the State Council’s March 28 Order” was adopted. All employees of administrative bodies of the former Tibetan Government were ordered to register with the military authorities, and wait for the decision of the relevant body. All residents were once again offered the opportunity to unite under the leadership of the CPC and the Central Government, support the PLA, and to “fight for a democratic and socialist

174 For example, In Tibet, the Day of Liberation...

175 Bogoslovsky, 1978, p.75–83.

new Tibet”.¹⁷⁶ The resolution of the 1st session of the NPC 2nd convocation adopted on April 28, 1959 stated that following the defeat of the rebellion and the dissolution “of the local Tibetan Government” an opportunity arose to establish local administrative authorities under the leadership of the PC TAR to successfully implement the request of the broad masses of the Tibetan People to carry out the reforms”.¹⁷⁷ Local authorities were disbanded, with Chinese committees of military control being established instead. They took up the formation of new administrative structures. These committees were to include the PLA soldiers and “patriotic local people”.¹⁷⁸

On March 29, having heard the order of the State Council of China, the 14th Dalai Lama and his companions immediately set up a new Government.¹⁷⁹ The formal inauguration took place in the Lhuntse Dzong. On March 31, the Dalai Lama and his companions arrived in India. There, the Dalai Lama gave a press conference at which he stated: “Wherever I am, accompanied by my government, the Tibetan people recognize us as the Government of Tibet”.¹⁸⁰ Thus, the highest



The 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso with his younger brother Tenzin Chogyal and entourage on their escape route to India (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)

176 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.60.

177 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.195–197.

178 Klinov, 2000, p.323.

179 Shakabpa, 1988.

180 Van Walt, 1987, p.163.

legal authority institution in Tibet was restored on the following day after the announcement of its dissolution by the State Council of the PRC.

On 8th April 1959, units of the People's Liberation Army crossed the Tsangpo and, having split into three groups, continued to advance towards the south. Battles ensued and the Tibetans were defeated. According to Chinese data, during the ten days of fighting, about two thousand insurgents were killed, wounded and captured.¹⁸¹ According to a secret report of the PLA that was captured by the guerrillas, from March to October of 1959, in Lhasa and the surrounding areas, eighty-seven thousand Tibetans were eliminated.¹⁸² Another twenty-five thousand were arrested.¹⁸³ Xinhua claimed that there were twenty thousand "rebels" altogether.¹⁸⁴ Contesting the figure of eighty-seven thousand dead, several Sinologists believe that the Chinese word "xiaomie", literally translated as "eliminate, obliterate from the face of earth", here means "arrested", "captured", etc. This interpretation is strange. In this way, even the word "kill" can be understood in some figurative sense, thus the military report language needs to be further clarified and understood without ambiguity.¹⁸⁵ According to Chinese data, in 1959–1961, in the future TAR, ninety three thousand "rebels" were killed, wounded and arrested, and according to other sources, in 1959–1960, this relevant figure was eight-one thousand.¹⁸⁶

During the year after March 1959, eighty thousand Tibetans fled to Nepal, Bhutan and, especially, to India.¹⁸⁷ Such an event had never before happened in Tibetan history. On April 18, 1959, the Dalai Lama published a statement in Tezpur, India, which explained the reasons for his escape to India. He pointed out that the Seventeen Point Agreement was signed under pressure because the Tibetans had had no other choice. The Chinese permanently violated it. The Tibetan Government did not possess the slightest degree of autonomy. The PC TAR had little power, and all the important decisions were made by Chinese officials. During the uprising, Chinese troops committed murder and destruction. The Dalai Lama's main concern was the welfare of his people, the eternal prosperity of religion and the freedom of his country. From the day of the Tezpur Statement onwards, the Dalai Lama "declared that the Agreement would be considered null and void, and he would strive for restoration of Tibet's independence."¹⁸⁸ On June 20th, the Dalai Lama stated at a press conference that he and his Government were ready to accept a peaceful solution, provided that it would ensure preservation of all of Tibet's

181 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959.

182 Tibet under the Rule of Communist China, 2001.

183 Dalai Lama, 1992.

184 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.10.

185 Norbu, J. March winds...

186 Ji Youquan, 1993; Knaus, 1999 — in: Blondeau and Buffetrille, 2008, p.89.

187 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

188 His Holiness's Middle Way Approach...

rights and powers, which it had sovereignty over until 1950.¹⁸⁹ On September 5, he said that Tibetans had decided to appeal to the UN.

Shortly thereafter, Malaysia and Ireland forced the Tibetan issue to be included on the agenda of the 14th Session of the United Nations. The discussion was opposed by the countries that were members of the socialist bloc. The delegate from China (who was still a representative of the Government in Taipei) declared that “Tibet is part of China”, but called for a discussion on violations of human rights by the Communists there.¹⁹⁰ On October 21 1959, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 1353 (XIV). It said that the General Assembly:¹⁹¹ “1. Affirms its belief that respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is essential for the evolution of the peaceful world order based on the rule of law; 2. Calls for respect of fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people and for their distinctive cultural and religious life”. The resolution was adopted by forty-five votes in favour, nine against (the socialist countries) and twenty-six abstentions.

Seeing how many people were fleeing to India, the Chinese authorities convened meetings where people were “frightened” by stories about a hot climate, malaria, the capitalist system, etc.¹⁹² Another argument was the impending “liberation” of China’s neighbouring countries. This did not help. The followers of Buddhism and Bon were the first to move abroad. A year later, unable to endure the terror, they were joined by Muslims.¹⁹³ Chinese officials offered them the option to emigrate to any Islamic country, but only after having left all their property in Tibet. Those who demanded to keep their property were boycotted, and food was forbidden to be sold to them. As a result, there were cases of death by starvation of Muslim children and the elderly. Those who could went to India, seeking to go to Kashmir. Several were able to go to Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Nepal. Some Tibetans who could not escape, committed suicide by shooting themselves or throwing themselves into rivers.

However, many did not give up. Some parts of Amdo and even Western Tibet remained under the control of the guerrillas for about a year. By 1960, about four thousand guerrillas were concentrated near the Tibetan borders with India and Nepal.¹⁹⁴ In 1961–1962, groups of one hundred to two hundred guerrillas penetrated into Tibet (going up to 100 km in), attacking the occupant forces and seizing their weapons.

189 Shakabpa, 1988.

190 The book by Klinov (2000) contains a detailed analysis of the discussion of the Tibetan issue in the UN in different years.

191 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/141/76/IMG/NR014176.pdf?OpenElement>

192 Norbu, 1999, p.156–157.

193 Butt, 1994, p.8–9.

194 Andrugtsang, 1973, p.110.

In March 1960, the President Chiang Kai-shek sent a message from Taiwan to the guerrillas:¹⁹⁵ “The puppet government of the Communist bandits Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung attempts to suppress and bring under control your revolutionary movement against communism and tyranny with the cruel and violent measures of terror and massacre. I am convinced that although the brutal armed forces of the Communist bandits can destroy your monasteries and pillage your cities for a time, they can never destroy your revolutionary determination and religious belief”.

According to Chinese data, by the end of 1960, large detachments of rebels were largely defeated, and, by March 1962, the uprising in Tibet ended. According to the same source, 70% of the insurgents were captured or surrendered, a few were wounded, and some were killed. The losses the PLA incurred were 1,551 killed and 1,987 wounded.¹⁹⁶

However, the losses of Tibetans should have been greater, as their weapons were inferior, and their movement was often retarded by their families who accompanied them to India, etc. The Chinese had overwhelming superiority over the Tibetans. The Tibetans were uncoordinated, and they randomly rebelled at different places and at different times. The 10th Panchen Lama wrote:¹⁹⁷ “At the start, most of the rebellion in Tibetan areas was no more than disturbances in individual tribes and villages, and was not an attack on our main bases. Moreover, those rebels had no military prospects, since they had no united leadership or command, their organization and equipment were utterly inadequate, they did not support or co-ordinate with one another, their internal contradictions were many, they were scattered <...> they lacked a strategy”.

The assistance the guerrillas received from the CIA was insufficient. America, like England, did not need the Tibetan State, but wanted a tool to place pressure on China, so CIA trained guerrillas on the Saipan Island in the Pacific, and later in the Hale camp in the Rocky Mountains, Colorado.¹⁹⁸ Three thousand people received sabotage commando training. Having completed their course, the Tibetans were airdropped back in to their homeland by U.S. aircraft. They were dressed in the *chuba* (Tibetan national dress), had rifles, mortars, hand-held radios and potassium cyanide capsules (for use in case of capture). It was difficult for them to liaise with the local resistance movement. Only a few of them survived.

In 1960, the nomads of Sog, Bacheng and other areas of north-east Changtang, being led by Pon Norbu Tsering, formed a rebel force of five thousand to seven thousand people.¹⁹⁹ To combat them, the Chinese sent two infantry divisions, reinforced by cavalry, armoured cars, tanks, and fighter aircraft that were based in

195 Ling, 1964, p. 449–450.

196 Wang and Nyima, 1997, p.249.

197 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.100.

198 French, 2004.

199 Norbu, 2006.

Damshung (north of Lhasa). In order to help the insurgents, the CIA dropped eight Tibetan paratrooper-commandos and later dropped some weapons.

In late 1959 to early 1960, the CIA air-dropped four groups of Tibetans who were trained in the American camp. The following was learned from the participants in those events.²⁰⁰ Each group carried a wireless transmitter and a personal weapon, and each of its members had a potassium cyanide capsule in case they were captured. The first group was air-dropped to Namtso Lake, to the north of Lhasa, in September 1959. When they landed they learnt that the guerrillas, whom they were meant to join, had already been defeated by the Chinese. Because of that, they went to India via Nepal. At around the same time, a group of eighteen people were air-dropped into the Chagra Pembar area to the north-east of Lhasa, where freedom fighters had gathered with their families and livestock. Soon, the CIA air-dropped them weapons using parachutes. Unlike previously, these weapons were U.S. made: mainly M-1 rifles, mortars, light recoil-less canons, machine guns and grenades. As was planned, the five Tibetans who were trained in the American camps went north to join the local freedom fighters in the Nira Tsongo area. This crowd mostly consisted of families and livestock, and looked more like a medieval camp than warring guerrilla detachments. The guerrillas requested assistance by radio. In response, another three groups (sixteen people in total) were air-dropped into Nira Tsongo and Chagra Pembar. Some weapons were also air-dropped. The guerrilla groups gradually swelled due to the influx of refugee families that continued to join them. The CIA instructed their people to persuade the leaders of different detachments to break into smaller groups and disperse, so as to be less vulnerable. But this did not happen.

One of the Chagra Pembar fighters described the situation thus:²⁰¹ “Then one day, the Chinese surrounded us. A Chinese aeroplane came in the morning and dropped leaflets, which told us to surrender and warned us not to listen to the ‘imperialist’ Americans, because nothing good would come of it. After that, every day, some fifteen jets came. They came in groups of five, in the morning, at midday and at 3 or 4 o’clock in the afternoon. Each jet carried fifteen to twenty bombs. We were in the high plains so there was nowhere to hide. The five jets made quick rounds and killed animals and men. We suffered huge casualties”. As a result of the air raids and the subsequent shelling of Chagra Pembar and Nir Tsong probably, thousands of men, women and children were killed. Of those who had parachuted into Tibet, only five were able to escape to India.

In January 1960, paratroopers were air-dropped into Markham.²⁰² For several days the guerrillas fought with the superior Chinese forces, until one morning they

200 Sonam, 2007.

201 Sonam, 2007.

202 Sonam, 2007.

found themselves surrounded. The freedom fighters were prepared to stand to the end. The only survivor of these events later recalled: "Then the whole mountainside was swarming with Chinese. We fought them nine times. We suffered our heaviest casualties that day. During the battle, the Chinese would shout out to us, "Surrender! Surrender!" We shouted back, "Eat shit! " I swear, we said, "Eat shit! You invaded our country, what do you mean by surrender? " We shot at them instead. We really fought. It was intense; like a dream, it didn't seem real. And then, at around 10 o'clock, I looked around and saw that two men from our team had taken their cyanide capsules and were dead. It was the end. I put the capsule in my mouth because later I might not have time". But, without having had time to bite on it, he lost consciousness from a blow and woke up a captive. He spent twenty years behind Chinese bars.

In the 1960's, the CIA changed its tactics. Now the Americans started to train guerrillas in Nepal's mountainous Kingdom of Mustang.²⁰³ They planned to form guerrilla units armed with mortars, carbines and rifles. Tibetan refugees began to enrol into these units in the hundreds. In 1960, after the Soviet Union shot down a U.S. spy plane, President D. Eisenhower forbade secret operations. Help from the CIA suddenly stopped. More than two thousand Tibetans who remained in the training camp began to starve, and some died. A year later they began to receive supplies again. The rebels made incursions into Tibet, where they intercepted the PLA's radio messages and made use of the operational information for several years. In 1961, they managed to capture secret Chinese documents covering the famine in China and the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations.

Between 1958 and 1962, the CIA air-dropped cargo for the Tibetan guerrillas in Amdo and Kham on forty different occasions. Altogether, about 550,000–800,000 pounds (250–363 tons) of weapons and ammunition was dropped.²⁰⁴ This included British rifles, American M-1 and M-2 rifles, small-calibre recoilless guns, light machine guns, bazookas, and hand grenades. By comparing the composition and volume of what the CIA supplied to the Tibetan guerrillas, to what the Soviet Union supplied to the army of the CPC (see Chapter 7), it is easy to see that the independence of Tibet was not part of U.S. plans. The Tibetans accepted this assistance since nothing better was on offer; they were in a desperate struggle to liberate their homeland and not on a mission to execute other people's plans for putting pressure on China.

The last CIA paratroopers were dropped into Tibet on May 1965, but the guerrillas were then under instructions to stop armed attacks and to limit their operation to intelligence gathering. However, they ignored these warnings and continued their raids until the end of the 1960s.²⁰⁵ Before the Cultural Revolution,

203 French, 1984.

204 Brief introduction of Chushi Gangdruk...

205 Sonam, 2007.

thirty to forty thousand Tibetan guerrillas saw action between the Tsangpo River and the Nepalese border.²⁰⁶

Lhasa and other cities had underground organizations. During 1962–1976, the Chinese uncovered nine such organizations, and forty-four cases of open rebellion were noted in the same period.²⁰⁷ On the other hand, some Tibetans fought in the ranks of the PLA and even received Chinese awards.²⁰⁸ According to official Chinese sources, the Tibetans have “tried to help soldiers and commanders of the PLA, established self-defence units in many places, as well as detachments for the protection of livestock, etc., all on their own initiative. They have helped to repair roads, taking on freight and mail delivery, served as guides, carried water for men of the PLA, treated them with tea, shared duty on guarding positions, helped to treat the wounded. All of this helped to isolate the rebels”.²⁰⁹ What this information does reflect is, at best, the subordination of losers to winners. After all, even in 1954, the Chinese widely used the “abolished” transport service (*ula*).

Poor regulations at the Tibetan-Indian border control and India’s support for the Tibetan refugees led to Sino-Indian border disputes. After 1959, they turned into armed conflicts. And this was despite India’s recognition of China, support of China’s request for membership in the UN, reunification with Taiwan, the Agreement of April 29, 1954 and the pro-peace statements made by Zhou Enlai in India in the summer of 1954. Only in 1948 the Indian Ambassador to China, S. Panikkar, urged his Government to recognize the independence of Tibet.²¹⁰ He foresaw that if the Chinese Communists came to power and subjugated Tibet, it could lead to direct conflict between China and India.

And so it happened. In 1959, 1961 and 1962, China accused India of provoking armed conflict on the border, violating the McMahon Line, “capturing” more than 90,000 km² in the eastern sector, and 2,000 in the central sector of the border.²¹¹ The Chinese conducted a “counter-offensive”. Having killed the Indian frontier guards and taken a number of disputed territories, they offered peace negotiations on the basis of the status quo. China informed India that these areas had Tibetan names, and in the past the control over them had always belonged to “local authorities of the Tibetan region of China”. Two other districts, Aksai Chin and Ali, had always “belonged to Xinjiang of China”.

The first armed conflict with India took place in August–September of 1959, a few days before N.S. Khrushchev’s U.S. visit. Mao Zedong, as always, counted on unconditional support from the USSR. However, the Soviet leadership asked

206 Bogoslovsky et al., 1975.

207 Van Walt, 1987.

208 Wang and Nyima, 1997.

209 Who has sovereignty over Tibet...

210 Shakya, 1999, p.23–24.

211 On the Sino-Indian Border, 1962.

both sides to find a peaceful solution. On September 13, 1959, the CPC Central Committee sent a secret letter to the CPSU Central Committee where it accused the Soviet leadership of “concessions and time-serving policy towards Nehru and the Indian Government” and regretted that the TASS Agency publicised Soviet-Chinese contradictions to the world, causing “the Indian bourgeoisie to literally rejoice and exult” with the same applying, as always, to “American and British imperialists”.²¹²

In September 1959, following Khrushchev’s visit to the USA, the relations deteriorated further. Khrushchev went to China after his visit to the United States, adding to the Chairman’s grievances. Mao Zedong met with him on October 2. Khrushchev proclaimed that Chinese leaders should not have wasted four years before starting the transformations in the future TAR, should not have let the Dalai Lama leave for India, and should not have solved their problems with New Delhi by armed force. According to his words, the TASS statement had shown the world that the problem with India was the Chinese problem, and not a problem of a “united front of the socialist countries”. Mao replied: “Our mistake was that we did not disarm the Dalai Lama immediately. But, at that time, we did not have contact with the masses of Tibet”. Khrushchev replied: “But even now, you do not have contact with the masses of Tibet”.²¹³ A common ground regarding the Sino-Indian conflict was not found. On December 18, 1959, the chief Soviet ideologist, M.A. Suslov, who accompanied Khrushchev in Beijing, produced a report for the Politburo CC CPSU, in which he criticized the policies of the CPC that led to the uprising.²¹⁴

Thus, the USSR did not support the PRC on this occasion and adopted a neutral stance instead. Great Britain and the U.S. began to supply arms to India. China had to release most of the captured Indian territory. Nevertheless, in 1965, there was a new conflict. At this time the Chinese invaded the Sikkim and Chola districts, but the Indians repulsed them. However, the highland Aksai Chin area has still been retained and developed by China, which has built a highway to there.

China made territorial claims not only to India but to many other countries as well, including the Soviet Union. Since the late 1950’s, the Sino-Soviet relations were steadily deteriorating. Mao Zedong was displeased with the refusal of unconditional support for his policies, the ongoing criticism of the personality cult of I.V. Stalin, and improvement in the Soviet-American relationship under N.S. Khrushchev and L.I. Brezhnev. By that time, thanks to the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of China firmly held power, and industry was steadily growing. Of the total output of China in 1960, the output of enterprises built with Soviet help was as follows: steel production 30%, other ferrous materials production over 50%, trucks 80%,

212 Zubok, 2001 (1), p.106–107.

213 Zubok, 2001 (2), p.99.

214 Jian, Ch. The Tibetan rebellion...

tractors 90%, generation of electricity 25%, etc.²¹⁵ The market value of just the scientific and technical assistance from the Soviet Union is estimated at 10.824 billion dollars (of which China paid only 125.5 million).²¹⁶ This was in addition to military aid and various non-military supplies. Then projects were put on hold, and the flow of supplies dropped.

By suppressing the uprising in Tibet, the CPC used a policy that combined three inseparable elements: “military attack, induced political conversion and the mobilization of the masses”. Since March 29, 1959, in Shigatse, Lhasa, Yatung, Netong, Gyantse, Nagchu, and Dinchin, rallies, meetings and interviews were convened so as to “condemn the rebellion”.²¹⁷ On April 15, a mammoth rally was gathered in Lhasa that was “demanding the thorough quelling of the rebellion”.²¹⁸ The Chinese announced that non-participation in this meeting would be treated as sympathy for the reactionaries with all its consequences. These activities were designed to create an appearance of popular demand for reform. On April 18, 1959, Zhou Enlai’s report to the 1st session of the NPC’s 2nd convocation stated:²¹⁹ “In Tibet, the number of workers who demand reforms, the progressive elements of the upper strata who endorse the reforms, and the intermediate elements that can be convinced of its benefits add up to more than 1.1 million people”. The Premier mentioned that the total population of the future TAR was 1.2 million people. The 1953 census was undoubtedly at the foundation of these claims. However, how did he calculate such a large number of those who had approved the reforms, if the very population size was census-counted inaccurately (see Chapter 9)? Obviously the claims were based on indirect, mostly class criteria. It is clear that such an assessment is not correct.

On March 29, 1959, the 10th Panchen Lama sent Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai a telegram expressing his support, and, on March 30, he was present at a rally in Shigatse, displaying his support for the order of the State Council of the CPC.²²⁰ In April, at the NPC session, together with other delegates, he reiterated that Tibet was “an integral part of the PRC”, that the Seventeen Point Agreement had been signed free from duress and generally satisfied with the Chinese side, and that the CPC was not against religion²²¹. Apparently, the delegates wanted to ease the plight of the vanquished Tibetans.

After all, the Chinese side, although having broken this Agreement, initially declared moderation and justice. On March 31, 1959, the newspaper *Renmin Ribao*

215 Filatov, 1980, p.48.

216 Filatov, 1980, p.121.

217 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959.

218 Shakya, 1999, p.244–245.

219 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.67.

220 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959.

221 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

stated in its editorial:²²² “All prisoners of war will neither be killed nor insulted, severe punishment will only await those who provided firm resistance. Detachments of the People’s Liberation Army in Tibet will continue to adhere to a consistent policy of respect for religious beliefs, customs and habits of the masses, protect Lamaist monasteries and ancient monuments of culture. <...> The mutiny of the Tibetan traitorous clique has certainly proved the need for democratic reforms in Tibet, but the Central People’s Government undertakes broad consultations with the patriotic leaders of the upper and middle classes and the various circles of Tibetan masses on matters of timing, means and methods of reform”. Mao Zedong instructed:²²³ “because the population of Tibet is small, we should adopt a policy of not killing people or of killing very few people”.

Democratic reform was started in the future TAR. According to the decision of the 2nd plenary session of the PC TAR in June 1959, it was to be performed in two stages.²²⁴ The first priority was the “Three Antis”: “anti-revolt, anti-ula and anti-slavery”. Let’s recollect that ula was transport duty, and “slaves” were domestic servants. Thus the Communists finally decided to use the common people for conducting reforms. The second stage was the “two reductions”: rent and lending rates, with subsequent redistribution of land. It should be noted that the “two reductions” were included by some functionaries into the second stage, while others maintained that they were part of the first.

During the summer of 1959 there were countless meetings of various types: denunciations, confessions, criticizing reactionaries, opposing imperialists, and “bitter memory”.²²⁵ Meetings of the “bitter memory” had “serfs” talking about their “suffering” at the hands of landlords. It was implied that everyone cried. The meetings were intended to “mobilize the masses” and support democratic reforms. People were forced to show up and approve what was ordered to be approved, i.e. it was both “conversion and mobilization”. When “mobilising the masses”, the Chinese began to divide people into those who helped the rebels, and those who did not help. This was the first label to be applied.²²⁶ Later they also added class and political labels. The division of the elites into those who participated in the rebellion and those who did not participate helped to prohibit the establishment of opposition to Chinese power.

The Party leadership had achieved its aim: Tibetan society was split, having created a narrow layer of activists from the most ignorant strata of people. They had to conduct the reforms. Peng Dehuai noted that Mao overly-emphasized the role of lumpen, considering them to be the vanguard of the revolution.²²⁷ Other cadres

222 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.24–25.

223 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.37.

224 Tibet: 1950–1967. 1968, p.388–389.

225 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.63–64.

226 Shakya, 1999, p.245.

227 Shevelev, V.N. Mao Zedong..

were beginning to be recruited from those who studied in China, however they were now quickly being sent back, even those who did not complete their education. These cadres were needed not for the creation of autonomy, but as intermediaries between the Tibetan masses and the Chinese authorities.²²⁸ Most of them received very poor education or no education at all, and they originated mainly from the middle and upper strata.

Tax cuts and the abolition of compulsory duties had nothing but purely symbolic significance for the Tibetans, as the old system had been destroyed a long time before. The cancellation of debts only benefited the peasants who had them, and even then, only until 1958.²²⁹ Even among the peasants, only the paupers were happy about the reforms. But even they were also worried about the presence of troops and felt habitual distrust towards the Chinese, and they hoped that they would soon go away.

During the summer of 1959, the future TAR was already in the first stage of collectivization: the establishment of mutual aid teams.²³⁰ Those who were labelled as reactionaries were not accepted there. The mutual aid teams were given the best lands. Those who preferred to remain as private producers received the worst lands. The teams engaged in irrigation, melioration and afforestation. They had to absorb the surplus labour force, create resources for the mobilization of construction work, and they were easier to control than the private owners.²³¹ Nevertheless, agriculture was still based on private individuals. At the same time, most of the crops were confiscated under the guise of various “voluntary” taxes or were “bought” for a pittance.

The lands that belonged to feudal lords and the rebellious monasteries were subject to confiscation, and the few who did not participate in the uprising (the “patriotic” and the “law-abiding”) were forced to sell their lands (about a third of the total land). Purchase certificates were issued to 1,300 families.²³² After the confiscation and land re-distribution was carried out, collective burning of “serfs” obligatory bills was organised. As a result, precious records of births, deaths, weddings, stories of ordinary families, etc, were burned.²³³ In summary, “the peasants have become masters of their fields and pastures for the very first time”.²³⁴

As we know, reform of the Kham and Amdo regions was already in progress for a long time. The Chinese military felt themselves to be complete masters of the situation. They took the best lands for their livestock.²³⁵ The military men were

228 Shakya, 1999, p.256.

229 Shakya, 1999, p.250–253.

230 Smith, 1996, p.472–473.

231 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

232 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

233 Knuth, 2003, p.220.

234 Ovchinnikov, 2006, p.97.

235 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

followed by a new wave of colonization, the poor Han peasants. In order to feed the army and the Chinese migrants, the government converted the pastures into arable land. This was called “cultivation”. Its result was desertification of lands. Eyewitnesses described how in 1959, the Amdo Tibetans were forced to carry out deep ploughing of their steppe pastures, fully destroying the thin topsoil. Seeds were sown in stony ground. Of course, there was little to no harvest as a result.

In the early 1960's, a campaign was launched in China under the name of “speaking bitterness”, or “bitter memory”.²³⁶ The aim was to show the Chinese that their famine caused by collectivization was not comparable to the suffering which was commonplace before the CPC's victory. The new campaign was thought to be particularly important for the “minority nationalities”, who were supposed to be thankful for “liberation” and were meant to experience hatred towards the formerly “oppressing” classes.

Meanwhile, as the country was experiencing yet more difficulties in building communism, the “Great Helmsman” indulged himself with a life of comfort and pleasure. He lived in expensive villas with swimming pools, ate food from special farms, kept a harem, etc.²³⁷

Another campaign was called “Destroy the Four Pests”: rats, mice, flies and sparrows. For Tibetans, it was of particular significance, as Buddhism prohibits the killing of living beings. There, an extermination of dogs and small wild animals took place at the same time. In January 1960, in Lhasa, beggars were forced to kill stray dogs, to remove the skins and burn carcasses in front of the temple.²³⁸

During 1960, rallies resumed with renewed vigour in the future TAR. Sometimes they were conducted in the presence of armed soldiers who stood on neighbouring rooftops.²³⁹ On March 4, 1960, the Tibetan Daily Newspaper gave the following example: The Communists had learned that one village had not submitted any complaints about feudalism. They immediately summoned a meeting and brought up a lot of typical examples, which the villagers could use to “recognize the evils of the old society”.

Chinese propaganda cites these rallies as a sign of popular support. In fact, people memorized the required answers to standard questions and then read them from memory.

According to Ngabo, by the summer of 1960, the first stage of the reforms was completed in about half of the monasteries of the future TAR.²⁴⁰ It was time for the second stage. The power and land tenure of the Buddhist church was abolished in a matter of months. Having obtained land and livestock, many poor people were

236 Smith, 1996, p.477–478.

237 See, For example, Jung Chang and Halliday, 2007.

238 Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960, p.33.

239 Shakya, 1999, p.248, 257.

240 Tibet: 1950–1967. 1968, p.396.

initially overjoyed. But even they raised the question: what right do the Chinese have to hand out Tibetan land, especially land belonging to monasteries?

By the end of 1960, the redistribution of land in the future Tibet Autonomous Region was complete, except for border areas. Almost all of the suitable land was divided between the “serfs”. But it was also necessary to accommodate the land-poor and landless peasants, the many “freed slaves” (the former servants of feudal lords) and the hundreds of thousands of monks that were expelled from the monasteries. But there was next to no free land remaining.²⁴¹ Furthermore, neither the slaves nor the monks had any agricultural skills. To get by, some sold livestock to peasants of average means at low prices.²⁴² At the same time, production requirements increased as it was now also necessary to feed the occupying forces. Previously, monasteries helped peasant farms so that they could continue their work and pay the rent.²⁴³ But the decline of the monasteries deprived the peasants of this support.

The problems required quick solutions. Where to find them? Of course, collectivization was the answer, just like in China. The peasants cooperated very quickly with servants and expelled monks. People said: “In the people’s communes, every person only had three personal belongings, a set of clothes, a set of bedclothes, a bowl and a pair of chopsticks”.²⁴⁴ Agriculture was to become “intensive”, a completely ignorant measure in Tibet’s environment. The intensification of agriculture took place without a corresponding increase in arable land and could not be successful in principle.²⁴⁵ This activity was called a “patriotic increase of production”. Now, the grain had to be given not to the landlord, but to China. It was called “patriotic public grain”. By the end of 1961, various forms of cooperation already covered about 90% of farms.²⁴⁶ Taxes were gradually increased to 75% of the gathered harvests, and farmers were put on rations and then given food cards.

Obviously, famine accompanied collectivization. The situation was worsened by poor harvests from 1959–1961 in China. During 1959–1961, excluding the decline in birth rates (about thirty-three million) the population losses in China that shot up due to deaths from starvation were estimated to be between twenty million people (this figure was released in 1988 and can be considered the official statistic) to forty-three million people.²⁴⁷ It was the harshest, most severe famine not only in the history of China, but also in history of mankind. Tibet enjoyed a good harvest in 1959. But in 1961–1964, the famine had spread to Tibet as well.

241 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

242 Goldstein et al., 2009, p.74.

243 Klinov, 2000, p.327.

244 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.110.

245 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

246 Bogoslovsky et al., 1975.

247 Courtois, S. et al. *The Black Book...*

Mao and his Party did not feel guilty because of their failures. The Tibetans were told that the Soviet Union had ceased to help but was requesting loans repayments, and that the grain was exported for that purpose, so this was the cause of hunger. Such statements are found to this day, although the Tibetans knew them to be wrong even then.²⁴⁸ Production was exported from Tibet not into the USSR, but into the neighbouring provinces of Sichuan and Gansu that were most affected by the famine.²⁴⁹ This was explained by the need to “pay back the motherland” for “liberation”, for improving the economy, health care and building roads. So the assertion that Tibet did not have enough roads and gasoline to export grain to China is wrong.²⁵⁰

The real cause of hunger was stated by the 10th Panchen Lama:²⁵¹ “In Tibet, owing to the Party considerably setting a low tax rate, the quantity of patriotic public grain (*aiguo gongliang*) was not large. However, during the big movement for competition in production, because of a tendency to boast and exaggerate, there were false reports of increased production, which were inconsistent with reality. There were those who in order to cover up their own lies took the falsely reported production indicators as the basis, and after the collection of patriotic public grain, apart from some seed grain, grain for everyday consumption, and animal fodder, bought up the majority of the remainder, and tapped past grain reserves. Because this was done too strictly, difficulties arose in the livelihood of the masses. <...>

From 1959 to 1960, after exchanges between agriculture and animal herding were discontinued, although replacement grain was supplied to animal herding areas by the government, it was not sufficient... This resulted in a grain shortage, and the people had to slaughter and eat much of their livestock. All this has had an effect on production in animal herding. <...> Those people who worked in animal herding were extremely short of grain, and the peasants were short of meat, butter, salt and soda, which resulted in difficulties in life in the agricultural and the animal herding areas. <...> At the time of democratic reform, it was forbidden to travel back and forth to transport materials and grain, and people's travel to different places was very restricted. Consequently the supply of goods, which the towns needed and which had to be brought in from the countryside, was almost cut off. A lot of surplus grain was also collected from the people in the towns; perhaps collection was excessive, and even grain and *tsampa* contained in sachets was collected. Families who secretly concealed a few litres (sheng) of grain and *tsampa* were struggled against, which appears very petty and mean-spirited. Most households were ransacked, and almost all of the residents' own stores of grain, meat and butter were taken away. <...>

248 For example, Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.84, 94.

249 Smith, 1996, p.488.

250 Sautman, 2008, p.239.

251 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.26–27, 30, 112–113.

Because the amount of grain was not enough to feed even those with the lowest requirements, the fire of bitterness and hunger was ignited, and so dregs of fat, grain husks and so on, which formerly in Tibet were fodder for horses and donkeys, bulls and oxen, became hard to get and were considered nourishing and fragrant foods. Also, in order to make the food to appear more and to dispel one day's hunger and bitterness, the responsible people in the canteens, apart from gathering together a lot of grass, which was more or less edible, even gathered together tree bark, leaves, grass roots and grass seeds, which really were not edible. After processing this, they mixed it with a bit of foodstuffs, made it into a thin gruel like pig food and gave it to people to eat, and even this was limited in amount and could not fill their stomachs. Because the anguish of such severe hunger had never been experienced in Tibetan history, and was such that people could not imagine it even in their dreams, the masses could not resist this kind of cruel torment, and their condition declined daily. Therefore, in some places, colds and other such minor infectious diseases easily caused a percentage of people to die. In some places, many people directly starved to death because the food ran out, therefore, in some places, there was a new phenomenon of whole families dying out from starvation.

The mortality rate was critical (*yanzhong*). <...> For example, in the Wendu monastery of Xunhua county in Qinghai province, I specifically convened a forum of more than three hundred grassroots-level cadres and representatives of the masses of the Tibetan, Han and Sala nationalities. In the meeting, the people and principally the grassroots cadres, said: "From 1959 until the first half of 1961, the difficult circumstances in the lives of the masses in the Xunhua area were unimaginable and difficult to describe. In every village, a percentage of the people miserably starved to death. Not only did they say this with bitter tears, but they also emphasised: 'Before, although we had good harvests, our lives never improved, but now we only think about survival (*gouqie du ri*). In these bitter living conditions, we have no way to lift our morale for production and work hard at it, and so it is difficult for us to have a good harvest; from now on, if the state will only let us fill our stomachs, then we will be able to strive for a good harvest'".

Therefore, the "liberated" peasants preferred feudalism to the democratic reform. In general, Qinghai's famine ranked third place in China after Guizhou and Anhui.²⁵² During the three years (the suppression of a revolt followed by famine) 150,000 people died in Qinghai: this was more than one third of its population for 1957. Not only were the villages starving, but also the cities. An eyewitness recalled that it was prohibited to talk about the famine in Lhasa, under threat of severe punishment.²⁵³ During the autopsy of one person who died of hunger, grass and horse manure were found in his stomach.

252 Yang, 1996 — in: Blondeau and Buffetrille, 2008, p.143.

253 Tibet under Chinese, 1976, p.56.

Before 1950, Tibet conducted foreign trade. Now the southern borders were closed.²⁵⁴ Trade with India and Nepal was disrupted, many traders had fled abroad. As a result, the market speculators flourished and prices increased.²⁵⁵ National crafts were in decline, with the exception of manufacturing products made of stone, wood and steel. After the beginning of the land reform, in the future TAR, residents were offered an exchange of their Tibetan currency for Chinese currency for a period of seven to ten days, with the rate being half of what it was before the uprising.²⁵⁶ When this period expired, Tibetan currency and silver coins (with which the Chinese had paid them previously) were all declared invalid. Residents of Lhasa were ordered to surrender valuables, including religious items. Many preferred to throw them into the Kyichu River.

On 20 December 1961, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 1723 (XVI), “gravely concerning the continuation of the events in Tibet, including the violation of fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people and the suppression of the distinctive cultural and religious life which they have traditionally enjoyed”.²⁵⁷ The resolution states that the UN General Assembly: “1. Reaffirms its conviction that respect of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is essential for the evolution of the peaceful world order based on the rule of law; 2. Solemnly renews its call for the cessation of practices which deprive the Tibetan people of their fundamental human rights and freedoms, including their right to self-determination; 3. Expresses the hope that Member States will make all possible efforts, if appropriate, towards achieving the purposes of the present resolution”.

In Resolution 2079 (XX) of 18 December 1965, the UN General Assembly declared that that it reaffirmed its previous resolutions on Tibet, and “1. Deplores the continued violation of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people of Tibet; 2. Reaffirms that respect for the Principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is essential for the evolution of the peaceful world order based on the rule of law; 3. Declares its conviction that the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Tibet and the suppression of the distinctive cultural and religious life of its people increase international tension and embitter relations between peoples; 4. Solemnly reviews its call for the cessation of all practices which deprive the Tibetan people of the human rights and fundamental freedoms which they have always enjoyed; 5. Appeals to all States to use their best endeavours to achieve the purposes of the present resolution”.²⁵⁸ The States did not use their best endeavours.

254 Tibet, 2007.

255 Panchen Lama, 1997.

256 Smith, 1996, p.472–473.

257 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/167/76/IMG/NR016776.pdf?OpenElement>

258 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/218/42/IMG/NR021842.pdf?OpenElement>

Meanwhile, a valuable document was preserved regarding the situation in Greater Tibet during 1959–1961, the so-called “Seventy Thousand Character Petition” of the 10th Panchen Lama. I have already cited some parts of it above. This document was dated May 18, 1962, and titled “A report on the sufferings of the masses of Tibet and other Tibetan regions and suggestions for future work for the central authorities through the respected Premier Zhou”. It contains observations and conclusions of the Panchen Lama after his travels around Tibet in 1960 and 1961, during which he witnessed the effects of the democratic reforms. In January 1961, he was able to meet with Mao Zedong and tell him about his observations. The Chairman issued a directive to correct the “leftist errors”.

At the end of April 1962, a “Symposium on the National Work” was organised by the CPC Central Committee in Beijing. The Tibetan lamas who spoke there, especially Geshe Sherab Gyatso, attracted a lot of attention. He proclaimed that the activity of the CPC in Qinghai was based on intimidation and was worse than that of the Chinese Republicans (KMT).²⁵⁹ The Panchen Lama realized that he was not alone. Having returned, he began to prepare the message. It was ready by May. Sherab Gyatso and Ngulchu Rinpoche (the teacher of the Panchen Lama) edited its language and style, and Ngabo Ngawang Jigme persuaded him to insert a long preamble with laudation of the CPC’s victory over the “separatists”.

Ngulchu Rinpoche urged the Panchen Lama not to proceed with this message. But the hierarch remained steadfast. A description of a concentration camp was removed from the text, where on May 1 the PLA ordered Tibetans to dance on the graves of dead prisoners. Phrases about more crimes being committed at that time than was the case during the time of the Kuomintang and the feudal lords were also deleted. From April to June 1962, three teams translated the text from Tibetan to Chinese in Beijing, having also done a reverse translation, which was given to the Panchen Lama for his approval. In May, the Panchen Lama outlined the contents of the document to Zhou Enlai, and in June, the Party leadership formally received the Chinese and the Tibetan versions. In 1992, the message somehow leaked out abroad and was translated into English and then published. In 1987, the Panchen Lama provided additional facts.²⁶⁰ Some things he had witnessed himself, other things were learned from others.

Facts about the situation in Ü-Tsang, Amdo and Kham were mixed with red rhetoric, which took up almost half of the Petition. At the same time, it is sprinkled with very reasonable proposals about how to change the situation for the better. Probably, such a style is the only one that can succeed in China. Without it, the petition was doomed to failure. Proposals included the termination of lawlessness, mass repressions, the rejection of collectivization, ending the persecutions against

259 Barnett, 1997, p.xvii.

260 His Holiness the Panchen Lama...

religion, and the restoration of ties with representatives of the surviving feudal lords and clergy.

Both messages of the Panchen Lama paint a big picture of building socialism in Tibet. First of all, there is the massive killing and sending of the indigenous population to concentration camps and prisons. "Some cadres and a few military officers who did not properly understand the Party's policy" attributed serious crimes to all of the Tibetan people, saying things like: "Tibetans are a stubborn nationality who are intoxicated with religious belief and self-esteem", discriminated against them and violated their national regulations.²⁶¹ It should be added that nationalist discrimination was also evident in prisons and concentration camps.²⁶² The Chinese were given lighter work than the Tibetans, they were less "criticized". Chinese guards and inmates stressed the "backwardness" of the Tibetans.

According to the memoirs of the Panchen Lama, the local authorities often did not differentiate the degree of guilt of the Tibetans. Innocent people were labelled as "rebels". This label extended to the population of areas where there was an uprising, and to those who happened to have been there at that time. Then accusations of "supporting the rebels" appeared. These were directed against those who had any contact with "rebels" even before the uprising, in 1957 and 1958.²⁶³ People were imprisoned and their property was confiscated.

For example, the monk Palden Gyatso, who had spent thirty-three years in prisons and labour camps, recalled that his spiritual teacher was arrested by the Chinese, after they found him with a picture of Tibetans who were standing next to the leaders of the Indian independence movement.²⁶⁴ The photo was taken in 1946, when Tibetans went to India on official trips in order to honour the occasion of the Allied victory in the 2nd World War. Now the monk was commanded to "confess" that his teacher was an Indian spy. Defamation of a spiritual teacher, according to Buddhism, is one of the worst deeds. For several days the refusing monk was subjected to beatings and hanged on a rack. Questions about his involvement in the uprising in Lhasa were added later. The inquisitors were particularly interested in who organized the uprising. Apparently, the Party leadership needed "confirmations" of their fabrications on the organization of the uprising by the Tibetan Government.

There were more prisoners throughout Tibet than there ever were throughout its history. There were difficulties with their keep. There were not enough prisons in Tibet, and it was dangerous to have so many prisoners in their home country. Therefore, large numbers of them were taken to prisons and labour camps in China. A few years later some of them were transferred to the Tibetan prisons, whose numbers grew rapidly. The guards were not only Chinese, but now also

261 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.64.

262 Tenpa Soepa, 2008, p.90–92; Khetsun, 2008.

263 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.13.

264 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.66–71.

Tibetan. Of those who were arrested in Chamdo, five thousand people were put into Markham Gartok, three thousand into the former Chamdo Monastery and eight thousand into Tsa Pomda. Subsequently, most of them died from hunger and deprivation. The Tibetans from Kham (to the east of the Yangtze) were sent to lead mines that were to the east of Dartsedo and also to the Minyak concentration camps to the west of Dartsedo. Tens of thousands of Tibetans and Chinese were put there, most of them died. Tibetans from Amdo were sent to prisons in Xining, Lanzhou, to concentration camps in Xinjiang and Qinghai. Like in the USSR in Stalin's era, concentration camps were an important source of free labour. Some major construction projects in Tibet would have been impossible without the prisoners' labour.²⁶⁵

Former political prisoners told me that most of the people who were put in prisons and camps were ordinary Tibetans. For instance, the Drapchi Prison had six blocks, and the number of people in them was about equal. Aristocrats were kept in just one of them, the 5th block. Prisoners of the pauper strata were instructed to help the socialist revolution by pointing to "class enemies".

The Panchen Lama wrote:²⁶⁶ "Furthermore, apart from part of the upper strata who were imprisoned in the Tibet military region and a small number of administrative personnel detained in ordinary prisons who were treated in accordance with Party and State law, in the majority of other prisons, the personnel and the managing personnel (*fuzeren huo guanlirenyuan*) principally responsible did not care about the life and health of the prisoners. In addition, the guards and cadres threatened prisoners with cruel, ruthless and malicious words (*canku wuqing de eyan donghe*) and beat them fiercely and unscrupulously. Also, prisoners were deliberately transferred back and forth, from the plateau to the lowlands, from freezing cold to very warm, from north to south, up and down, so that they could not accustom themselves to their new environment. Their clothes and quilts could not keep their bodies warm, their mattresses could not keep out the damp, their tents and buildings could not shelter them from the wind and rain and the food could not fill their stomachs. Their lives were miserable and full of deprivation, they had to get up early for work and come back late from their work. What is more, these people were given the heaviest and the most difficult work, which inevitably led to their strength declining from day to day. They caught many diseases, and in addition they did not have sufficient rest. Medical treatment was poor, which caused many prisoners to die from abnormal causes (*fei zhengchang de siwang*), and old prisoners in their fifties and sixties, who were physically weak and already close to death, were also forced to carry out heavy and difficult physical labour".

265 Shakya, 1999.

266 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.37.

Former prisoner Dawa Tsering recalled that the conditions became particularly severe after the eruption of famine in the early 1960's.²⁶⁷ Twice a day, each inmate was given a cup of corn or barley soup, sometimes a piece of turnip. People became weak, and wanted to lie down and never get up. Some cut pieces of leather from their shoes and chewed them all day to feel satiation. When the famine became more severe still, the guards allowed the prisoners to leave the camp and collect insects, worms and berries. Many never returned. Subsequently, tramps reported they had found human skeletons, which were lying, sitting, and leaning against stones, etc. After conducting registrar checks in Drapchi Prison in 1962, the Chinese guards found that the numbers of prisoners were dwindling. Reporting something like "he died from hunger" was not allowed—how could anyone starve in a socialist society?²⁶⁸

The arrested inmates were tortured. The diversity and scale far exceeded all of what was written by accusers of feudalism. In 1943, Mao Zedong himself publicly spoke about torture:²⁶⁹ "They should not stop too early or too late, the damage (inflicted on the victims) would be too great... Thus, the main rule is to watch carefully and do everything in its time". Now, the arrested Tibetans were subjected to many kinds of torture by the Chinese. Men were heavily beaten. They were beaten so thoroughly and indiscriminately from head to toe that it became impossible thereafter to make out the proper contours of their body. They were made to squat naked on the ground in heavy snowfalls, or wear a fur hat in heat. They were prevented from getting any sleep over a number of days, and were made to kneel down over an assortment of broken pieces of bones. They were made to stand up with their hands stretched out for prolonged periods of time, and they were suffocated to death by having their breath stifled. Their skin was perforated with needle pricks, they had both their nostrils penetrated with fingers that were driven right through to reach the depth of their cheeks inside their mouths, which made them strike the ground, and they were made to ride a *kyang* (wild donkey) without wearing any clothes when it was extremely cold.²⁷⁰

According to the same source, other tortures were also used, such as suspending the prisoner upside-down in the air by his legs with his hands tied behind him, burying the prisoner up to the level of his navel in the ground, covering the upper part of his body from the head down with wet animal skin that is rendered airtight by being pressed to the ground on all sides with stones and then keeping the spot under guard by militiamen, making a prisoner sit on a mattress spread on the ground and forcing him to continuously gulp down a dilute kind of black tea without any permission to allow him to relieve himself (leading to death from kidney failure),

267 French, 2004.

268 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.84.

269 Quoted by: Jung Chang and Halliday, 2007, p.255.

270 For details see: Samsara, a Tibetan human rights archive...

making the prisoner sit on a horse that is then given a wild chase, and making a group of people beat drums and strike cymbals as a prisoner is tied up to the back of a wild yak which then bolts with a start, dragging them along behind.

Palden Gyatso recalled that prisoners who had already started serving their sentence one winter were harnessed to a plough, on the back of which a young Chinese soldier was standing, and forced to plough the field.²⁷¹ This labour, by people “liberated from feudalism”, was required to convert pasture into arable land. Heavy and strong metal shackles were also widely used. One prisoner was ordered to wear leg shackles for four years. The shackles were not removed even for the period of work during frost or heat.

Here’s a story about a former political prisoner, Tenzin Choedrak, and what happened to him after his arrest in 1959.²⁷² Once in prison, he was manacled in one-and-a-half foot-long leg irons. Then, he was subjected to “struggle”. A rope was first laid across the front of the prisoner’s chest and then spiraled down each arm. The wrists were then tied together and pulled backwards over the man’s head. Next the rope-ends were drawn under either armpit, threaded through the loop on the chest and pulled abruptly down. Immediately the shoulders turned in their sockets, wrenching the prisoner in a grisly contortion without strangling him. The pain from this torture was so great that a man would invariably lose control of his bowels and bladder. The aim was to malign and defame the Dalai Lama. When the victim regained his consciousness, the procedure was repeated all over again. A few four-hour “sessions” during an interval of about one month were used. Eye damage and loss of teeth did not hinder the continuation of torture. During the intervals, people were kept in a solitary rooms about 4 × 8 feet in size. The “sessions” stopped when the prison doctor refused to take any more responsibility for the survival of the victim.

In October 1959, T. Choedrak and another seventy-nine prisoners were moved from Tibet to China, thirty-eight prisoners per truck. They were forced to stand for the entire journey, which lasted ten days. They were brought to the Kokonor region, where they were put on a train and taken to a jail on the Gobi border. There, they lived in cramped conditions and worked in the fields. Returning from the day’s labor, they had to undergo political “study sessions” lasting until 10 p.m. In May 1960, the rations were decreased from 16.5 to 8.5 pounds of grain per month. Grains were mixed with bark and inedible roots. By July, the prisoners looked like skeletons. During work, people fell and weren’t able to get up. Some died of hunger. Others started to cut leather shoes for food, to hunt for frogs and insects, and to dig for worms. A more constant source of food was the refuse discarded by Chinese guards. Crowds of prisoners would

271 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.78–79.

272 Victim of Chinese torture...

gather around bones or fruit rinds thrown by the roadside. By October 1962, of the seventy-nine Tibetans only twenty-one survived. These were sent to their homeland and were placed in the Drapchi Prison. All their spare time was devoted to “re-education”, “admitting mistakes” and informing on their cell-mates. Nearly thirteen years since his arrest, Choedrak finally received a sentence. Although no charges were made against him, he was considered an “upper class intelligentsia associated with the former Tibetan Government”, and was given a seventeen year sentence. After that, conditions improved, and he was transferred to the Sangyip Prison and was assigned to hard labor in the prison’s quarry. Every day, he was forced to chisel ninety twelve-by-eight-inch stone blocks from boulders blasted out of the mountainside nearby. In 1976, having completed his full sentence, he was out of the Sangyip Prison although he was still considered “an enemy of the people”. He worked in the hospital. In October 1980, after the Dalai Lama’s delegation visited, he finally left for India.

According to Tenpa Soepa, who spent twenty years in prison camps, Tibetan prisoners were forced to work on the farms from dawn to dusk.²⁷³ Such slavery was termed “change through work”. The sick were not always admitted to hospital, and some died at work. Those who did not meet work targets were beaten by prison guards and “struggled against” their own inmates in the evenings, that is, once again they were beaten. Work shifts were followed by “re-education” sessions. The prisoners were divided into groups, in which each prisoner was set against another to point out what mistakes the other had made, and whether they had spoken the truth. The session usually ended with “the struggle against” two to three people. Those who were not “corrected” had their prison terms and forced labour hours extended. Prisoners were allocated one day of rest per month. But propaganda demanded they worked on those days as well. As a result, there were only three days off per year: Spring Festival, International Labour Day on May 1, and Republic Day.

In the Jang Tsalakha site, located in the desert of the northern plains, there were five concentration camps that contained more than ten thousand people. They were forced to mine, and transport borax.²⁷⁴ According to former prisoners, ten to thirty people died there every day from starvation, beatings and overwork. More than eight thousand died there in just one year. Three or four corpses were burned or thrown into the river each day on the construction site of the Ngachen Hydroelectric Power Plant near Lhasa (which was allegedly built by the PLA).

According to a Tibetan woman who was a former prisoner in the Dartsedo area in 1959, they were given a cup of skilly three times a day, lots of water and nothing else.²⁷⁵ In 1960 she was transferred to the lead mines of Goltok. The work was hard,

273 Tenpa Soepa, 2008, p.68–80.

274 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

275 Behind bars...

but the food was worse — there was a famine. The men were adding insects to the gruel, but the women were squeamish to do so. According to the camp commander, from 1960 to 1963, 12,019 prisoners died there. Of the seventy-six Tibetans in the Chiu-chon Prison in Gansu, from 1959 to 1962, fifty-three died, some from hunger and hard work, others were executed.²⁷⁶ The rest were transferred to the Drapchi Prison in Lhasa. By 1979, when the last of the prisoners were released, only seven of the seventy-six people were alive. Two third of the Kongpo prisoners died.²⁷⁷ In some prisons the corpses were piled outside during cold winters. Inmates sometimes ate them so as not to die themselves.

According to the 10th Panchen Lama, nearly half of all the adult men in Tibet were put into prisons and concentration camps, and almost all of these prisoners died from hunger and deprivation. In 1962, he said that about 5% of the population of Tibet were imprisoned. But in 1987, having being jailed for eighteen years, the Panchen Lama said:²⁷⁸ “According to my information at that time, it was between 10% to 15%. But I did not have the courage to state such a high figure. I would have died under *thamzing* if I had stated the real figure”.

In Tibetan “*thamzing*” means “struggle session” (Chinese “*dou zheng hui*” — the meeting of struggle). The selected victim was made (through threats or physical force) to “repent errors”. Humiliation was one of the necessary components of this process, accompanied by accusations of sympathising to the reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries. Usually, the “struggle” included beatings that were carried out by “the masses” at special sessions and were repeated many times. Chinese officials themselves usually took the position of passive observers of “the wrath of the masses”. An eyewitness from Kham told me that at first the Chinese were teaching people how to conduct *thamzing*, i.e. how to beat without killing. The victim was to accept everything meekly and demonstrate repenting. They had to stand with their head bowed, or bend at the waist. Often, the victim died and sometimes *thamzing* was finished with an execution.

The “struggle session” was a unique method used by the CPC during Mao Zedong’s period. It combined punishment without trial, harassment, torture and sometimes murder with ideological rallies, intimidation and brainwashing of the masses. No other regime would have thought to combine all of these. People were afraid of such meetings. The few who had the courage to refuse to participate in them were labelled as enemies, and then later became the objects of “struggle” themselves.²⁷⁹ Initially, such a person could have been told that he did not have “a pleasing face”. This meant that at the next meeting he had to pull someone’s hair, hurl abuse, etc., i.e. he had to “fight”. Refusal to participate could cause an arrest.

276 Tenpa Soepa, 2008, p.93–96.

277 Khetsun, 2008.

278 His Holiness the Panchen Lama...

279 Shakya, 2002.

Back in 1927, when responding to “accusations and attacks on the revolutionary struggle of the peasantry”, Mao praised the following methods of dealing with “enemies”, religion and traditions:²⁸⁰ “Each village requires a brief period of terror <...> Groups of peasants break into houses of their (landlords. – Author) and initiate interrogations that are not too harsh. As a result, most of these people write “confessions”. <...> Wearing a high cap. This method is very common everywhere. The local tuhao or leshen put on a tall paper cap with an inscription: tuhao such or leshen such, and then lead him on a rope, while accompanied by a large crowd of people. <...> Each county needs to have a few most brutal and criminal local tuhao and leshen shot. This is the only effective means of suppression of the reaction. <...> Numerous local peasant unions insist on seizing the property of the temples. <...> In the Liling county a movement for the prohibition of superstitious rites and destruction of images of deities was fairly widespread <...> In the Dunfusi temple, students together with the peasants have burned more than thirty wooden statues. <...> It is necessary that the peasants themselves dumped figures of deities and destroyed the temples of faithful widows that followed their husbands to the grave, and the arches, erected in honour of chaste and respectful wives”, etc. In 1927, 336 million people inhabited China’s rural areas, of which 45% owned their land, and 32% of these were rich peasants and landlords.²⁸¹ Thus, the terror was directed against 48.4 million people.

During the second half of 1959, a crime of a person was determined by his class origin.²⁸² For example, the father of the 10th Panchen Lama had not done anything wrong, but came from a class of “serf owners”. He “admitted his mistakes and repented before the masses” in Shigatse. However, members of the local work team initiated a “struggle” against him. As a result, he was put up in front of a crowd and brutally beaten by the activists. Another aristocrat was subjected to *thamzing* for handing a cigarette to a convict. He was accused of trying to buy favours with the working class.²⁸³

Dukchu (“tears of sorrow”) was another type of rally.²⁸⁴ In order to find the cause of “serfdom” misery, people were demanded to open up and “display old wounds”, that is, to weep and complain, and to describe all instances of “suppression under the evil serfdom system”.

This was particularly important when foreign journalists visited, for example, those from the left newspapers like Pravda, L'Humanite, Daily Worker, etc. The authorities planned these visits well in advance, carefully preparing political performances, ensuring the foreigners were accompanied by Chinese cadres, and

280 Mao, 1952, c.44–59, 70, 72.

281 The Ideological and Political Essence of Maoism, 1977.

282 Panchen Lama, 1997.

283 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.121.

284 Norbu, 1999, p. 186–187.

that Tibetans gave the required interviews under their supervision. Of course, no one was tortured and killed during a *thamzing* during these visits. The results were predictable. Unfortunately, this “evidence” is still used in discussions on Tibet.²⁸⁵

A good example of such a hoax is a trip by a group of foreign journalists to Tibet in 1959. Former prisoners recalled how they were once informed about the upcoming foreigners’ visit to Lhasa.²⁸⁶ The Chinese put back religious objects in a monastery, and lit the oil lamps. The prisoners were given good food, and the foreigners were photographed with them. Another eyewitness reported that during a visit to the monasteries by Czech, Soviet and British visitors, the monks were allowed to conduct religious meetings. Beforehand they were forced to collect manure instead, to carry soil and bricks, plant trees, or work in the fields.

A Soviet correspondent was one of the visitors there too. He recorded many interviews with Tibetans. All of them greatly approved of the CPC. An exhibition of “nightmares of feudalism” was organised at Jokhang. Of course, instruments of torture and products made of human bones were present on display there. For example, there were skulls with silver noses and artificial eyes.²⁸⁷ Today’s propaganda prefers to keep quiet on that subject: such things are made as souvenirs. They can be easily bought in Tibet as well as other countries. It never enters someone’s mind to accuse someone of murder. Other fabrications are also no longer used, for example, stories of judges determining guilt by throwing dice.

The Soviet correspondent also described the *thamtzing* of three main lamas from Drepung.²⁸⁸ Initially, the younger monks acted out a little piece about their “cruel ruler”. Then the protagonist himself along with the two others was led into the yard and forced to stand while bending at the waist. One of them was labelled as “tsampa in front of the Buddha statue”. It was explained to the foreigners that during holidays a ball of tsampa was placed before the statue, and that tsampa was painted on top and rotten inside. (This implied that rotten religious offerings were performed.) Then, the monk witnesses were seated at the table and began to say that the rebels, the torturers of people at the monastery and outside of it, gave orders to kill their serfs at a local prison, so as to get the skulls needed for religion, that they became fat, when the rest were starving, and that they engaged in trade, deception and sin. Finally, the *thamtzing* was over, and it was time for the visitors’ dinner. The convoy led the lamas to a bus. And our reporter, wandering along the “narrow as vaults streets” recalls the scenes he witnessed that day: “stacks of gold bars, stench and soot in the prayer halls, small lamas singing a song of the Chinese Young Pioneers”.

Foreigners were also treated to an organized *thamzing* of the former governor, Tsewang Dorjee Lhalu, which took place on his estate. Our correspondent above

285 For example, Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

286 Tibet under Chinese, 1976, p.56, 88.

287 Domogatskikh, 1962, p.41–43.

288 Domogatskikh, 1962, p.50–53.

described it as well.²⁸⁹ Hundreds of people are sitting in the courtyard and all the while shouting and waving their fists. The next table is covered with a plastic tablecloth. The *sanfan* committee sits at the table and carries out the “three antis”. Lhalu is standing, bending at the waist. He confesses that he was one of the leaders of the uprising in 1959. A young man gets up, accusing him of poisoning his uncle, Gedak Lama, in Chamdo. He gives a detailed description of how Lhalu poisoned Gedak Lama. Maybe he saw it himself? A serf gets up and points to the prison estate. It turns out he was jailed there for not paying his fines. The visitors are taken inside for a quick look. They see a wall with pegs. It turns out, these were used to tie a victim and torture him to death. There was also a box for keeping scorpions. The basement was meant for hungry rats, and after spending one day there a prisoner was eaten to a skeleton. The bones of the victims are obvious, they are spread over the floor. The visitors exit. The play continues. Up jumps a young man, in comes an old lady. They weep as the feudal lord separates the families and tortured people as well. The foreigners are led to the mansion. The luxuries are in full view: wine, furniture, tableware, gold, pearls, corals, sugar, rice, flour, butter and – oh, horror! – a pistol from the Federative Republic of Germany. “It turns out that not only German beer, but also the German arms came here from the Chancellor Adenauer’s patrimony”. The audience are lead back to the yard. A trunk is uncovered and obligatory bills are read to the accompaniment of wailing. The receipts are solemnly burned. “The roar of jubilation bursts out of hundreds of chests: Down with the accursed slavery and serfdom!” The land is given to mutual aid teams.

I would like to add the following as an epilogue: Lhalu was jailed in Drapchi Prison. In 1965 he was released and became a peasant. In 1983 he was rehabilitated and became the Vice-Chairman of the Tibet Regional Committee of the CPPCC. His rehabilitation answered all questions about poisoning, pegs in the wall, scorpions, rats and bones.

Other journalists, such as the American A.L. Strong, also published their impressions. Subsequently, her books were published in the PRC and she was enrolled into Hong Wei Bing (Red Guards). She was also enthusiastic about the democratic reforms, took numerous interviews, witnessed *thamzings*, exhibitions, etc.²⁹⁰ It is interesting to compare the descriptions of the same events with those by Domogatskikh. They glorify the CPC in various ways for different audiences. For example, Strong noted that some accusations (killings, beatings, sexual harassment etc.) of lamas were unsubstantiated.

In 1963, an epic Chinese film “The Serf” was launched. It contained a lot of factual errors, but was shown for a long time in Lhasa. The film was meant to stir up hatred of the people towards the “exploiters”. Whist watching the film, people

289 Domogatskikh, 1962, p.55–64.

290 Strong, 1959.



A struggle session with Lhalu, the former governor. A foreign correspondent is seen to the rear-left (Domogatskikh, 1962)

were expected to cry in order to avoid accusations of sympathy for the feudal lords. Some applied “tiger balm” around their eyes to induce tears.^{290a}

The 10th Panchen Lama wrote:²⁹¹ “In May 1959, our Great Leader, Chairman Mao, and you, Premier, indicated... that in the aspect of religion, the Party Central Committee would not only continue to give the masses, both monastic and secular, freedom of religious belief, but also would protect law-abiding monasteries and believers, and that we could carry out religious activities including “teaching, debating, writing” (*jiang, bian, zhu*) as before”. In fact, it happened as follows.

290a Shakya, Ts. Tibet and China...

291 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.40.

Before the reform in Greater Tibet, the clergy did constitute probably more than 10% of the population. According to Ngabo, by 1959, Tibet had 2,467 monasteries, and more than 110,000 monks and nuns.²⁹² According to Chinese data, the number of functioning monasteries and temples in Tibet fell from 2,711 in 1958 to 370 in 1960.²⁹³ This refers to the future TAR: Greater Tibet had 6,259 monasteries and other religious centres.²⁹⁴ According to Chinese sources, by 1958, Qinghai had 722 Tibetan monasteries with 57,647 monks, 2,500 nuns and 1,240 *tulkus*.²⁹⁵ After democratic reforms, only eleven monasteries remained intact. According to the same source, in 1958, there were 369 monasteries in Gansu. Only eight of them remained open, of 16,900 monks only 571 were left. In Sichuan, there were 922 monasteries, in Yunnan province twenty-four. After summing up the numbers for all of the Tibetan regions, we will get the figure of 4,748. Perhaps, the discrepancy in numbers is due to how one regards small temples, separately or together with the monasteries.

According to A.L. Strong, 2,136 monasteries of Ü-Tsang (i.e. almost all) supported the uprising.²⁹⁶ As a result, the main repressions hit the clergy, and in Ü-Tsang its numbers fell from 114,100 people in 1958 to 18,104 in 1960.²⁹⁷ The number of monks dramatically decreased even in the main monasteries. For example, in Drepung, only seven hundred monks were left from eight thousand to ten thousand; in Kumbum, four hundred were left from 1,200. In Tashilhunpo the number of monks decreased by half, down to 1,980 people, despite the Panchen Lama's support for the Chinese leadership.²⁹⁸ Some monasteries were turned into prisons, barracks, warehouses, and barns.²⁹⁹

The Panchen Lama wrote to the Chinese leaders:³⁰⁰ "Before the democratic reform, there were more than 2,500 large, medium and small monasteries in Tibet. After democratic reform, only seventy or so monasteries were kept in existence by the government. This was a reduction of more than 97%. Because there were no people living in most of the monasteries, there was no one to look after their Great Prayer Halls (*da jing tang*), and other divine halls and the monks' housing. There was great damage and destruction, both by man and otherwise, and they were reduced to the condition of having collapsed or being on the point of collapse. In whole of Tibet, in the past there was a total of about 110,000 monks and nuns. Of those, possibly ten thousand fled abroad, leaving about one hundred thousand.

292 Ling, 1964.

293 The unpublished data of Jing Jun— in: Smith, 1996, p.474.

294 For example, Briefing paper...

295 Harris, in: Kolas and Thowsen, 2005, p.46.

296 Strong, 1959.

297 Smith, 1996, p.474.

298 In 2001 there were only 800 monks there (Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005).

299 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.72–75; Puntshok, 1998, p.24.

300 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.52.

After democratic reform was concluded, the number of monks and nuns living in the monasteries were about seven thousand people, which is a reduction of 93%. In regards to the quality of the monks and nuns living in the monasteries, apart from those in the Zhashenlunbu (Tashilhunpo; Tibetan: bkra shis lhun po) monastery, who were slightly better, the quality of the monks and nuns in the rest of the monasteries was very low. <...> In reality, the monasteries had already lost their function and significance as religious organisations”.

Monks’ return to the secular world was interpreted as realization of the freedom of religion. It was assumed that the vast majority of monks became what they were against their will.³⁰¹ Monks were forced to repeat that to foreigners and to add that they voluntarily left the monasteries to become peasants, and that people are “more likely to seek help from the Party and state organizations than from God. And they are only better off because of it”.³⁰² This was also repeated by the modern Left wing:³⁰³ “But monks who had been conscripted as children into the religious orders were now free to renounce the monastic life, and thousands did, especially the younger ones. The remaining clergy lived on modest government stipends and extra income earned by officiating at prayer services, weddings, and funerals”. But in reality, tens of thousands of expelled monks were unable to find jobs, thus increasing the number of paupers and beggars.^{303a}

The methods used to reduce the number of clergy were thus:³⁰⁴ “When by any means possible monks and nuns were being made to return to secular life, first of all in the so-called names of ‘study’ and ‘mobilisation’ in each monastery, monks and nuns were gathered together in the Great Prayer Hall (*dajingtang*) or in a large room. They were tightly controlled, they studied intensively, and they were forcibly mobilized (*qiangpo dongyuan*) to carry out mutual criticism both day and night, and a high tide of acute struggle was stirred up. Those who publicly displayed their religious beliefs were given all types of labels including ‘superstitious element’ and ‘disliker of the revolution’, and unbearable and inexplicable struggles and attacks were carried out against them. On the other hand, when the monks were asked whether or not they wished to go back to secular life, if they asked to remain as monks, they were told ‘You still have not been educated, you have not done away with your superstitions’ and were violently struggled against, and many (*bu shao*) of them were put under surveillance or locked up.

Under these circumstances, unless you were made out of iron, there would be no way you would ask to remain as a monk. Thus, sixty and seventy year old monks also asked to go back to secular life and return to their families. These people had no way to start a family, and also had no strength to engage in production, and they

301 Bogoslovsky, 1976, p.272.

302 Domogatskikh, 1962, p.14.

303 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

303a Bogoslovsky et al., 1975.

304 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.49–50.

did not want to leave the monastery where they had spent the first half of their lives, this was common knowledge. The fact that these people had no alternative but to go back home is sufficient to prove that a serious problem had arisen, namely that they could no longer live in the monasteries.

In some monasteries, work teams drew up a list of monks, and compelled those monks to go back to their families and return to secular life; even more seriously, they went so far as to line up monks on one side, and line up nuns and secular women on the other side, and force them to select someone from the other side (*huxiang tiaoxuan*). This is practically impossible to explain and account for in the context of the civil rights of males and females to choose their own marriage partner. This is a right with which nobody can interfere and which is stipulated in and protected by our law.

In small Buddhist monasteries and hermitages (*chan an*) deep in the mountains, there are many devout followers who have spent their whole lives in practice and meditation, conducting themselves strictly in accordance with their religion; they regard everything in the ordinary world as poisonous, and are pessimistic and world-weary. Because a revolutionary undertaking is also something of the ordinary world, very few of them displayed a welcoming and enthusiastic attitude. This is not only not surprising, it is possible, and normal. But the cadres took this to be the foundation of incorrigibly obstinate reactionary thinking, and placed many of this type of follower under surveillance, or locked them up. They carried out grave attacks against pure and holy followers who conducted themselves in accordance with their religion”.

The slogan “we must get rid of superstition” covered up senior officials who drew up lists of rites that were to be eliminated. “They continually (*yi wei*) encouraged actions by monks and nuns which contravened their religious doctrine, and also forced them to take such actions. They coerced them into participating in bad things, where they cast aside good and did evil; what is more, those who took part could gain the glorious title of ‘progressives’ or ‘activists’, and gain special care. This caused monasteries, which were places where merit had been and was being accumulated, to change into places where evil was done”.³⁰⁵ All of this, as was noted by the Panchen Lama, was a gross violation of Chinese laws and policies that were declared by the CPC.

In March 1960, the Chinese conducted a raid on roadside temples in the Nichungri area. They threw away all the pieces made of clay and stone, collapsed the roofs and took the wooden support beams.³⁰⁶ All clay images were smashed into pieces and turned into bricks for the construction of lavatories. The great Gyapun Thang temple in Lhasa was completely destroyed, clay sculptures were smashed, the fragments were scattered along the surrounding roads. In 1960, the largest stupa in

305 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.54–55.

306 Tibet under Chinese, 1976, p.56.

Tibet (about 37 m high) was destroyed. This was the Great Stupa of the Thousand images of Buddha Maitreya (Jampaling Kumbum), consisting of nine levels, it was situated in the lower part of the Dranang Valley and built in 1401–1472. There were temples on each of its floors. The temple on the first floor had a huge image of Maitreya. All the buildings were destroyed in the Jampaling Monastery.

However, it was more important to make people break their own sacred objects. Partly zombified and partly frightened by endless propaganda, the former “serfs” gathered for rallies at the gates of monasteries, then entered inside and started the demolition. Suitable construction materials were dismantled for the construction of buildings and roads.³⁰⁷ Some of the wooden parts were dragged away as firewood. Those who did not participate in the destruction were denounced as “superstitious”, “unreformed” etc. They were “struggled against”. In addition to simple destruction, theft and “recycling”, the communists and people who were brainwashed by them turned the sacred objects into objects of bullying. The Chinese broke off the heads from statues of Buddha and forced the arrested Tibetans to wear them as tubs on their backs, with *thangkas* tucked underneath.³⁰⁸ Large *thangkas* that were hanging on walls in cloth frames were cut into pieces and distributed among the poor (most of who continued to count them as sacred).³⁰⁹ Thick paper from sacred books were used as insoles by the Chinese. Wooden boards with engravings that were used as binders for xylographs were turned into chairs and floorboards. Religious clothing was distributed to the “cultural troupes”.

The Panchen Lama wrote:³¹⁰ “As for the eradication of Buddhist statues, Buddhist scriptures and Buddhist stupas, basically speaking, apart from the very small number of monasteries including the four great monasteries which were protected, in Tibet’s other monasteries and in the villages, small towns and towns in the broad agricultural and animal herding areas, some of our Han cadres produced a plan, our Tibetan cadres mobilized, and some people among the activists who did not understand reason played the part of executors of the plan. They usurped the name of the masses and put on the face (mask – *mianju*) of the masses, and stirred up a great flood of waves to eliminate statues of the Buddha, Buddhist scriptures and stupas; they burned countless statues of the Buddha, Buddhist scriptures and stupas, threw them into water, threw them onto the ground, broke them and melted them. They recklessly carried out wild and hasty (*fengxiang chuangu*) destruction of monasteries, Buddhist halls, “mani” walls and stupas, and stole many ornaments from statues of the Buddha and precious things from Buddhist stupas.

Because government purchasing bodies were not careful in making distinctions when purchasing non-ferrous metals, they purchased many statues of the Buddha,

307 Ely, M. The true story...

308 Puntshok, 1998, p.22–26.

309 Smith, 2008.

310 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.50–51.

stupas, and offering vessels made of non-ferrous metals and showed an attitude of encouraging the destruction of these things (indicates Buddha statues and so on. – Chinese translator's note). As a result, some villages and monasteries looked not only as if they were not the result of man's deliberate actions (*bu jin bu xiang shi 'youxin' zhi ren suo wei*) but rather they looked as if they had been accidentally destroyed by bombardment and a war had just ended, and they were unbearable to look at. Furthermore, they scrupulously insulted religion, using the 'Tripitaka' (*dazangjing*) as material for fertiliser, in particular using pictures of the Buddha and Buddhist sutras to make shoes. This was totally unreasonable. Because they did many things which even lunatics would hardly do, people of all strata were thoroughly shocked, their emotions were extremely confused and they were very discouraged and disheartened. They cried out, with tears flowing from their eyes: "Our area has been turned into a dark area" (in common parlance in Tibet, areas which have no religion are called dark areas – Chinese translator's note) and other such piteous cries. It is difficult to imagine and describe Tibet's Buddhist statues, scriptures and stupas being destroyed like this, but some people still say that 'the broad masses of the working people have become conscious, and so they have been destroyed'. This is sheer nonsense, which comes from a complete lack of understanding of the actual situation in Tibet".

The destruction of religious buildings was conducted as follows.³¹¹ Special teams of Chinese mineralogists visited them to identify and remove all of the precious stones. Then metallurgists visited them with the same purpose but with regards to metals, after which everything of value was taken out in army trucks. The walls were exploded, and all wooden beams and pillars were taken out. Clay sculptures were destroyed in the hope of finding precious gems in them. The remaining pieces of wood and stones were removed. Hundreds of tons of valuable religious statues, *thangkas*, metal objects and other treasures were shipped out of Tibet. There are reports of convoys of trucks that took metal objects from the monasteries of Tibet to China.³¹² Initially, the trucks were carrying small statues of gold and silver, later larger statues that were sawn up into pieces and destined for melting. This kind of looting also continued during the Cultural Revolution until the 1970s and was called "re-distribution of wealth during the period of democratic reform".

Mao Zedong was to be considered "the living Buddha" and his ideas the new religion. During the early 1960's, the portraits of Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai were installed in surviving temples in one row, with the *thangkas*.³¹³

Religious life was almost destroyed. The Panchen Lama wrote:³¹⁴ "As for the actual situation after the democratic reforms of those monasteries which had monks, most of the regular meetings (indicates the routine gatherings of monks. – Chinese

311 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

312 Tibet under Chinese, 1976, p.80; Smith, 2008, p.116; Smith, W. Congressional panel...

313 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

314 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.56–57.

translator's note), occasional meetings, and occasional ceremonies have basically ceased, and there are no gatherings and debates about scriptures. Due to this, there are basically no debates about the exoteric and esoteric religious theories (*xian mie li lun*), no teaching and reciting scriptures (*jiao jing du jing*), no explanation and teaching of precepts (*chuan shi jiao jie*), no compilation of scriptures (*bian zhu jing lun*), no rites of consecration by pouring water (*guan ding sui chi*), no self-cultivation and meditation (*wu jing xiu chan*), no preparation of offerings on the altar (*hua xian she tan*), no setting up the fire-offering ceremony (*xian gong huo ji*), no ten preliminary ceremonies (*chu shi li fo*), no twenty-five fragrant meetings (*ershi wu xiang hui*), no redeeming of wishes through making an offering to a god (*huan yuan gong shen*), no vocal practices and spiritual dances (*tiao shen lian yin*), no driving out of evil spirits (*song gui qu mo*) or other such normal religious activities”.

When destroying religion, the Communists were paying attention to the private life of the Tibetans. “People have had to take down the flags from their roofs, it is inconvenient for them to wear protective talismans and the ‘*jingang knot*’; they have had to hide statues of the Buddha, Buddhist scriptures and stupas which they worship at home; they do not dare to chant scriptures or accumulate merit in public; they do not dare to burn juniper incense (*bai xiang*) to worship the Buddha; it is inconvenient or impossible to worship and make offerings to holy places and well-known statues of the Buddha and stupas, to turn the prayer wheels (*zhuan jing*) and make offerings to the “good monks”, to donate to the poor or to carry out other such merit-accumulating activities; the situation has become such that when people become ill, scriptures are no longer chanted and when people die, the ‘*chaodu*’ ceremony³¹⁵ is no longer carried out. For example, according to our Tibetan customs, if the ‘*chaodu*’ ceremony is not carried out after someone dies, this would be seen as a lack of respect for the deceased, cruel and merciless, and abominable. Therefore, for a period, people said: “We died too late, if we had died a bit earlier, we could have had prayers and the ‘*chaodu*’ ceremony, but now death is just like a dog dying, as soon as breathing stops we will be thrown out of the door”.³¹⁶

At the same time, the communists put a lot of effort into re-education, education and training of cadres with the new ideology. Meetings were held to explain the stance of the CPC on various issues. After them, people were asked: “Are there more opinions?” Everybody was unanimously “in favour”. Debate was dangerous: everyone demanded unanimity. Thus, when a person was told “go to studies!” he was trembling with fear.³¹⁷

315 Here and below: “the *chaodu* ceremony” is the Chinese designation of the Tibetan texts “bar do thos sgröl” (or “Bardo Todol”, “Self-liberation Through Listening in the Bardo State”). In the West they are known as the “Tibetan Book of the Dead”.

316 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.57–58.

317 Panchen Lama, 1997.



1



2

The Khampa nomads (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration): 1 – wearing national dress, 2 – wearing "Mao suits"

“The Tibetan language, dress and personal adornment (*fushi*), good customs and habits and other such important national characteristics which should have been respected were also included in the ‘Three Greats’ revolutionary work of ‘great destruction, great exposure, great construction’. They (cadres. – Author) thought that everything old was backward, filthy and useless... They neglected the Tibetan language, laughed at Tibetan dress; they showed an attitude of dislike towards women’s head dresses (*shoushi*) and men’s queues, with the result that it was impossible to wear a headdress or keep a queue. They regarded whitewashing the outer walls, flagpoles on the roofs, marriage and funeral ceremonial gifts, monastery gatherings and worshipping the gods, festival entertainments and traditional sports as useless and superfluous, so that most of these practices stopped.<...> From ancient times to the present they have all worn Tibetan clothes for work and in their daily life. For instance, old people say: ‘If we wear Han clothes, we feel cold at the small of our backs, but these days, we have no choice but to wear them.’ The masses call Tibetans in Han clothes ‘fake Han’.”³¹⁸

People were forbidden to wear maroon and saffron-coloured “monk-like” clothes.³¹⁹ Traditional Tibetan costumes and hairstyles—bright and peculiar, differing between children, men and women, different tribes, people of different occupations, etc. were all struggled against. Instead, they were replaced with uniform short haircuts and “Mao suits”: standard, dull, monochrome jackets and caps that reminded of military and prison styles simultaneously.

318 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.65–66.

319 Puntshok, 1998.

A policy with an aim of abolition of the Tibetan language was adopted.³²⁰ The Tibetan language was the only subject which distinguished schools of that territory from the schools of Central China. Now it became intensely sinicized as well: Chinese words and phrases were forcefully injected, religious and “reactionary feudal” vocabulary was banished. For example, a ban was imposed on so-called “polite manner of speech” that applied to conversations with seniors, and in particular with the aristocracy.³²¹ For example, the use of the polite ending “la” after a person’s name was prohibited.³²² Instead, new phrases were introduced: “the great leader”, “the great, glorious and correct CPC”, later “the great red banner of Mao Zedong thought”, “Soviet revisionist renegade clique,” “paper tiger”, “traitor, provocateur and strikebreaker” etc. Some of this language is still used in propaganda.

The Panchen Lama wrote:³²³ “...Say that the Tibetan language is inferior and lacks capability to communicate and express meaning <...> in recent years, wanting to carry out “cultural revolution” and “unification of the written language with the oral language”, those people who have a low level of Tibetan, whose pride is the size of a mountain or who are good at flattering and toadying, talked wildly and said, “they are not correct” or “they are not perfect” about the thirty letters of the Tibetan alphabet (*sa song*) and “adding to the nature of characters” (*zixing tianzhi*, in Tibetan: *kangyur*) (grammar), which were created by our ancestor Tunmi (Thumi Sambhota) and which are the foundations of the Tibetan language, and about the standardization of characters carried out and the common written language composed by themselves to be infallible, those people reformed the language, which led to the loss of its capacity to express common things and things of depth and its communicative and expressive capacities. Moreover, the Central authorities and Tibet used the Lhasa dialect as the standard Tibetan dialect, and when writing down non-standard pronunciations, they spelt them as they wished. Therefore, except for those who understood the Lhasa dialect, nobody could fully understand those documents. Similarly, Tibetan language teachers and secretaries in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, Yunnan and other places all took their own dialect as the common oral language and wrote it down accordingly. This led to people outside the area in which that particular dialect was spoken not being able to fully understand the meaning. In this manner, the unifying nature of the Tibetan language was lost”.

The old Tibet did not have schools in the European sense. But thousands of monasteries substituted for schools and universities and met the people’s needs for education.³²⁴ According to official Chinese data, children who were attending school

320 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

321 It must be noted that similar expressions were eradicated in the Mongolian People’s Republic a quarter of a century before.

322 Puntshok, 1998, p.24.

323 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.69–70.

324 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

constituted less than 2% of all school-age children, 95% of youth and middle-age people were illiterate.³²⁵ This is wrong. The monks were literate and they were mainly “youth and middle-age people. There were nearly six hundred thousand. Before 1959, there was a custom by which every Tibetan family tried to make a monk from at least one of its children. Thus, there were literate people in every, or almost every Tibetan family. Of course, this was not the whole of the population. But if Tibet’s population was about four million people and the future TAR had about 1.2 million (see Chapter 9), then the literacy rate was clearly higher than 5%. And we did not count the numerous literate laymen: governmental affairs, trade, etc: all required an ability to write and count.

The repressions were largely aimed against the clergy, nobility and other “exploiters”, that is against the most educated part of the population. The destroyed monastic schools were replaced with newly created “public schools” with an extremely low level of education, with the majority of them being funded by local residents.³²⁶ Soon, these schools closed.

The message from the Panchen Lama was approved at a special meeting. Zhou Enlai has summoned Zhang Guohua and Zhang Jingwu to Beijing and told them in person that they should admit their mistakes.³²⁷ By July of 1962, four documents were produced and endorsed by the CPC Central Committee. They pointed to the need for unification, religious freedom and rule-making regarding the “rebels” of 1959.

The Panchen Lama went to Lhasa, while Zhang Guohua and Zhang Jingwu stayed in Beijing. They began convincing the party leadership to accept their point of view.^{327a} Li Weihai, who supported the Panchen Lama, was removed from his post as the head of the United Front. Mao accused him of being “soft and revisionist”.

That same summer, a meeting of the Central Committee was held at Beidaihe Resort. Mao said that a key part of the Party’s work must be the intensification of class struggle. After all, for him, the nationality problem was a class issue. It is said that the chairman accused the Panchen Lama of attempting to restore his class position as a feudal ruler and called his message a “poisoned arrow that was shot at the Party by reactionary feudal overlords”.

After all, at another time, Mao said that the Communist Party was not afraid of criticism.³²⁸ Moreover, he said:³²⁹ “We cannot apply administrative measures for the elimination of religion; we cannot force people not to have faith. <...> All questions of an ideological nature, all controversial issues within a nation can be resolved only through democratic methods: discussion, criticism, the methods of persuasion

325 National regional autonomy...

326 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

327 Barnett, 1997, p.xix–xx.

327a Shakya, 1999, p.290.

328 Mao, 1966, p.269.

329 Mao Zedong. On the question of the right solution...

and education; they can not be solved using methods of coercion and oppression". However, criticism was acceptable only where it was not contrary to Maoism. Otherwise, the opponent had to be gagged: "With regards to obvious counter-revolutionaries and elements that undermine the cause of socialism, the problem is solved easily: they are simply denied their freedom of speech. The situation is different with erroneous views that are spread among the people".

In September, Zhang Guohua suspended the previously adopted four documents and criticized the Panchen Lama and Sherab Gyatso. The Panchen Lama was relieved of his powers. But his Petition was not wasted. Many of those who had been arrested "by mistake" were released, as were those whose role in the uprising was insignificant and people who fully "repented". Large temples that were damaged during suppression of the uprising in 1959 were now restored in Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse.³³⁰ However, the restorers ignored the ruined Shigatse Dzong (castle). Limited religious services became permitted in the Drepung, Sera and Ganden monasteries. There is evidence that from 1962 to 1966, in Qinghai, 137 monasteries were reopened, in Gansu 107 were reopened, and the number of monks in both provinces had risen to four thousand.³³¹ Some monks who were incapable of work started to receive a small pension. Small plots of land were allocated for monks who were able to work. During the 1960's, democratic management committees were set up in the remaining monasteries. They continue to exist to this day. Supervision of monasteries became a duty of the representatives of the Commission for Nationalities, which went on to settle in monasteries.³³²

Collectivization was suspended for the next five years, the mutual aid teams were divided into smaller groups, and some assets were redistributed among the peasants. And in 1964, the collectivisation was stopped altogether. In some places, the ruling cadres were replaced. During the spring of 1963, in 50% to 70% of the counties of the future TAR, elections were held, but then scrapped.³³³ Apparently, the way they were conducted by the military authorities caused popular discontent.

A new system of education started to be introduced. In 1964, it already encompassed 1,682 primary schools with sixty thousand students, and even outside of Lhasa, school was attended by about half of school-age children.

In 1964, political campaigning in the future TAR became more intense. The Party's positions were strengthened to such a degree that a compromise with the remnants of the former elite became unnecessary. Now the Communists developed a detailed class division of Tibetan society.³³⁴ Domestic servants were declared to be

330 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

331 Kolas and Thowsen, 2005, p.47.

332 Bogoslovsky, 1996, p.275.

333 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

334 Shakya, 1999, p.294–296.

“poor peasants”. They became the foundation of the newly enrolled Communists. Even “poor peasants” who had participated in the uprising were proclaimed to have been “misguided” and were forgiven. The peasants who owned land, but did not use hired labour were declared to be “peasants of average means”. This was where the border between the “exploited” and “exploiters” was drawn. Later, this category was divided into three sub-categories, depending on how frequently they hired employees. Similar division was introduced for nomads. Their analogy of “land owner” was “livestock owner”. Further separation proceeded according to the number of cattle in an ownership and use of hired labour. The classification also employed the size of the surplus product. Those who had over 50% were becoming “landlords”, those who had 25% were “peasants of average means”. Monks were also split into classes, although they were all declared to be “parasites”. Their class membership was determined by their position in the clerical hierarchy.

Nobody could avoid the class labels. Labels were used to reveal the “class enemies” against which the poor were obliged to arrange *thamzings*. The Chinese, who occupied important posts in each village, were the instigators.

In early 1964, the Panchen Lama was asked to give a speech to the people of Lhasa during the Monlam Festival. He agreed, and to the surprise of the authorities, he stated that the Dalai Lama was the true leader of the Tibetan people, and concluded his speech by shouting: “Long live the Dalai Lama!”³³⁵

In April 1964, Zhang Guohua and other functionaries arrived in Beijing. At a meeting with Mao and his entourage Zhang stated that the Tibetans were ready for socialism, but that the Panchen Lama was blocking the road.³³⁶ The hierarch’s home was searched and many of the found documents were interpreted as counter-revolutionary.³³⁷ In Lhasa, an exhibition of “evidence” was set up. For example, it displayed a jeep that was allegedly saved for an escape to India in case a future anti-Chinese uprising was to fail. The Panchen Lama was also reminded of his “poisoned arrow”. From mid-September to November 1964, over a period of seventeen days, he was subjected to *thamzing* in front of a large crowd of people. He was abused, beaten, pulled by his hair, and spat at. However, the hierarch refused to “confess to his crimes”. He even lost his temper, began to poke his finger at the documents on the table, tearing through them. Later, he would be reminded that he was “behaving badly” and “resisted criticism of the masses”. Although these trials of the Panchen Lama were organized by Zhang Guohua and Zhang Jingwu, the ultimate decision had to be made in Beijing.

In December, the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama were removed from the posts of vice-chairmen of the NPC, three of his supporters were announced to be

335 Dalai Lama, 1992, p.234.

336 Norbu, 1999.

337 Shakya, 1999, p.298–299.

members of the “Panchen clique”, his property was confiscated. The Dalai Lama was declared a “traitor”. The Panchen Lama became isolated in Beijing.

In the summer of 1965, new elections began (without taking the results of previous ones into account).³³⁸ Over a month, local people’s assemblies in 90% of counties were formed. Then, after just a few days, the elections of the prefecture assemblies were started, and were followed by the elections of the TAR Assembly. Elections never took place in sixteen counties, and the delegates were chosen at the “conferences of representatives”. As early as in September 1965, the first session of the NPC was convened, which elected the People’s Committee of Tibet Autonomous Region, headed by Ngabo Ngawang Jigme. The delegates almost exclusively consisted of former “serfs” and “slaves”. The Beijing officials argue that its intention was to legally provide “the political rights of the Tibetan people for equal participation in management of state affairs”.³³⁹ But, in a message by the NPC to the first session of the PC TAR the reasoning was different: the proclamation of the Tibet Autonomous Region “marks a new stage in the development of the revolution and construction of the Tibetan people and is another great victory following the abolition of serfdom and the carrying out of democratic reform”.³⁴⁰

The proclamation of the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1965 was linked to the fact that by that time, the opposition in Tibet had been eliminated.³⁴¹ The savageness towards the Panchen Lama was the last act of this process. As was stated by Ngabo, “exposing the traitorous clique of the Panchen” created the most favourable conditions for the formation of the TAR. Therefore, the establishment of autonomy became possible only when the remnants of self-governing were eradicated. This autonomy was a fictitious cover for the rule of the Army and the CPC institutions.³⁴² In 1965, the composition of the Working Committee of the CPC of Tibet Autonomous Region was purely Chinese, whose power was founded on the 130,000–150,000 strong army.³⁴³ The creation of the TAR finally buried the Seventeen Point Agreement that was discarded back in 1959.³⁴⁴ Tibet was no longer a “unique region” of PRC.

Soon, a Committee of the CPC Tibet Autonomous Region was formed. Zhang Guohua became its secretary, taking the place of Zhang Jingwu, who had recently climbed further up the career ladder and had become the vice-director of the Working Department of the United Front. The work with cadres continued.

338 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

339 The question of Tibet...

340 In: Tibet: 1950–1967. 1968, p.512.

341 Shakya, 1999, p.300.

342 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

343 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

344 Shakya, 1999, p.306.

According to Chinese data, by 1965, there were twenty thousand Tibetan cadres at the level of settlements and sixteen thousand at higher levels.³⁴⁵ These “serfs or slaves, who matured during the revolutionary struggle”, were inexperienced, many of them were illiterate.³⁴⁶ Therefore, Chinese cadre “advisors”, assistants and Tibetan translators were assigned to help them. They became known as the work-teams of the Party. The main tasks of these teams were to explain the class struggle and to organize *thamzing*. The former “serfs” who felt pity towards the “serf owners” were explained that this struggle was not against them personally, but was the struggle of the whole class of “the serfs” against the whole class of “the serf owners”.

Tibetan nationalities of Sherpa, Monpa, Lhopa, Tengpa, Jangpa and others were identified as separate “Chinese minority nationalities”.³⁴⁷ This was despite the fact that they made up a part of the Tibetan nation. The attempts to justify the separate origins of different Tibetan nationalities, and thus prove that they did not form a single nation, were scientifically refuted.³⁴⁸

This was how the Communists perpetuated the subjugation to China and the artificial division of the Tibetan nation. As was noted by the 14th Dalai Lama, “following the occupation of Tibet, Tibetan Buddhism has lost its cradle and its homeland; this has not only violated the right of the Tibetan people for freedom of religion, but also endangered the very preservation of the rich spiritual and cultural traditions in Tibet and Central Asia. This is especially true with regard to the Chinese policy of splitting Tibet into many separate administrative units, most of which were incorporated into neighbouring Chinese provinces. From a historical point of view, the contribution of these Tibetan areas towards the common spiritual and cultural heritage of Tibet is huge. However, as tiny minorities within the Chinese provinces it will be very difficult for them to maintain their Buddhist culture and national identity in the future. The Tibetan communities that happen to be outside the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region form a large part of the population of Tibet, namely: approximately four out of six millions of all Tibetans. The problem of Tibet cannot be solved without re-uniting all of these parts of Tibet, which is necessary for the survival of Tibetan culture”.³⁴⁹

Time has proved the validity of these conclusions by the Dalai Lama. Since democratic reform was already completed in Greater Tibet, the perpetuation of such splitting had no objective grounds.³⁵⁰ We can only conclude that the goal was precisely the destruction of Tibetan culture and its replacement with a new one.

345 Tibet: 1950–1967. 1968, p.493, 518.

346 Shakya, 1999, p.304.

347 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

348 E.g. see Namkhai Norbu, 2008, p.200–208.

349 The Dalai Lama, 1995, p.24.

350 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

The Dalai Lama and his followers started to make arrangements for accommodating the compatriots who had fled abroad, the restoration of spiritual traditions and the legitimate governmental bodies in exile. In February 1960, the first Tibetan rural settlement was created in Bylakuppe (Karnataka, South India). In April of that year, the Tibetan Government that was temporarily located in Mussoorie, had moved to another town, Dharamsala. In May of that year, the first school for refugees



Tibetan refugees in India during the 1960s. (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)

was opened in Mussoorie and a kindergarten was opened in Dharamsala. By 1970, India already had thirty-eight Tibetan villages with a population of sixty thousand, ten years later there were forty-five villages.³⁵¹ Many hardships were experienced in the beginning, for biological reasons among others. Tibetans were not accustomed to the hot climate of India, and many died in the refugee camps.

One of the refugees later recalled:³⁵² “Life in Missamari was intolerable. The climate was hot and unbearable, the mosquitoes feasted on the little blood we had left, and many people died from malaria and diarrhea. The few interpreters who were helping in the camps could not cope with the diseases, the deaths, and the dire situation; they ran away”.

The Dalai Lama asked the Indian Government to move the refugees to the cooler mountainous areas. His request was granted, and soon groups of families

351 Van Walt, 1987.

352 Taklha, 2001, p.92.

went to the cooler regions of the Himalayas for building roads. This work was temporary. The refugees had to move from place to place in search of new jobs. But even here, the climate was unusual for the Tibetans, as their homeland had a dry climate. They particularly suffered during the rainy seasons in India; their tents leaked and everything was wet.

Nevertheless, the diligence of the people and the talents of its leaders did produce results. In Dharamsala, under the leadership of the Dalai Lama, Tibetan governmental institutions started to function: the Government (Kashag) and the Parliament, which was elected by the people. The Government installed posts of internal affairs, foreign affairs, religion and culture, education, finance and security ministers. The first democratic parliamentary elections, to the Commission of People's Deputies, were announced in 1960.³⁵³ In 1961, the Dalai Lama developed a Constitution for the future Tibet, having sought to take the opinions of the Tibetans into account. In 1963, he convened a meeting of all the heads of Buddhist sects and the Bon religion, to discuss the problems and the strategy for future development.³⁵⁴ During the same year a detailed draft of the Constitution was published. The Government in exile, operated under the auspice of the 14th Dalai Lama, organised an effective movement for non-violent resistance to the Chinese occupation.

During the entire history of Tibet, prior to the establishment of the PRC authority, there were no significant expressions of class antagonism between the "exploited" and "exploiters", there were no demands of reforms that came from the people.³⁵⁵ This is a rare phenomenon in the history of feudal societies! Thus, the Chinese Communists did not even export the revolution to Tibet, but rather arranged it by themselves in the neighbouring country. The people's dissatisfaction with the "peaceful liberators" culminated in the uprising of 1959. For the first time in the history of Tibet, it was conducted following the initiative "from below", when the masses organized themselves, armed themselves, formed their own committees, nominated their own representatives and put forward their demands. This fully corresponded to the Communist dogma. The fact that was not consistent with that dogma was that the people's uprising was counter-revolutionary. As was noted by the 10th Panchen Lama,³⁵⁶ it was directed against the CPC, the PRC, the democracy and socialism. It is hard not to agree.

Tibetans defended the independence of their country and its feudal system. When supporting the Tibetan guerrillas, the U.S. adopted a hypocritical position,

353 Van Walt, 1987.

354 Dalai Lama, 1992, p.182.

355 Bogoslovsky, 1976, 1978.

356 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.98.

desiring a weakening of the PRC without caring for Tibetan independence. The Tibetan guerrillas were receiving assistance from the CIA not because they supported the foreign imperialists, but because nobody else was willing to supply them. The support of Tibetans from abroad cannot be considered illegal. Tibet, as any other state, had a right to self-defence, including the guerrilla movement and enlisting support of other countries.

However, even now, allegations that originated in the Chinese propaganda of the 1950s – 1960s, are widely replicated. “The mass of the insurgents were blindly following the representatives of the Tibetan elite, who feared losing their privileges and had anti-Chinese sentiments. <...> Tibet could not indefinitely continue to be one of the most backward areas of China in terms of economy, education, health and standard of living, etc”.³⁵⁷ “Under the leadership of the Central Government of China and the PC TAR, the Tibetan people have very quickly pacified the rebellion and proceeded to carry out democratic reforms”.³⁵⁸ The uprising was planned and directed by foreign forces, particularly the U.S. imperialists.³⁵⁹ It was initiated by the elites and the Government of Tibet, less than 5% of the population have rebelled, the majority were forced to participate by lies and threats; the people had supported the PLA and the Chinese Government and began to gather meetings and demonstrations of support.³⁶⁰ The reactionary circles of Tibet have unilaterally violated the Seventeen Point Agreement by their rebellion in 1959, which led to Beijing’s response of a wave of reforms that were tough, but fair,³⁶¹ because the “feudal-theocratic regime has kept itself not only by religious fanaticism, but also by fear, by truly medieval methods of coercion”.³⁶²

All of this is wrong. If China did not occupy Tibet, it would not have become the “backward region of China”, which for some reason had to be democratized. The theocratic regime was a conscious choice made by the Tibetan people. Tibetans knew by their own experience, whether it was good or bad to live under the rule of feudal lords in the “backward” society (which, in reality, was harmonious and stable). When this society began to be destroyed by democratic reform and a significant proportion of people rebelled, they did not “blindly follow” the elite, but fought for the independence of their homeland. The bulk of the insurgents were the Tibetan working masses.³⁶³ Their rebels did not have a mere twenty thousand participants, despite this being stated in the official Chinese reports. The uprising was far more widespread. Even the later Hong Wei Bing press stated that the entire

357 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.278.

358 National regional autonomy...

359 Ran, 1991.

360 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959.

361 Ovchinnikov, 2004, 2007.

362 Ovchinnikov, 2006, p.95.

363 Klinov, 2000, p.323.

Tibetan Army (four thousand people) revolted and was supported by more than one hundred thousand “armed bandits”.³⁶⁴ Former insurgents told me that the majority of their brothers-in-arms were ordinary people. They made their own choice to revolt against the Chinese power.

One cannot speak of “fair of the tough reforms” in Tibet. It was a kind of coercion that was worse than that during the Middle Ages. The Seventeen Point Agreement was violated by the Chinese but not the Tibetans. This was well-known in the USSR. “As shown by numerous facts, Mao Zedong and his followers, in fact, did not comply with any single point of the Agreement of 1951”.³⁶⁵ And they did not comply deliberately, so as to bring reforms closer. This was why Mao commented at the beginning of the uprising in the following manner:³⁶⁶ “This is good because that is what will solve our problem by military means. <...> They gave me an excuse for waging the war. <...> The stronger the rebellion, the better”. The CPC leadership terminated the Seventeen Point Agreement and put the blame onto the Tibetan Government, although the latter did not support the rebels.

Soon after the uprising was suppressed in Lhasa, on April 18, 1959, Zhou Enlai said at the 1st session of the NPC 2nd convocation:³⁶⁷ “In any case, reforms will be implemented gradually, peculiarities of Tibet will be given maximum consideration; during the reforms we will fully respect the religious beliefs, customs and the remarkable culture of the Tibetan people”. In fact, the reverse was true. Contrary to the official Chinese statements, most of the destruction in Tibet was done between 1955 and 1961, and not just during the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976. This was confirmed by Bhuchung, then Vice-President of the Tibet Autonomous Region People’s Government, at a press conference on July 17, 1987.³⁶⁸ The huge scale of destruction was mirrored by the huge scale of mass repression.

Some people try to relieve Mao Zedong from the responsibility for the above actions. They say that the Chairman wanted gradual change, but zeal of commanders and local officials led to excesses. It is impossible to agree with this view. The ruling party and its leadership are responsible for their course, regardless of internal contradictions. Mao created this system and was its unquestioned leader and theoretician. “Gradual reforms in Tibet” was a tactic that was dictated by circumstances. Future TAR was to follow the same way as Kham and Amdo. There, the Chinese also initially tried not to offend anyone, to attract people, to pay well, etc. And, simultaneously, they were building roads, bringing in troops, and developing infrastructure. Having established the necessary foundations, they started democratic reform there, i.e. the destruction of traditional society. This led

364 Bogoslovsky, 1978, p.82.

365 Rakhimov, 1968, p.72.

366 Jung Chang and Halliday, 2007, p.481.

367 Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, p.67.

368 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

to an uprising, which was used as a pretext for forceful acceleration of reforms. While an uprising was going on in the background, in Kham and Amdo, there was no sense to provoke it in the future TAR, which at that time was still insufficiently controlled. When the uprising spread to there as well, it was used as an excuse for immediate reform.

There is evidence that there was a certain “Tibetan Variant” that was developed by Mao Zedong personally and implemented in the internal directive of the Central Committee of the CPC.³⁶⁹ Its main idea was to provoke the Tibetans to set out against the Chinese troops, and then follow with large scale punitive and repressive operations, in order to “pacify Tibet” once and for all. In September 1977, the Renmin Ribao newspaper wrote: “Everything happened as was predicted by the Chairman Mao”, apparently referring to his “Tibetan Variant”. As the chairman used to say, “our trump card is war and dictatorship”.³⁷⁰

Sometimes the perpetrators were punished for their lawlessness. Nevertheless, the trend remained the same. After all, local officials had to do the impossible, to carry out reforms at the request of the population, which did not want it. According to Marxism, the people were supposed to break up and overthrow the exploiters, but this did not happen. Hence repression and imitations of class struggle. Mao’s policies must be judged on results and not on his declarations: witnesses noted his duplicity.³⁷¹ The rallies and demonstrations of “support”, the “bitter memory”, *thamzing*, *dukchu*, remorse for non-existent crimes, “unanimous glorification” of the CPC, the “demand for reform”, etc: all of these were but plays directed and produced by the Communist Party. They had nothing to do with the will of the people, and were aimed at brainwashing. The official figures that show reforms that were supported by a majority of Tibetans have the same origins.

By 1965, a new wave of repression started in Tibet, the one especially directed against the “class enemies” (lamas, wealthy peasants). Also accelerated training of local cadres, accelerated government reform, communisation of villages all took place as well. The slogan of “relying on slaves and serfs” was put forward. At the end of 1965, a campaign of “socialist education” was started, an essential component of which was the eradication of religion.³⁷² These became the prologue of the Cultural Revolution.³⁷³

369 Iliin, 1978.

370 From Mao’s conversation with journalists on March 10, 1957 — in: What Beijing does not Say, 1972, p.31.

371 For example, Braun, 1974.

372 Gorbunova, 2008, p.144.

373 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

CHAPTER 9

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Results of the Mao Period



The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966 was initiated and led by Mao Zedong personally: “The fire of the Cultural Revolution was sparked and fuelled by me”.¹ To the end of his life he considered it to be one of his major merits. Its aim was to preserve his personal power through liquidation of the old Party and state cadres, preventing the restoration of capitalism, complete destruction of traditionalism and the creation of conflict between generations. Having vulgarized the dialectic and the ancient Chinese principle of cyclicity, Mao taught:² “Without destruction there is no creation. Destruction means criticism, a revolution... Destruction is first and foremost; very creation is inherent in destruction”. He did not know exactly what to create and how, but decided to repeat destruction from time to time. On May 16, 1966 the CPC Central Committee stated that at that point the Cultural Revolution was being conducted for the very first time, but in future it would be conducted repeatedly. The “wise decisions” were put into life by followers led by Jiang Qing, the wife of the Chairman. Some of them were later declared to be “The Gang of Four”.

The Cultural Revolution was meant to create a new socialist man. “The great unification of the Chinese nation will have successfully completed earlier than in any other area, than unification of any other nation”, these were the words of Mao Zedong in 1966.³ Building on his idea that the national question is a class question, implied a declaration of war against the diversity of national traditions. Practically, it was the policy of assimilation of “minorities” by Han, with the latter also having to change.

At a popular level, it was described as “transplanting a new brain”. Those who held on to old values and traditions were said to possess a “green brain”, while

1 Speech on Oct. 25 at a meeting of the CPC CC. — in: *What Beijing does not Say*, 1972, p.55.

2 *The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*, 1970, p.108.

3 In: *The Ideological and Political Essence of Maoism*, 1977.

the progressive men had a normal “white brain”,⁴ which had to be filled with Mao’s ideas. Without them, the brain would be empty. In China, this question was associated with the dichotomy of the old and the new, tradition and modernity, capitalism and socialism, etc. In Tibet, another dichotomy was added, which was the division between the Tibetan and the Chinese. The Chinese has been associated with the “new” for the majority of the Tibetans.

In Tibet, there was almost no proletariat, there were few local cadres needed for the revolution, administrative staff ineffective, Party organizations consisted mostly of the Han, local people often expressed dissatisfaction with the Chinese power. Therefore, the aim of the Cultural Revolution there was to establish an effective power, the completion of the restructuring of the socio-economic structure according to the Chinese model, the displacement of ethnic and religious “prejudices” with Mao Thought.⁵ The PLA was given the task of ensuring the success of the Hong Wei Bing (“the Red Guards”) and the Zao Fan (“the Rebels”) arrived from China.⁶ The platform for the destruction of “prejudices” was already prepared by the democratic reforms.

Although the Cultural Revolution officially began in May of 1966, for most Tibetans, it started in February, when the authorities banned one of the main festivals, Monlam in Lhasa, which was established by Tsongkhapa back in 1409.⁷ Rallies were organized in advance, during which this ceremony was called to be a waste of resources.

In May 1966, five hundred people (mostly Han) were brought from Beijing to conduct the revolution in Lhasa.⁸ Among the arrivals were students of Beijing University, and the Aviation and Geological institutes. They were joined by the Red



Poster of the Cultural Revolution, 1966: “Chairman Mao is the red sun in our hearts” (<http://www.oldposters.ru/>)

4 Shakya, 1999, p.316.

5 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

6 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

7 Shakya, 1999, p.317.

8 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

Guards from nine local Chinese organizations, some former “serfs” and “slaves”. They wore “Mao Suits”, badges with portraits of Mao and red armbands. The pieces of red cloth had an obligatory portrait of Mao wearing a cap and an inscription in Chinese and Tibetan like “Red Headquarters of Tibet. The Red Guard”, etc.⁹ At the end of May of 1966, the CPC of TAR established a Cultural Revolution Committee in Lhasa. It was to be headed by Wang Qimei, who stood in Tibet since 1951. At one time he was negotiating with Ngabo Ngawang Jigme in Chamdo.

On 21st June 1966, Renmin Ribao, the main newspaper of China, published an article entitled “Ideas of Mao Zedong inspire Tibet to free itself from serious feudal sins”.¹⁰ It called on the people to fight the ideology of the feudal-theocratic “oppression” and the “four olds”, to achieve universal dissemination of the ideology of the Cultural Revolution. The “Four Olds”(Chinese: si jiu), implied old ideas, old culture, old habits and old customs. In August 1966, the first ninety teachers of the new type graduated in Lhasa. They were former “serfs” or their offspring. It was reported that they had raised their class consciousness, changed their outlook and reinforced their decision to break with old ideas, culture, habits and customs. That same month, the local youth organizations of more than ten thousand people expressed their support for the Red Guards. At the same time, the Gongren Ribao newspaper devoted an article to the struggle against the “Four Olds” in the capital of Tibet.

Such was the situation when Zhou Enlai issued orders on the protection of some of the most important historical monuments of China, including the Potala.¹¹ Subsequently, his name was used throughout the PRC as a symbol of protection of cultural heritage, although in reality it was impossible to protect all of the monuments. The destruction of the “Four Olds” was one of the main goals of the Revolution, but nobody was told what specifically had to be eliminated.

The 18th August 1966 was considered to be the birthday of the Hong Wei Bing in China. On this day, Mao Zedong and his confidants staged a mammoth rally of the Red Guards at Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Stressing the importance of the event and his support for the army, the Chairman wore a military uniform, for the first time in the sixteen years that followed the Korean War. Chen Boda, Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai all stressed in their speeches that the creation of new organizations of the Red Guards was supported by Mao Zedong personally. He was named the Commander-in-Chief and military leader of the Cultural Revolution. Lin Biao supported the call to the fight with the “Four Olds” that was previously launched by Chen Boda. From the 18th of August to the 26th of November, in Beijing, Mao met with the Hong Wei Bing, revolutionary teachers and students on

⁹ See photographs: Woese, 2006, p.196.

¹⁰ Gorbunova, 2008, p.145.

¹¹ Ho, 2006, p.67.

eight occasions. These meetings were attended by more than eleven million people. Mao was able to combine his dictatorial methods with anarchism, which he was attracted to in his youth.

On the 23rd August 1966, Mao criticized the Red Guards for their “excessive civility”.¹² He said:¹³ “The main issue is to decide what course of action to take against the so-called disturbances at the local level. My opinion: let the disturbances continue a few months more”. This decision was unique in history, as the ruler had authorized anarchy in his own country. Thus, the Soviet authors were inaccurate when calling the gangs of Hong Wei Bing and Zao Fan to be “storm-troopers” – similar to the *Sturmabteilung* or SA in Nazi Germany (although the similarity was, of course, present).¹⁴

Schools closed down as the students filled the gangs of Hong Wei Bing, according to Mao saying: “The more you study, the more stupid you become”.¹⁵ Instead, by September, a lot of “cultural rooms”, youth centres and evening schools for study of Mao’s works were opened in Lhasa.¹⁶ In the old Lhasa, more than half of its population regularly took part in these studies.

The directives of the Chairman inspired the Hong Wei Bing in Lhasa to take decisive action. On August 25, 1966, pogroms of the main temples of Tibet, Jokhang and Ramoche (founded around 640) were started.¹⁷ Ribhur Tulku described these events in the following way.¹⁸ Around midnight, several cars, which probably belonged to the Chinese Cultural Relics Bureau, parked near the temples. A lot of soldiers and, apparently, officials came from them. Before dawn, they took all the gold and silver ornaments from all the statues as well as other valuable items, piled them into cars and drove away. The loot was probably very rewarding. The 10th Panchen Lama was ordered to place all objects of worship from the largest monasteries (Sera, Drepung and Ganden) into Jokhang. Then the leaders of the CPC Committee of TAR and other organizations in Lhasa mobilized their subordinates for the pogrom of temples. Later, the orders stated that only the Tibetans were allowed to take part, and the Han were not allowed.

A participant of the Jokhang pogrom, then still a schoolgirl, had the following recollections of this.¹⁹ In the morning, the students set out from their secondary school, headed by two Red Guards and a Chinese teacher. They carried banners and placards of their school with Mao’s quotations: “To rebel is justified” and “Suppress the counterrevolution”. The students marched through the streets to the

12 Jung Chang and Halliday, 2007.

13 Maoism without Embellishments, 1980, p.202.

14 The Ideological and Political Essence of Maoism, 1977.

15 In: Maoist library...

16 Tibet: 1950–1967. 1968, p.606.

17 Smith, 2008, p.123–125.

18 Smith, 2008, p.125–131.

19 French, 2004, p.273–285.



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Pogrom of the Jokhang Temple (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser)

1 – Buddhist classics were burnt outside the Jokhang Temple; 2 – Buddhist statues and ritual objects in the Jokhang Temple were destroyed by the Red Guards; 3 – Destruction of roof ornaments; 4 – The Red Guards who damaged the Jokhang Temple. Most of them were the students of Lhasa Secondary School. There was a portrait of Mao Zedong. The banner reads: “Completely destroy the old world! We shall be the masters of the new world.”

accompaniment of drums and cymbals. On the way they met with hundreds of students and young Red Guards. By noon they reached the courtyard opposite the temple and performed usual songs and dances that mocked the traditional way of life. The Red Guards snatched people from the crowd and cut off their plaits. Women were stripped of their Tibetan aprons, and one man was made to wear a British uniform, to look like an imperialist. Several mock trials were staged against performing of religious rites, the victims were told to adopt new views. One pupil threatened his mother, who was standing in the crowd – she was imbued with the old traditions.

By noon, many people had gathered. The Red Guards dragged out several statues from the Jokhang and smashed them. Some old people became hysterical. The Red Guards scaled the buildings on the Bharkhor, climbed onto the temple itself, and started to rip off the prayer flags and throw statues through the windows. Four of the entrances to the temple were guarded by the Red Guards. The PLA soldiers were nearby. They kept the crowd under control. Late in the evening, a fight broke out near one of the entrances. The soldiers could not do anything. The robbers, many of whom came from the suburbs of Lhasa, ran inside. The students joined them and saw how systematically chapel after chapel, shrine after shrine were being destroyed. The robbers searched for gold and precious stones. The floor was covered with oil, *torma* (ritual cakes made of dough), holy books, *thangkas*, and fragments of statues. Some people tried to steal things, while others tried to save them. Monks formed a living barrier around the holiest sites – the statues of Jowo Sakyamuni and Palden Lhamo. Many of them were seriously wounded.

According to my data, raiders still managed to damage the foot of the Jowo statue. As one of the pogrom participants recalled, the statue of Palden Lhamo (guardian deity of Mahayana and the City of Lhasa) was reached by the crazed mob through the roof that they had previously dismantled. Then, a loudspeaker announced “a great victory over backwardness” and praised the actions of the crowd. At nightfall, the children were told to return to school. They were congratulated by the leaders of the Red Guards.

On that day, ancient statues of Buddha Vairochana, bodhisattvas, protectors of the Teachings, Buddhist kings and thousands of other sacred objects were destroyed.²⁰ Among the statues which stood in Jokhang, two of them played a special role at the end of Songtsen Gampo’s life, the great king of Tibet, who lived in the 7th century. The Legend states: in Nepal there was a famous wooden statue of Buddha which appeared by itself. This statue was given to Songtsen Gampo. At Jokhang, it was placed in a large clay statue of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. When dying, Songtsen Gampo dissolved into rays of light into a small wooden statue of the Buddha. When the Red Guards destroyed the large clay statue, a small wooden figure was found in its centre. One Tibetan managed to save it and take it to India, to the 14th Dalai Lama.²¹

The main phases of the Jokhang pogrom were photographed by the Xinhua News Agency.²² Apparently, these shots did not suit the authorities, as they lacked the ideological vector. Thus, the Chinese (the members of proletarian education teams) visited the scene again during the night and destroyed almost all of the remaining statues. Of the hundreds of chapels of Jokhang only two survived. The following day

20 Smith, 2008, p.131.

21 Laird, 2006, p.40–41.

22 French, 2004, p.283.

the authorities came to the school. They condemned the incident and said that the Red Guards allowed the situation to get out of control. Later, when the Red Guards seized power, they accused these officials of capitalist sentiments and subjected them to “purges”. The “headquarters” of the Red Guards were created at Jokhang.

On the day of the Jokhang pogrom, sacred images in the temples of the oracles were also destroyed. At the Ramoche Temple, the second of the two most revered statues of Buddha in Tibet was broken. According to legend, it was consecrated by the Buddha himself. In the 7th century it was brought to Tibet by Bhrikuti, the Nepalese wife of Songtsen Gampo. The Red Guards forced blacksmiths to use chisels and hammers until the statue broke in half. Then it was taken to the foundry. Subsequently, in 1980s, the statue was restored. Its lower part was found at the local scrap metal yard, and the top part was found in Beijing.²³

Thousands of other sacred objects in the temple of Ramoche were destroyed. The murals were scraped off in the main hall and the premises were given to the District Committee of Northern Lhasa. According to the memoirs of Ribhur Tulku, during those days, all the books from the major temples in Lhasa were burned (except those that got hidden in time) by the order of the Chinese.²⁴ Smoke rose to the skies above the city for several days. The nearby 8th century stele with the inscription of the Tibetan-Chinese Treaty was also damaged. This engraved treaty is still used by the Chinese propaganda as evidence of Tibet’s long-standing relations with China.

The subsequent self-evaluations of the pogrom activists are indicative. The participant that was quoted above recollected these events with bitterness. She says that she acted as if in a dream. When the raid on the temple ended, none of the Tibetans could believe what they did. Many of the Tibetans, who were forced by the Maoists to participate in destruction raids felt guilt and remorse until the end of their lives.²⁵

Having declared the war against the “Four Olds”, the Red Guards drafted a twenty-point program on how to combat them. On August 27, the Red Guards of the Tibetan teacher college spread leaflets and *dazibao* (handwritten wall newspapers) with this program around Lhasa. It stated:²⁶

1. Bowing and sticking tongue out as a sign of respect should be abolished, as these are signs of feudal oppression of the proletariat.
2. All observance of religious festivals should be abolished.
3. All feudal names of parks and streets should be changed (for example, the Norbu Lingka (Norbulingka) should be named the People’s Park).

23 Wren, 1983; Ribhur Tulku, 1988.

24 Smith, 2008, p.129–132.

25 Laird, 2006, p.346.

26 In: Shakya, 1999, p.320–321.

4. All large and small *choetens* must be destroyed.
5. All books praising the idealism and feudalism should be prohibited.
6. All mani walls, prayer flags and incense burners should be destroyed.
7. No one should recite prayers, circumambulate, prostrate. People should not consult oracles and diviners.
8. People should destroy all photographs of the Dalai and the Panchen.
9. All photos praising revisionists, feudalism or reactionaries should be destroyed.
10. All monasteries and temples, apart from those that are protected by the government should be converted for general public use.
11. The “Tibet Daily” and “Lhasa Radio” must use the language of proletariat (*ngal-rtsal mi-dmangs kyi skad-cha*) and expunge the language of aristocracy (*sku-drag sku-ngo tsho'i skad-cha*). Accordingly, Tibetan grammar should be reformed.
12. All Muslims should also embrace the new society and destroy the old traditions.
13. The People’s Park, formerly the Norbu Linga, should be opened for the public for recreation.
14. There should be greater political and ideological education among the monks and nuns. They should be allowed to abandon their religious duties and vows without pressure from the monasteries.
15. Monks and nuns should be allowed to marry and they must engage in productive labour.
16. The exploitive class should be subjected to labour education and a close watch should be kept on their conduct.
17. Feudal practices, such as giving parties, exchanging presents and *khata* should be stopped.
18. Feudal marriage practices, such as one man having two wives, one woman having two husbands, father and son sharing a wife, two sisters sharing one husband and two brothers sharing a wife should be eradicated.
19. Scientific education should be propagated among the people. Films which teach scientific education should be shown.
20. All stray dogs in Lhasa must be destroyed and people should not keep dogs and cats in the house”.

It is noteworthy that this appeal does not mention the struggle between capitalism and socialism. The local branch of the Communist Party was also left out. Ts. Shakya correctly observes that this appeal by the local Red Guards was incited by the local communists, who wanted to deflect the blow away from themselves onto feudal traditions. That is, they wanted to destroy the little of real Tibet that was still left in their homeland. This appeal led to amusing contradictions.²⁷ For example, the prohibited white *kata* were replaced by red ones: they were put onto

²⁷ Shakya, 1999, p.512.

the portraits of Mao, whose name could no longer be mentioned by the media without glorification.

On 15th October 1966, Zhou Enlai (who was probably still under the impression of pogroms in Lhasa) told Tibetan students that the destruction of the “Four Olds” was certainly a good cause, that it was right to attack the monasteries and churches, and to abolish the power of the lamas. But religion’s influence can only decrease gradually, it would be better to turn the temples and monasteries into schools and warehouses. Some religious images could be destroyed, but one needed to think about preserving some of the great temples, so as not to offend the elderly.²⁸ As we can see, the plea to leave something intact was much more vague than the clear directive of the Revolution to smash the “Four Olds”.

Mao himself, as we can judge by his writings, was not concerned with preservation of cultural heritage. He was fretful about his personal power, about how to manage the chaos he had created, the inner-Party squabbles, exposing capitalism and revisionism, etc.

Not surprisingly, the pogroms did not stop. Therefore, on March 16, 1967, the CPC Central Committee, the State Council and the Central Military Commission had to issue a circular on the protection of state property.²⁹ Its Article 4 directly prohibited “mindless scattering” and destruction of cultural relics and books. On May 14, a new document was issued with calls for the preservation of state property. It explained that feudal buildings, religious sculptures, etc. could someday be used for exposing the crimes of the ruling classes and imperialists, to educate the masses of the future, that the “poisonous books” must not be indiscriminately burned, some must be retained for that purpose.

Of course, in those days, other types of explanation were unfeasible. But such language sounds vague even now – one can only imagine how it was perceived during the times of the revolutionary befuddling. Besides, the directive to destroy the “Four Olds” continued to be in force. Thus, the destruction continued, at a lesser pace compared to the second half of 1966.

Fighting with the gangs was prohibited. Mao and his CC gave clear instructions to this effect. “It is not permitted in any manner, under any pretext whatsoever, to incite or organize the workers, peasants, or the urban population to the fight with the students... One must not enter into direct altercations with students, there should be no collisions with them”.³⁰ The revolutionary acts of the Hog Wei Bing “express outrage and denounce the class of feudal lords, the bourgeoisie, the imperialists, revisionists and their lackeys... show that to rebel against the reactionaries is justified. I express you my fervent support”.³¹ “We must let the young people make mistakes.

28 Ho, 2006, p.68.

29 Ho, 2006, p.69–71.

30 In: Maoism without Embellishments, 1980, p.203–204.

31 The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1970, p.30–31.

While their orientation is generally correct, let them make small mistakes. I believe that they can be corrected during practical work”.³²

The chairman seemed to contradict himself. After all, “all questions of an ideological nature, all controversial issues within a nation can be resolved only



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1 – Apparently they were only primary school students. They were not only brandishing the “Quotations from Chairman Mao”, but were also wearing red armbands, which suggests that they had joined the Red Guards (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser); 2 and 3 – Communist rallies and demonstrations (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser)

32 In: Maoist library...



Portrait of Mao Zedong and dazibao in Lhasa (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser). The translation of the slogan: “Make a new great way!”

through democratic methods: discussion, criticism, the methods of persuasion and education; they can not be solved using methods of coercion and oppression”.³³ In fact, there was no contradiction, if one remembers how Mao distinguished between the “people” and the “enemies” (see Chapter 8).

In Tibet, the Hong Wei Bing cut men and women’s plaits, broke into houses and initiated pogroms there, destroying everything that was part of the Tibetan culture. These searches and pogroms were systematic. If they found clothes of the feudal lords, expensive ornaments, uniforms of the Tibetan Army, etc., the owners were made to wear them and were driven from their homes and bullied on the streets. The Red Guards also searched for religious items. Some of them were loaded into boxes and sealed, but religious books were burned immediately.³⁴ Every day, they came out with threatening warnings that everyone had to destroy all of their religious objects. All silver and gold had to be handed over to the Chinese State Bank. People had no choice, but to take their jewellery there. Many Tibetans hid and buried small statues of deities, and smashed the big ones and threw the pieces into the Kyichu River.³⁵ At the Tromtsikang market, the Chinese set up an exhibition of the kinds of religious and decorative objects that were forbidden, accompanied by

³³ Mao, 1966, p.54.

³⁴ Smith, 2008, p.129–130.

³⁵ French, 2004.



Struggle session with a nun (a reincarnated lama) and her parents in Lhasa (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser)

large posters.³⁶ The posters stated that the possession of these items was illegal, and that they should be brought there and surrendered to the authorities.

Each house now exhibited a portrait of Mao and the Chinese flag,³⁷ and on the walls excerpts from his quotations book were written or pasted on them. 350 million copies of Mao's "Little Red Book", officially known as "Quotations of Chairman Mao Zedong", were issued by the end of 1967. Subsequent editions in practically all world languages increased its circulation to approximately a billion copies. In Lhasa, everyone was obliged to study the "Quotations". Gangs of Chinese youngsters, who called themselves "security groups", stopped people on the streets and demanded them to recite its passages from memory. After having read a passage, the passersby also had to explain its meaning. A serious reprimand awaited those who were unable to comply. However, in some cases, the Red Guards themselves could not explain just what exactly their Chairman meant.

³⁶ Tibet under Chinese, 1976, p.178.

³⁷ Kalovski, I. The true face...



Struggle session with the 10th Panchen Lama (Thinley, 1996)

Traditional festivals and crafts were forbidden. For example, the Janang County was known for its traditional products, primarily the Puru cloth, baskets, pottery, etc. Now, all the tools were confiscated, and the county became poor.³⁸ The tools were only returned in the 1980s.

Even the traditional *khabse*, spirals of dough that were roasted in oil during religious festivals, were announced to be a feudal remnant.^{38a} By order of the Red Guards, people started the extermination of dogs and flies. Tibetans were very fond of dogs, so there were many of them. Now the dogs were killed with stones under the watchful eye of the Maoists, who achieved two goals: “clean streets” and struggle against religion, because Buddhism prohibits killing.

The names of people, streets and buildings were replaced with revolutionary Han names. For example, the name of Tenzin was changed to “Mao Sixiang” (“Mao Thought”); Kechog Wangmo became “Da Yuejin” (“The great leap forward”).³⁹ The Tsuglakang Temple became “Zhaodai Suo” (“Guest House no. 5”), Norbulingka was turned into “Renmin Gongyuan” (“People’s Park”), Bharkhor Street was now “Lixin Street” (“street of Establishing the new”). Tibetan holidays were replaced by revolutionary Chinese holidays.

³⁸ Bogoslovsky, 1996.

^{38a} French, 2004.

³⁹ Norbu, 1999, p. 275; Tibet: 1950–1967. 1968, p.607.

“Struggle sessions” (*thamzing*) were carried out everywhere. Crowds were beating up and insulting people in front of their relatives. As the 10th Panchen Lama recalled, people were beaten up until blood began to pour from their mouths, ears, nose and eyes. Many suffered broken bones, many fainted, ended up maimed or died. Those who were lucky to survive and had not been disabled, said that they continued to be beaten on a monthly basis for several years, after which their bodies were covered with large bruises, and patches of hair were missing from their scalps.⁴⁰ In other cases, victims were shackled, had their bodies and heads burned, were forced to eat human and cattle faeces, and were forced to wear horse bridles in their mouths.



“Rebels” take the high lama Ribhur Tulku wearing a “shaming cap” through Lhasa (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser). Translation of the inscription on the “shaming cap”: “Demolish god, yaksha, spirit and Nawang Gyatso”

40 French, 2004.



A struggle session in Lhasa in August, 1966 (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser). Left to right: the wife of an aristocrat Horkhang Sonam Pelbar, himself and his father in law. As a form of bullying, Horkhang was made to wear silk clothing, dress of a governmental official ranked above the 4th category, and a warm fox fur hat on that warm summer day. These clothes were found at his and his wife's home, which led to the charge that they wanted to restore the "feudal slave" system. Horkhang's father in law was forced to wear a helmet and the uniform of the old Tibetan Army, which allegedly resembled the uniform of the British military. He stashed that uniform, but the "revolutionary masses" found it and forced him to put it on

Each and every person could have ended up being a victim of the "struggle", but the clergy and the former feudal elites were especially targeted. The 10th Panchen Lama recalled that *thamzing* was carried out against all the members of his family.⁴¹ He was "struggled against" even before the Cultural Revolution (see Chapter 8). And in 1966 in Beijing, where he was isolated, he was seized by the Hong Wei Bings, had his hands tied and was taken to the Institute of Nationalities. He was "criticized" yet again there, beaten and insulted, and then led through the streets, with the loudspeaker announcing that he was "the most prominent reactionary feudal lord, the largest parasite and bloodsucker of Tibet".⁴² On the orders of Zhou Enlai, the soldiers transferred the Panchen Lama to Tibet where he was put under house arrest. In the spring of 1968, he was arrested again, this time by PLA soldiers.⁴³

41 His Holiness the Panchen Lama...

42 Hilton, 1999, p.162 — in: Garri, 2009.

43 Thinley, 1996, p.21–24.



A Tibetan aristocrat, former civil official of the 4th or 5th rank, during a struggle session (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser)

He was transferred to small solitary confinement and spent the next ten years there. The conditions there were such that he tried to commit suicide.

The social class of a person was not the only fact that could have lead to a “struggle”. A careless word, even a blot on a Maoist slogan could warrant severe punishment. For example, a former aristocrat of Lhasa, who was tasked to write a Chinese slogan of “Long life to Chairman Mao”, accidentally, dropped a blot of ink onto the word “Mao”.⁴⁴ This was interpreted as an attempt to insult the chairman, because according to Chinese tradition, the name of a prisoner is crossed out before his execution. She was subjected to a “struggle”. First, she was forced to kneel in front of a spoilt poster. This was followed by an interrogation, wearing a “shameful cap” with a “counter-revolutionary” inscription. She was dismissed from college, forced to clean toilets, put on starvation rations, one of her plaits was cut off with the other plait being used for dragging her out for another bout of “criticism”. During the “struggle” she was beaten and insulted on a stage. The “sessions” were repeated several times a week. During one of the “sessions” soldiers came in and, at a gunpoint, forced her to “confess”. She was given six years of jail time as a result.

⁴⁴ French, 2004.



Sangpo Tsewang Rinzin, former kalon and member of Kashag, at a struggle session in August 1966 in Lhasa (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser). As the deputy commander, he signed many of the CPC's proclamations to the masses, which were pasted on walls. In August 1966, when he and his family were beaten by a mob, all of his property was seized from their home

But that was not so bad. Tenpa Soepa told me that when he was in prison, he witnessed an execution of a Tibetan girl because she threw a Mao Zedong brochure into the latrine.

According to observations of the former Red Guard, the Chinese continued their beatings until serious injuries were inflicted.⁴⁵ The Tibetans showed more aggressiveness when compared to the Chinese, but also more compassion – people who obeyed, or were bleeding, were released. Often they tried to alleviate the suffering of victims. Tenpa Soepa described to me one “struggle session” that involved a former high official, who was forced to stand for three hours, bending at the waist at all times, which was very difficult. The ordinary Tibetans felt sorry for him, but they were watched by the Chinese. Then one of the Tibetans said: “You have beaten us all the time, so here’s your stick”, and gave him a stick to lean on. Another Tibetan said: “You forced us to give you our *tsampa*, so here’s your *tsampa*”, because of this, the official was able to have a meal when he returned to prison.

45 French, 2004.



A struggle session with a man who gained his aristocrat status through marriage with a woman from an aristocratic family (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser). The inscription on the “shaming cap”: “Demolish god, yaksha, spirit and Tsering”. In 1959, he collaborated with the CPC, worked in the government, did not participate in the uprising, was recognized as “a patriot” and even appointed as the mayor of Lhasa. However, during the Cultural Revolution he was declared to be a member of a counter-revolutionary group. In 1979, he was recognized as a “progressive Tibetan” that contributed to the “peaceful liberation of Tibet”

Thamzing was constantly practiced in prisons.⁴⁶ It was never hard to find a pretext. Examples included a person not making remarks (or making “wrong” remarks) during a discussion of a Party newspaper article, suspicion of somebody carrying out religious rites, etc. The “criticized” were most often those who were classified as belonging to “exploiting classes”. The beatings were widespread and regular, and were often repeated dozens of times, for example every evening for

⁴⁶ Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.135–137; Tenpa Soepa, 2008, p.117–120.



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Struggle sessions with “reactionaries” (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser):
1 – People wearing traditional Tibetan dresses, their faces painted. The inscription on the “shaming cap”: “Demolish god, yaksha, and spirit.” The banknotes hanging from the monk in the centre were a symbol that the clergy exploited people for money.
2 – the “shaming cap” and the poster state: “Lets demolish and get rid of the reactionary feudal master Tenzin Gyatso” (the name of the Dalai Lama)

2



Struggle session with a woman accused of secretly keeping reactionary items, and selling gold and jewels to foreigners (Woeser, 2006/ permission from Woeser)

thirteen days in a row. Some died or committed suicide. Former officials of the Tibetan Government, high lamas, abbots of the great monasteries, and other upper class representatives were held in the fifth block of the Drapchi Prison, near Lhasa.⁴⁷ Many of them were brought there from the concentration camps, where living conditions were worse still. Before 1966, the inmates of the fifth block were treated somewhat better than the other prisoners. After 1966, the opposite became true, and they were fed worse than the rest, forced for penal servitude from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. Anyone who protested was immediately subjected to *thamzing*. Relatives were allowed to bring food to the prison, but for doing so, they themselves became labelled as “assistants of counter-revolutionaries”.

The prisoners were not spared from the destruction of the “Four Olds”. If they still retained monastic clothes, religious books or other items of Tibetan culture, all of this had to be burned publicly.⁴⁸ The same fate awaited, for example, leather shoes that were made by “Indian expansionists”, a bag, in which small objects or meals were carried (“a remnant of feudalism”), a traditional wooden cup (for the same reason), etc. Everything that was red-brown or yellow (the colours of religion) had to be either destroyed or repainted into bright red or dark green (the colour of the PLA).

⁴⁷ Tenpa Soepa, 2008, p.112–116.

⁴⁸ Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.127–128.



The "shamed" are walked through the streets of Lhasa (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser)



The ruins of the Tsurphu monastery that was destroyed during Mao's rule, 1993 (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)

Overall, as was said by Lin Biao at the 9th Congress of the CPC in 1969,⁴⁹ “Mao’s Thought has gained direct access to the broad revolutionary masses. Such a wide dispersal of Mao Zedong’s Thought in such a large country with a population of seven hundred million is the biggest achievement of the current Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. During the ongoing Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, hundreds of millions of people never part with “Quotations of Mao Zedong”, study them thoroughly and meticulously apply them in practice”.

As a result, the destruction of traditionalism spread throughout the PRC. The little that was left of the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization up to 1966, was destroyed almost completely during the years of the Cultural Revolution. By the beginning of the 1970s, nearly all of the remaining monasteries were destroyed. As a result, of the 6,259 monasteries and other religious centres that were present in the Greater Tibet, only eight remained⁵⁰ (according to other sources, seven or thirteen⁵¹), and now there were less than one thousand monks. Many monasteries were completely razed – it is now impossible to even discern their foundations. The remaining temples were used for schools, prisons, warehouses, stables, barracks, housing, etc. Even now, the walls of some monastic buildings have large red hieroglyphs, glorifying Mao. From 1951 to 1979, of a total of 592,558 monks, nuns, Rinpoches (reincarnates) and Ngagpas (practitioners of

⁴⁹ The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1970, p.40.

⁵⁰ Smith, 1996, p.561.

⁵¹ Tsering, 1985, p.14–15.

Tantra), about 110,000 were tortured and killed in Tibet, and about 250,000 were disrobed and expelled.⁵²

Among the destroyed were the greatest shrines and monuments of world culture: the first Tibetan monastery of Samye (founded around 775 AD); the main monasteries of the religious sects of Tibet: Ganden (the main monastery of the Gelug sect that was founded around 1409), Sakya (of the Sakya sect, 1073), Tsurphu (the Kagyu Sect, 1155), Mindroling (the Nyingma sect, 1676; it was destroyed by about a third), and Menri (of Bon religion, 1405).

The Ganden Monastery was completely destroyed in 1969. It was smashed and blown up by the soldiers and the Red Guards.⁵³ Allegedly it was one of the strongholds of the theocratic regime that they hated. In addition, over four centuries it had accumulated a lot of sacred objects and gifts made from precious metals and stones. For example, there was a stupa containing the relics of Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelug sect. This stupa was made of silver and its top was coated with gold. The ashes of the eighty-four monastery abbots were in copper, silver and gilded stupas.⁵⁴ They were destroyed, the remains were annihilated. Bomi Rinpoche, one of the high lamas of the Gelug sect, managed to preserve fragments of Tsongkhapa's skull and a fraction of his remains. Having destroyed Tsongkhapa's stupa, the Red Guards forced Bomi Rinpoche to heap the remains onto his shoulders and throw them into the fire.^{54a} Bomi Rinpoche secretly buried the remaining fragments of the skull and ashes, so as to preserve them. After the restoration of Ganden Monastery, the remains were placed into a new stupa which was quite well made. They are currently stored there.

The town of Sakya had a total of 108 monasteries and temples. By 1968, there remained only one, Sakya Lhakhang Chenmo, the main temple.⁵⁵ The rest were completely destroyed. This was how it was done. Upon arrival to the city, the Red Guards had a meeting with the Chinese authorities and local progressivists. Then, they announced the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. However, few people had responded to the call, except for the progressivists. Then, in came a big crowd of people from the neighbouring village who started to wreak havoc, and who were joined by some of the local youth. The houses in Sakya were built of wood, which is scarce in this mountainous area of Tibet. Now was the opportunity to profit. As usual, the Maoists utilised people's brutish instincts. But, before that, the Bureau of Cultural Relics, as in other places, had emptied the temples of all precious metals and stones.

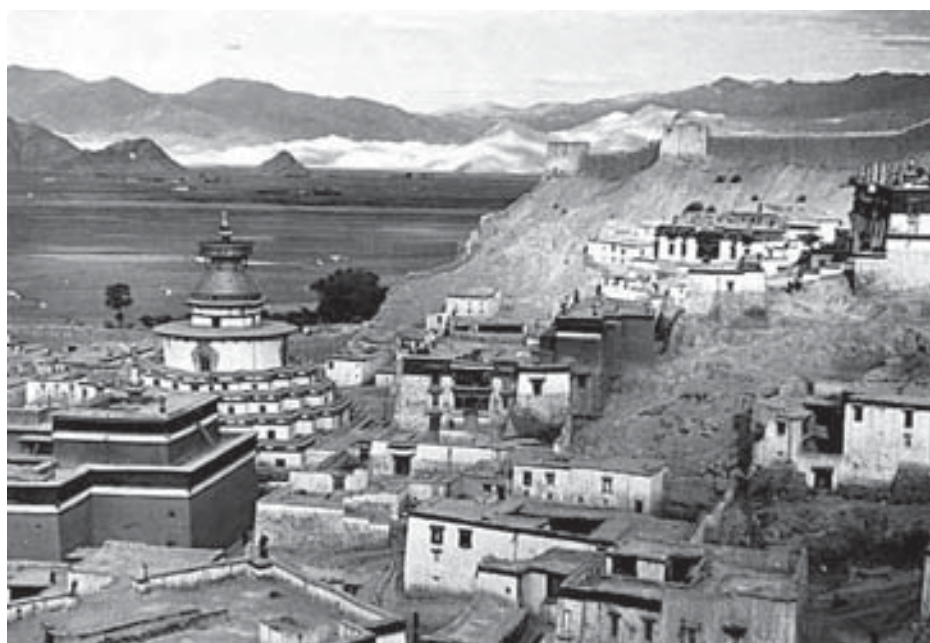
52 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

53 Butterfield, 1979.

54 Tsybikov, 1981, p.166.

54a Tibet, 2002.

55 Norbu, 1999.



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The Pelkor Chode Monastery with the Gyantse Kumbum Stupa: 1 – in 1938 (Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-18-10-22/foto: Ernst Schaefer / License CC-BY-SA 3.0); 2 – in 2008 (photo : S.L. Kuzmin)

The Norbulingka Palace (founded in 1755) in Lhasa was raided. In the area of Shigatse, all the ancient tombs of the Tibetan kings were detonated.⁵⁶ Yumbulakhang, the first castle of the Tibetan kings (2nd century BC) was destroyed. A third of buildings in the Tashilhunpo Monastery (founded in 1447) and the famous sacred object, the huge Buddha statue (cast in the 15th century) were also destroyed.⁵⁷ The 10th Panchen Lama was “convicted” earlier. The tombs of the five previous Panchen Lamas (from 5th to 9th) were broken, their remains were burned. The 10th Panchen Lama noted in his last speech in January 1989, that several of the faithful risked their lives and managed to save pieces of the broken tombstones.⁵⁸

The Gyantse Dzong, which once came under fire from the British artillery, was destroyed. The giant stupa, Gyantse Kumbum (built in 1418), with nine floors and seventy-seven chapels, was not destroyed. The Pelkor Chode Monastery, in which it is located, was less fortunate. Previously, it was the monastic town near the town of Gyantse. There were temples of all sects of Tibetan Buddhism. Now they were all destroyed, leaving only the main temple and the stupa.

The Potala Palace, on the orders of Zhou Enlai, was saved by the military that had set guard posts around it. From its height, they watched the movements of the warring gangs of “rebels” through binoculars, so as to divide them in a timely manner. The red flag was hoisted on top of the palace’s highest roof. Two big scrolls bearing the words: “Long live the Chinese Communist Party” and “Long live Chairman Mao” were hung from the brilliant golden top, and were visible several dozens of kilometres away.⁵⁹

The biggest monasteries were partially destroyed: the Drepung Monastery (founded in 1416), Sera (1418), Drikung (1179), Reting (or Radreng, 1057), the temple of the state oracle Nechung (12th century) in Lhasa; monasteries Labrang (1709), Kumbum (1477) and Rongwo (1300) in Amdo, etc. Among the monasteries that were partly destroyed was the Phuntsokling Monastery (1614), the former main monastery of the Jonang Sect that was founded by the famous Taranatha in the valley of Tsangpo. The Jampaling Monastery in Chamdo, which was restored by the Tibetans in 1917 after its first destruction by the Chinese in 1912, was destroyed again. The Rongbuk Monastery, the highest one in the world (5100 m above sea level) was destroyed. The Thongkor (1648) and Choeten Thang (1360) monasteries in north-east of Amdo, also started to be ravaged in 1958. They were almost completely destroyed. The Bon Monastery of Nangshig in Amdo (1754) was completely obliterated. The hermits’ cells and cave temples of Drag Yerpa in the Lhasa area were ravaged. Some of them were associated with Songtsen Gampo, Padmasambhava, and Atisha. The monasteries on the *kora* (the ritual

56 Levin, G.G. Runic inscriptions...

57 Tibet Through the Eyes of Tibetans, 1995, p.14.

58 Panchen Lama X. The Panchen Lama’s Last Speech...

59 Tibet: 1950–1967. 1968, p.609.



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Ritods of the Sera Monastery, destroyed during Mao's rule (permitted by Jose Ignacio Cabezon). 1 - Panglung (photo: Alex Catanese); 2 - Sera Gonpasar (photo: Alex Catanese); 3 - the main complex of the Hardo temple (photo: Alex Catanese); 4 - Nenang (photo: Jose Ignacio Cabezon); 5 - Garpa (photo : Alex Catanese); 6 - Rikya Ritro (photo: Alex Catanese)

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bypass) around Mount Kailash, that is sacred to Buddhists and Hindus, were also destroyed. Access to this mountain was closed to “outsiders” (including Indians) from 1959 to 1980.

Of the thirteen monasteries situated in Ngari (Western Tibet), ten were completely destroyed. During the 10th century, the great-grandson of Langdarma, the king of Tibet, had created the Guge Kingdom there. It lasted until the 1630s, when it was captured by the king of Ladakh. The conquerors almost completely destroyed Guge. Fifty years later, this territory came under the rule of the Dalai Lama, and monasteries were then built there. The largest of them were built in Tsaparang (on the site of the old capital of Guge) and Tholing. Over the centuries, many works of Buddhist art accumulated there.

The Red Guards did not spend too much time with the ruins of an ancient palace. Apparently, the dead kingdom was deemed less harmful than religion. Therefore, attention was mainly directed towards the temples of Tsaparang and Tholing. As a result, most of the ancient statues were mutilated or destroyed. Only three major temples survived in Tsaparang, the rest were destroyed. But even the surviving temples had their statues mutilated. However, the murals in the ruined temples were largely preserved, as this is a desert area where it rarely rains.⁶⁰ The photographs of the statues in the Tsaparang temples were taken in 1948 and were preserved.⁶¹ One can see what kinds of artistic masterpieces were destroyed there.

An eyewitness told me that during the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, the Chinese staged daily rallies in Charabambar in the south of Kham. At least one member of each family had to be present there. During the last rally the crowd was called to destroy a monastery. The crowd obliged. Everything inside the monastery was broken. The premises started to be used as a warehouse. The same Khampa told me that, when destroying the tomb stupas, the Chinese threw out the remains and tried to destroy them. Some of the faithful came there at night and secretly took them away. Such people were searched for. When they were found, they were subjected to *thamzing*. One of the “guilty” had the remains put around the neck and was forced to gnaw them. Then, the rounded up residents were forced to take turns at beating the victim. All of this lasted about a week. If a Chinese activist was nearby, the people could not get away with weak blows to the victim, for they themselves became objects of “struggle”. In between sessions, the victim was kept locked up without food. This resulted in death from starvation.

During the Cultural Revolution, Tibetan books and other written materials were destroyed on a great scale. In addition to old books, wooden planks for the xylographic press on which texts were carved, as well as printing presses were all

60 The lost kingdom of Guge...

61 Govinda, 2002, p.153–183.

burnt. The Chinese were using sacred books for making insoles and as toilet paper; the books were burned or mixed with manure. An eyewitness reported that large quantities of religious books were brought to the prison and dumped there.⁶² The prisoners had to tear them up and mix them with water and clay in a special drum for making a material for plastering the walls of houses.

During the period that lasted from the “peaceful liberation” to the end of the Cultural Revolution, 60% of philosophical, historical and biographical books, and about 85% of written materials and documents were burned in Central Tibet.⁶³ Some of the destroyed libraries contained books that were copied a thousand years ago from Indian originals, which also did not survive. The ancient monastery of Bedroya Drophan Tana Ngoetsar Rigjeling was destroyed together with its famous school of Tibetan medicine and all of its archives. In its place, a military prison with a radio transmitter was built. The ancient printing house under the Potala Palace was destroyed. The Dzogchen Monastery was destroyed along with its printing house, xylographic boards and library. A large collection of ancient texts and artefacts in the Dugu Monastery in Kham was destroyed. Some of them dated back to the 10th century. When destroying the Shalu Monastery, 227 manuscript volumes of Tengyur, the stylus and handwritten originals of the famous historian and religious figure Buton Rinchendub (1290–1364) were burned. 95% of the statues, texts and frescos that were five hundred years old were destroyed at the Sera Monastery. The surviving rooms were adapted for storage of grain, livestock stalls and prisons. One monk told a journalist in 1980, that the destroyed buildings were old, but that he felt even sorrier for the ancient manuscripts written in special ink with gold and silver on palm leaves. The Chinese used them to make their campfires. When the monks begged the soldiers not to burn the old books, they answered: “Rubbish, religion is bourgeois poison!” Kerosene was thrown onto the books and they were burned.

In the past, stacked piles of stones (*obo*) were traditionally placed on mountain passes. Now they were disassembled. The prayers that were carved on rocks in the mountains were replaced by Maoist slogans, and prayer flags (*lungta*) were replaced by red communist flags. Roadside stones with carved prayers were broken, the prayers were scraped, and the stones were used for construction of pavements and public toilets.⁶⁴

The looting of Tibetan cultural heritage that started back in the 1950s, continued during the Cultural Revolution. For the most part it was done in Amdo and Kham, but then it spread to Ü-Tsang as well. The scale of this looting only became apparent after the death of Mao Zedong.

62 Patt, 1992 — in: Knuth, 2003, p.219.

63 Knuth, 2003, p.220 – incl. by Kewley, 1990, Aldridge, 1999, Harrer, 1985 etc.; Lotus grove of great sacraments...

64 Smith, 2008, p.126.

Unlike the Nazis, who valued the art that they stole, the Maoists did not understand its value and proceeded to destroy it. There are reports that the Chinese were allowed to retain their loot, which included paintings, statues, and carpets.⁶⁵ It is also reported that a lot of religious items that were made of precious metals, the PRC gave to the Soviet Union when returning its debts.⁶⁶ However, this is unlikely, as such items were not needed in the USSR, although the precious metals themselves could have been useful. The most valuable items were given to Chinese museums, sold at international auctions or stolen by Chinese officials. Such items, from time to time, come up at auctions today. Now they are bought not only by foreigners but also by the new Chinese bourgeoisie. The Chinese authorities give foreigners permissions for export.⁶⁷

It was reported that Chinese officials made table lamps out of Buddhist statues.⁶⁸ I've seen such a lamp on sale in Moscow. It was made from a 40 cm tall copper figure of Amitayus Buddha, a metal tube with a wire was inserted into its head, together with a lamp socket and a bulb bowl. Judging by the style of manufacture, this "souvenir" originated from the PRC.

However, the majority of the Tibetan art works which were exported to China were destroyed. In 1982–1983, a group of Tibetans led by Ribhur Tulku was allowed to collect and restore works of Tibetan art remaining in China.⁶⁹ This was achieved thanks to the efforts of the 10th Panchen Lama. Having arrived in Beijing, the Tibetans found hundreds of statues and other religious items in one of the pavilions of the former Imperial Palace Gugun. Museum staff said that the statues were brought there from a foundry in 1972. The Chinese were happy that these objects would finally be returned home. Altogether, twenty-six tons of items were packed into 463 wooden boxes. Among the objects was the upper half of the famous Buddha statue from the Ramoche Temple, which was mentioned above.

The basement of the Confucius Temple in Beijing was also found to contain statues and other metallic objects of worship from Tibet: another six tons were packed into approximately a hundred boxes. An old Chinese official told Ribhur Tulku that of the Tibetan cultural heritage imported into China, most was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. The statues and ritual objects made of pure gold and silver disappeared. Those that were made of gilded copper, bell metal, red copper, brass, etc., were ferried from TAR to Liuyang (north-west of the Gansu Province). At that time it had the closest railway station. From there it was all sold to factories in Shanghai, Sichuan, Taiyuan, Beijing, etc. Their foundries melted roughly the same number of items from Tibet.⁷⁰

65 Smith, 2008.

66 Smith, 2008.

67 The U.S. Congress...

68 Smith, 2008, p.114, 545.

69 Ribhur Tulku, 1988, p.1–12.

70 Smith, 2008, p.116–117.

One foundry (in the original: “Shiyou Ching Rhru Thea” – “Precious Metal Foundry”), that was located 5 km to the east of Beijing, purchased six hundred tons of Tibetan crafted metals. An old man told Ribhur Tulku the following.⁷¹ In 1973, Li Xiannian, the Vice-Premier of the State Council, and Ulanfu, the Deputy Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee (who was in charge of Inner Mongolia) learned that Tibetan religious objects were melted in many Chinese foundries and turned into ingots. They ordered this to be stopped immediately. In July of that year, a twelve people Committee was formed to supervise this. The old man was one of them. Members of the Committee visited the foundry that was mentioned above and found that of the initial six hundred tons only about fifty were still remaining. They were dumped carelessly in the open air and barricaded with barbed wire. Of this pile, they salvaged only twenty tons, as the rest was beyond repair. A further thirty tons arrived later. Most artefacts were already ruined. They salvaged six tons from this lot. As a result, by the spring of 1983, Ribhur Tulku had sent about six hundred crates with 13,537 statues to Tibet via Chengdu City.

In Chengdu, Phuntsok Yonten, from the Bureau of Religious Affairs of the TAR, said to Ribhur Tulku that of the hundred tons of Tibetan religious objects in Taiyuan (Shaanxi Province) only about a ton remained, and the rest was melted down. They received a telegram in Chengdu that two tons of Tibetan statues and other cultural objects survived and were transferred from Chamdo to the Manshan district (south-west of Chengdu). The warehouse of the foundry in Chengdu was found to contain five tons of religious objects. At first, the foundry was refusing to give them up, stating that it had paid the government for them. Eventually, these objects were retrieved. Among them there were no objects of great historical or religious value. The items were sent to the Chengdu Religious Association with instructions to distribute them among the monasteries of Tibet. The biggest statue was given to the Lithang Monastery.

After the return of Ribhur Tulku, another group of Tibetans, led by Gatar Tulku travelled to Qinghai, where more objects were sighted.⁷² They found several warehouses in Huangyuan (west of Xining). Some of them were full of statues, others had evidence of earlier storage of lots of metal objects. One of the warehouses was empty, but the floor was strewn with Tibetan coins. As a result, a few more tons of statues were returned to Tibet. Gatar Tulku said that he had complete lists of warehouses in China, where stockpiled items from Tibet were waiting to be melted down. But Chinese officials confiscated this list, without allowing him to make a copy. In Chengdu, he met with Ribhur Tulku. There they went to a nunnery and found about a hundred baskets, with dozens of small

71 Ribhur Tulku, 1988.

72 Smith, 2008, p.116–117.

valuable Tibetan statues inside each of them, packed and prepared for shipment to an unknown location. These statues could not be saved because they were already bought and resold to another buyer.

About three thousand Buddha statues were found in the Gansu province.⁷³ In 1986, the first foreign tourists in Tibet saw rooms in former temples that were used for storage of copper statues broken during the Cultural Revolution.⁷⁴

M.M. Smith concluded that the “confiscation of Tibetan art and metal works was systematic and was organized by the Chinese Government”.⁷⁵

Thus, religious objects were exported from the TAR and into Liuyang and Huangyuan, which was also apparently used for storage of items that were taken from Amdo. Kham’s cultural heritage was taken to Chengdu, and possibly other locations in Sichuan. According to the data above, the Chinese stole over a hundred thousand metal statues from Tibetan monasteries. Thousands of gold and silver statues simply vanished. Many thousands of *thangkas*, books, clay statues and other works were destroyed. The believers were not able to preserve very much. For example, tourists from Russia witnessed an elderly Tibetan who was diligently gluing together little clay Tsongkhapa statues that were broken during the Cultural Revolution.⁷⁶ The statues were kept in bags until the new millennium. But this was rather an exception. Nowadays, old Tibetan artworks are a rarity in their homeland.

During the pogrom of the Muslim quarter in Lhasa in 1969, difficulties arose, as there were no paintings, statues or other images that could be smashed or melted. Therefore, the “rebels” simply burned the ancient religious books (including all copies of the Koran), documents and ceremonial headdresses in the courtyard of a mosque.⁷⁷ This was how the main relics of Islam in Tibet were destroyed. Among them were unique community documents dating back to the 12th century. The recordings of how Muslims migrated to Tibet, developed their traditions, descriptions of lands and privileges they received from the Dalai Lamas, all of these perished. The “rebels” took the Imam wearing a “shameful cap” around a city, announced him to be an exploiter and flogged him, after which he died. The mosque was turned into a cinema. The Muslim community in Lhasa has all but disappeared, there are few indigenous Muslims there now, and their situation has been worsened by the ongoing influx of migrants. Naturally, the only Christian church in Tibet was also closed.

The destruction of religion is the eternal goal of the Marxists. However, during the Cultural Revolution, the old Communist cadres could not be forgotten. On October 1, 1966, at the anniversary of the proclamation of the PRC rally, Lin Biao

73 Wren, 1983.

74 Laird, 2006.

75 Smith, 2008, p.117.

76 Tibet through the Russian eyes...

77 French, 2004.

said that the Cultural Revolution was called upon to crush a handful of authorities in the Party who were following the road to capitalism.⁷⁸ The Red Guards in Lhasa started to put up *dazibao* in which they “criticized” the local party committee. In October of 1966, a mass meeting was convened, where Ngabo Ngawang Jigme was called.⁷⁹ He “confessed”. When he was called out again on the following day, it turned out that he had already gone to China. At a rally on December 19, it was already Zhang Guohua who had to “confess”.

On 22nd December 1966, the establishment of a large group was announced: the “Central Headquarters of Lhasa Revolutionary Rebels”, abbreviated as Headquarters Gyenlog (Chinese: zaozong), or simply Gyenlog (Chinese: zaofan).⁸⁰ It consisted of thirty-five revolutionary organizations under the leadership of the Red Guards that came from Beijing. They created fifty-one “fighting squads”. Their ideology was simple: “We will resolutely make revolution and rebel. To rebel, to rebel and to rebel through to the end in order to create a brightly red new world of the proletariat”.⁸¹ On December 26, they issued a manifesto in which the Party Committee of TAR was charged with following a reactionary bourgeois line and opposing the revolutionary line of Mao.

The Zao Fan (the Rebels), having declared the illegal nature of their actions, were in fact following the directives of the 11th Plenum of the CPC Central Committee of August 12, 1966:⁸² “Do not be afraid of riots. We must struggle against those who adopt the standpoint of the bourgeoisie and protect the Right while cracking down on the Left, stifling the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. We must fight against those who create the various restrictions and tie the masses by their hands and feet”. Thus, the local authorities had no right to suppress public disorders. They chose a different approach, which authorized the establishment of “new” gangs of the Zao Fan.⁸³ These gangs were incorporated into “Lhasa Combat Headquarters for the Defence of Mao Zedong Thought”. It was created on December 28, 1966.

In the meantime, Gyenlog members acted radically. In early 1967, they seized a radio station, the Bureau of Xinhua, the central newspaper, began to publish their own newspaper Humsi Zao Fan Bao, and seized a number of institutions of authority in Lhasa, including the Public Security Bureau (PSB).⁸⁴ At the same time they were catching, arresting, beating up and interrogating members of the rival factions. On February 19, the Zao Fan newspaper published an article that denounced Zhang Guohua and the Working Committee of the CPC TAR for

78 The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1970, p.245.

79 Goldstein et al., 2009.

80 Goldstein et al., 2009.

81 Founding of Tibet’s “Revolutionary Rebels” Red Guards, December 1966 — in: Kalovski, I. The true face...

82 The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1970, p.149–150.

83 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

84 Bogoslovsky, 1978; Goldstein et al., 2009.

patronage of the reaction, revisionism, seeking to restore serfdom and the power of the reactionary clergy. They were also blamed for their methods that were utilised during the “adjustment” period of 1961–1962.

The Party apparatchiks responded with their own set of counter measures. In February 1967, the “Lhasa Combat Headquarters for the Defence of Mao Zedong Thought” was joined by several other factions. They formed the “Great Alliance Rebel Headquarters of the Lhasa Proletarian Revolution”.⁸⁵ This faction became known as Nyamdrel (Tibetan for “union” or “together”).

There were no ideological differences between the two factions: each followed the instructions of Mao Zedong and conducted the Cultural Revolution. But they reflected the interests of different strata: Nyamdrel, the local apparatchiks, who were protecting their power, and Gyenlog, cadres that were at the bottom and in the middle of the chain, who sought to seize this power. Gyenlog were supported by the Hong Wei Bing, who arrived from Beijing. The class support of both groups was similar. They could have been joined by anyone other than the former “exploiters” who were subjected to harassment from both sides.

In January–February of 1967, every village in Tibet and every institution already had groups of the two factions. Relations between them grew increasingly more tense. The members of Gyenlog started to seize areas where Nyamdrel people were in the minority, and vice versa.⁸⁶ Some of the territories were therefore shared. Major conflicts started to take place. In 1967–1968, over a period of approximately four to five months, the PLA soldiers that were stationed in the Potala, frequently moved through the city to separate the rival gangs, receiving a hail of blows with sticks and stones. The soldiers of that time were only armed with Mao’s red book of “Quotations” for exhortations, other weapons were off limits. In early February of 1967, the Gyenlog members, supported by one of the units of the PLA, attempted to neutralize the Headquarters of the Chinese troops in Lhasa. And on February 21, the CPC Central Committee issued an appeal urging the army to take power into its hands.

Having received authorization from Beijing’s Central Military Committee, the Headquarters began to restore order. First of all, the soldiers who attempted to extend the Cultural Revolution to the army were arrested. The troops began to take control of Lhasa. By March they occupied the government offices and had control over the city.⁸⁷ The members of Gyenlog were declared to be counter-revolutionary, its leaders were arrested. One of the former Zao Fans remembered that in Lhasa everything was resolved rather peacefully. Zhou Enlai would not allow a similar incident to occur as the one what had just been reported in the Qinghai Daily newspaper, where the army opened fire and killed more than a hundred of the surrounding people.

85 Shakya, 1999, p.328.

86 Goldstein et al., 2009.

87 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

The Chinese Red Guards were forced to return from Tibet to Beijing. It was announced that Zhang Guohua was a “good comrade”, although he made mistakes, and the “Rebels” had to cooperate with the authorities of the Military District.⁸⁸ The military gradually began to establish their control throughout the TAR. Accordingly, from December 1966 to April 1967, the membership of Gyenlog shrunk from fifteen thousand to three thousand people.⁸⁹ Simultaneously, the number of Nyamdrel members increased to thirty-eight thousand.

In early 1967, Mao Zedong saw that many of the old cadres began to restore their position, the army started to exert more and more influence on the situation in the country.⁹⁰ He decided to let the second wave of revolutionary masses crush the surviving enemies. On April 1, 1967, the CPC Central Committee announced that the local Party leaders and the army should not label mass organizations as counter-revolutionary, and that such a decision must come from the Centre. On April 6th, the Central Military Commission issued a directive by which the army was limited to doing political work, with important decisions having to be made by the Centre of the Cultural Revolution groups in the PLA. This inspired Gyenlog to mount a revenge following their winter defeat. By the summer Gyenlog managed to split the military, dragging some of them to their side. By late May, some of the Hong Wei Bing returned to Tibet from Beijing, and stated that they would oversee the Cultural Revolution to its completion. On May 29, Nyamdrel members attacked the Gyenlog “headquarters” in Chamdo. This was followed by armed clashes in Lhasa.

Starting from the second half of the 1967, there was almost constant fighting between the rival gangs of the “Rebels”. For the most part this was coordinated by the Han, who constituted a considerable part of the both factions as well as leading them. In early 1968, the situation deteriorated even further. The battles in Lhasa continued for ten days, and then spread to Shigatse and other cities.⁹¹ Machine guns, grenades, etc. were used during clashes. Apparently, the weapons were obtained from the sympathizers in the military. As a result, hundreds of people died.

In September 1967, Mao stated in Beijing that he wanted to put an end to the Cultural Revolution in Tibet by the end of 1967.⁹² However, in early 1968, during just one month in Lhasa, over one thousand people were killed. The clashes occurred almost everywhere except in the border zone, where the army retained its control. Gyenlog was able to reinforce its position due to the fact that the military were mainly in Lhasa, which allowed this faction to recruit people in rural areas.⁹³

88 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

89 Goldstein et al., 2009.

90 Shakya, 1999, p.336–337.

91 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

92 Shakya, 1999, p.341.

93 Goldstein et al., 2009.

Gyenlog members told the villagers that they had to get not 140, but 165 kg of grain per year.⁹⁴

They were further aided by the fact that on June 6, the Army was directed by Beijing not to support any particular group. But the very next day this order was violated. Detachments of the PLA attacked Gyenlog strongholds in Lhasa, at Jokhang and the financial department. This was because Zao Fans had set up speakers and played out propaganda messages from the roofs of both buildings, as well as from the top floor of the temple. The attack against the financial administration was unsuccessful. But they were able to quickly conquer the Jokhang. This was an important victory, as the radio station in the desecrated temple was very important for the Gyenlog. According to Tibetans, who served in the PLA, the soldiers had killed and wounded more than sixty “rebels” there, and seized small arms and grenades after having spent more than a thousand bullets and nine hand grenades.⁹⁵ The losses of the PLA amounted to six people killed and wounded. According to the memoirs of a Gyenlog member, twenty of his companions were killed and several were wound.

Now, the main temple in Tibet lodged soldiers. According to the emigrated monks, the new inhabitants urinated on the walls of the temple, turning it into a pigsty, and they slaughtered cattle in its courtyard.

By August 1968, armed clashes took on such a scale that Zhou Enlai acknowledged that the factional struggle in Tibet had become tantamount to civil war. On August 11, 1968, in Beijing, Mao had an audience with the “responsible comrades from the PLA troops in Tibet”.⁹⁶ At the same time the CPC Central Committee decided to dispatch a special commission to stop the fighting and establish order there. In August 1968, the Chinese Government organized another meeting between the representatives of Gyenlog, Nyamdrel, the Chinese authorities and the central group of the Cultural Revolution.

Consequently, in order to appease the Gyenlog, the Standing Committee of the Party Committee of Tibet District Military Headquarters had prepared a long document that contained self-criticism.⁹⁷ Among others, the following mistakes were noted: “We mistakenly regarded the revolutionary mass organization Gyenlo Headquarters as the bad organization controlled by a “handful of counter-revolutionary elements”. We severely attacked and suppressed this organization. We arrested and interned some persons in charge, some members of the revolutionary masses, some revolutionary young militants, and revolutionary cadres of this organization. Some of them were suppressed as “counter-revolutionary elements”. We seriously dampened their revolutionary enthusiasm”.

94 Tibet under Chinese, 1976, p.123.

95 Goldstein et al., 2009.

96 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

97 For text see: Goldstein et al., 2009, p.52–57.

Of course, the “mistakes” were explained by insufficient studying of Mao Thought. While in Beijing, the Gyenlog leaders agreed to stop fighting and to take part in the creation of the Revolutionary Committee of the TAR.

As a result, on September 5, the creation of the Revolutionary Committee was announced. It included twelve Chinese and four Tibetans. With that, the main stage of the Cultural Revolution in Tibet was completed. The power was passed onto the military. The chairman of the Revolutionary Committee, Zeng Yunya, was at the same time the chief commander of the Military Region. Previously he was Zhang Guohua’s deputy. The latter was transferred to Sichuan to a higher administrative post and also to avoid Gyenlog’s revenge.⁹⁸ For the most part, the Revolutionary Committee consisted of soldiers, revolutionaries, some of the former Party and administrative cadres. Almost all of them were Han. The formation of local revolutionary committees was delayed until 1969 because of the opposition that came not just from the Gyenlog, but also from the local population that was discontented with the continued unrest.

The fighting in and around the revolutionary committees during 1968–1970 led to new incidents that involved thousands of people. On the 2nd of October 1968, during an attack on the Revolutionary Committee in Shigatse, many of its employees were killed.⁹⁹ But the biggest incident took place in Lhasa on August 3, 1969. The Revolutionary Committee convened about three thousand of the Zao Fan from the biggest gangs and ordered them to surrender their weapons. They refused and were arrested by soldiers. After hearing about this, more than ten thousand members of their gangs moved towards Lhasa from other parts of Tibet. They destroyed roads and bridges around the city, broke into its central part, and demanded the release of their accomplices. An armed confrontation erupted.

In December of that same year, the Lhasa radio station was called on to protect the Revolutionary Committee in every possible way. Obviously, it was in danger from the irreconcilable class enemies, traitors, spies and other reactionary elements.

The mutual hatred between Gyenlog and Nyamdrel did not fade away. The areas where power shifted to Gyenlog, had “struggle sessions” initiated against the people of Nyamdrel, who were beaten and killed.¹⁰⁰ In order to seize power from Nyamdrel, members of Gyenlog used the fear and hunger of peasants, accusing their opponents of wrong economic policies.¹⁰¹ In some places, the members of Gyenlog, after seizing power, even permitted the conducting of individual religious rites (but not the restoration monasteries and monastic life). The Gyenlog leaders in Lhasa knew about this and allowed the use of religion to “activate the masses for

98 Van Walt, 1987.

99 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

100 Goldstein et al., 2009, p.90–91.

101 Goldstein et al., 2009, p.64, 172–181.

the ensuing assault”. Subsequently, many members of this faction were subjected to punishment as “reactionary”.

On the other hand, the struggle of the people against local authorities took the form that was adopted during the Cultural Revolution. In order to attack the Chinese, Tibetans used the pretext of Mao’s struggle with bureaucracy.¹⁰² By 1968, the uprisings had spread to twenty out of fifty-one TAR counties, and to some parts of Amdo and Kham. The national liberation movement was often conducted under the slogans of supporting the Gyenlog against Nyamdrel. For example, in 1969, the nomads of Pala (Western Tibet) learned about the forthcoming establishment of the commune. After declaring themselves as members of Gyenlog, they mutinied, partly killed, partly arrested the officials who supported the Nyamdrel, and declared religious and economic freedom.¹⁰³ They hoped to return to the situation that existed before 1959. However, this was not to be. Soon, the army arrived and, headed by a member of Nyamdrel, proceeded to launch the Cultural Revolution in full. The communes remained there until 1981. Some of the nomads were turned into paupers by the authorities, who confiscated their property, thus impoverishing them, so they could not join the communes.

The Army continued to eliminate the Red Guards and the “Rebels” not only in Tibet but throughout China, right up until the death of Mao. Some of the Chinese cities had to be stormed by soldiers. For example, the city of Wuzhou was bombed with napalm; the city of Guilin was seized by thirty thousand soldiers, and all of the Red Guards were killed.¹⁰⁴ The Chairman destroyed those whom he created himself. If we return to the analogy between the various “storm troopers” (see above), it can be concluded that the “night of long knives”, unleashed by Adolf Hitler against the leaders of the SA, resulted in far less bloodshed.

Having defeated the “Rebels” with the help of the army, the Communists returned to their eternal dream, which is the collectivization of agriculture. Actually, communes were set up in the TAR just before the Cultural Revolution in 1965, but the massive campaign unfolded only in 1968–1969.¹⁰⁵ Having created communes, the Chinese then announced that Tibet had completed the leap from serf feudalism to socialism, bypassing developed feudalism and capitalism¹⁰⁶ just like the Mongolian People’s Republic.

Chinese propaganda claimed that the communes were created at the request of the workers who were inspired by Mao Zedong Thought. However, the Tibetan peasants, who received land during the reforms, said: “I’d rather stay here than go all the way towards socialism”. The communes collectivized everything including

102 Smith, 1994, p.68.

103 Goldstein, 1994, p.94–95.

104 Courtois, S. et al. *The Black Book of Communism...*

105 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

106 Shakya, 1999, p.308–310.

the teapots, and people were even required to eat in common dining rooms.¹⁰⁷ The money was paid according to award points. People had tax cards, which indicated how much and of what products they had to submit. Accordingly, rations of food and manufactured goods, as elsewhere in China, were introduced. If someone was sick and could not work, his ration was decreased.

In order for one to stay home and not go to work, it was necessary to obtain permission from the authorities.¹⁰⁸ But it was better not to do so. Families with dependents, children and the elderly, were forced to share the meagre rations of the working members. In order to reduce hunger, parents sent their children to work from the age of eight years old. The most privileged people in the communes were the Chinese cadres. Farmers complained that these cadres were paid according to the scored points given to the members of the commune, plus a salary from the government. In 1968, the communes began to accept more of the Tibetan cadres. At the Party's call, many young Tibetans were sent to remote areas. They saw it as punishment.

Collectivization was one of the causes of the new famine in rural areas. It lasted from 1968 to 1973.¹⁰⁹ An eyewitness from Kham told me that this famine had arisen due to the fact that almost everything that the peasants gathered was handed to the state. People were getting so little in return for their labour, that they could not support families with dependents. People had to make flour from wild plants. People were dying of hunger. One of the former "serfs", who led the exemplary "Red Flag" commune in Lhoka, recalled that the productivity increased, but half of the harvested grains had to be sold to the Chinese state.¹¹⁰ As a result, most people's rations were so small that they had to borrow from the commune. Enthusiasm was lacking, and efficiency decreased.

Back in 1959, the foreign journalists who visited an experimental agronomic station in Central Tibet were told that many crops (wheat, corn, soybeans, flax, beetroot, etc.) grew better at an altitude of four kilometers than on the plain.¹¹¹ Allegedly, the Tibetan Plateau produced harvests of "Ukrainka" wheat type at 55 centners per hectare, which was as much as was harvested in its native Ukraine. Now the farmers were forced to plant wheat instead of the usual barley. It did not yield harvests in the highlands. Cattle breeders were then allocated the task of growing grain.

In 1968, in the Shigatse Prefecture, 45% of farms were merged into people's communes, and in some counties, this proportion reached 86%.¹¹² By mid-1970, the TAR had 666 communes which were organized in all the prefectures and in

107 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

108 Tenpa Soepa, 2008, p.132–133.

109 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

110 Shakya, 1999, p.311.

111 Domogatskikh, 1962, p.168–170.

112 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

34% of the counties. By the end of 1974, the communes were already established in 93% of the TAR counties. This was accompanied by public discontent and by the sending of “people’s militia” units.¹¹³ According to the stories of refugees, many Tibetans had long forgotten the taste of such products as sugar, butter, tea, and rice, and in order to survive, many had to donate their blood for money.¹¹⁴

The communes were given the responsibility for maintaining almost all of the schools, health centres, local industrial enterprises, construction, etc. Whenever the need arose, several communes were unified. Party committees and revolutionary committees were created in them. Members of the commune were required to participate in civil and military construction, to provide for the reception of Han settlers, to have military training needed for creating “people’s militia” units (the latter applied to almost all of the men and women). One of the functions of the “militia” was to help the PLA in identifying people who wanted to go abroad or who had arrived from there.^{114a}

But the main function of the communes was to service and feed the stationed Chinese Army. The press reported on the Tibetan people’s love and support of the PLA.¹¹⁵ This “love” was expressed in the fact that people cultivated the army-owned fields, harvested crops, supplied the soldiers with *tsampa*, prepared wood, fetched water, “conceded” their homes to soldiers, supplied working stock, etc. At times of need, the “liberated from feudal serfdom” people, had to work from dawn till dawn.

The “help” that the military offered during the harvest was often reduced to confiscation of production, and the peasants were forced to eat what was available from the scant nature of the highlands, for example, wild roots. Confiscation of produce often lead to sudden riots.¹¹⁶ For example, in 1969, in a small village in Dingri County, a poor harvest was collected. The Chinese cadres took all of it. The Tibetans responded by beating them up and fleeing to the mountains. The authorities promised not to persecute the people, so they returned. However sixty people were then arrested.

For comparison, let’s consider the current propaganda against the feudal-theocratic system:¹¹⁷ “In order to cultivate his land, the serf had to give up human and livestock resources for transport of officials, monks, trade caravans, Tibetan soldiers and material resources with plates on horses from the Tibetan Government; to feed and house them free of charge as well as carry out forced duties imposed by the local government; to work in construction of monasteries and temples; to

113 The PRC in 1974, 1977.

114 Bogoslovsky, 1996; Tenpa Soepa, 2008, p.133–134.

114a Tibet under Chinese, 1976.

115 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

116 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

117 The essence of feudal serf system...

give up production required by the local government, such as naked-grained barley, butter, chicken eggs, silver yuan, Tibetan silver, etc. Moreover, officials at various levels in local government had the right to impose corvée labour”.

However, back then there was no famine. And now it appeared due to the replacement of traditional crops by winter wheat (useless in these conditions), confiscation of food for the PLA, forcing the nomads into a sedentary lifestyle and collectivization.¹¹⁸

The troops were sent also to promote the ideas of Mao, for example that it was necessary to prepare for war, famine and natural disasters. “The clique of the Soviet renegades-revisionists was always hostile to and continues to be such towards the Chinese people. <...> Regardless of how many of you will come, and who will come with you, we will firmly, finally, utterly and completely destroy you. <...> Down with the new kings! Down with social-imperialism of the Soviet revisionists!”¹¹⁹

During the 1960’s, the Maoists staged several thousands of provocations on the Sino-Soviet border. The most widely known incident of them was the one on the Damansky Island in 1969, during which Soviet soldiers and officers had sixty killed and more than a hundred were wounded.¹²⁰ Under the 1991 Agreement, this island was officially given to China. Now there is a Museum of Military Glory of the PLA.

The Chinese leadership genuinely believed that a third world war would begin soon. It decided to defend against “kings-revisionists”. In Tibet, the supply of consumer goods was disrupted because vehicles were used for transportation of goods that were needed to prepare for war.¹²¹ The authorities assured people that soon the preparations would be completed and the goods would be plentiful. During the 1970’s, hundreds of people in Lhasa were digging tunnels and bomb shelters under the mountains.¹²² For the event of war, the communes were obliged to create reserves of food.¹²³

The campaign for the introduction of communes was completed by 1976. Ren Rong, the 1st secretary of the CPC TAR Committee, said in 1977:¹²⁴ “The TAR... everywhere implemented communization. The statement of Mao Zedong that the nature of the national struggle is a question of the class struggle, the directives of Mao Zedong... have enlightened the victorious path of the revolution in Tibet, lead the Tibetan people along the right path of the revolution towards the new victories”.

At the height of collectivization, on 7–12 August 1971, in Lhasa, the 1st Congress of the CPC TAR took place.¹²⁵ The Committee of the CPC TAR of fifty-six members and sixteen candidates was elected, as well as a permanent bureau

118 Tibet under the Rule of Communist China, 2001.

119 Down with the new kings!

120 Mar, 1969; Losses in Soviet military...; <http://www.damanski-zhenbao.ru/>.

121 Tibet under Chinese, 1976, p.124.

122 Shakya, 1999, p.376.

123 Bogoslovsky et al., 1975.

124 Renmin Ribao, 16.11.1977 — in: Bogoslovsky, 1996, p.8.

125 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

of sixteen people. The first secretary was, as always, the Han, Ren Rong, the 1st political commissar of the Tibetan Military District. Three Han and three Tibetans became the secretaries. Since the whole of China was divided into military districts, whose party committees were local authorities, Ren Rong represented the highest authority in Tibet. In June 1972, party conferences were held in Lhasa, Shigatse, Chamdo and Nagchu.¹²⁶ A movement was started to encourage Tibetans to join the CPC. According to Xinhua, from June 1972 to June 1974, more than eleven thousand residents of the TAR (mostly Tibetans) became communists.

In the early 1970's, restoration of the education system commenced. By 1975, the TAR had forty-three hundred primary schools, thirty secondary schools and two higher schools. During the period 1971–1975, twelve hundred Tibetans were sent to study at higher schools in inner China. Education was extremely ideologically driven. The Chinese sought to radically change the Tibetan language and to create a “language of the Sino-Tibetan friendship”.¹²⁷ At the same time, theatres and amateur troupes that performed in Tibetan started to reappear. The school of Tibetan medicine started up again.¹²⁸ Once again, industry began to develop. Factories, airfields, etc., were built, but special attention was given to building roads, the length of which reached sixteen thousand kilometres in 1975. The “liberated” population was forcibly allocated to special teams such as transport, and construction.¹²⁹ For example, ten thousand herdsmen were mobilised for construction of the Linji industrial complex.

Tibetans have called Lhasa a “holy land” or “paradise”. According to the Maoists, “Lhasa was then a paradise for the bloodsuckers and a hell on earth for the working people”.^{129a} They began to transform the city. It now had a functioning hydro-electric power plant, a wool mill, cement plant, automobile service workshop, a stadium, cinema, theatre, etc., and the western and northern suburbs became industrial zones. The area of Lhasa doubled. The Holy City started to look like a mediocre socialist town.

Masses of Han workers were brought in for working in construction and in mines. In the early 1970's, their population in the TAR reached one hundred thousand people. The government actively encouraged Han migration. For example, there was campaigning for sending soldiers who were demobilized from the army to “nationality regions”. Many graduates from Chinese universities wanted to “devote their entire lives to serving the liberated slaves” and firmly settled in Tibet.¹³⁰ An identical assimilation policy was implemented in other “nationality border

126 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

127 Smith, 2008.

128 Blondeau and Buffetrille, 2008, p.227–228.

129 Bogoslovsky et al., 1975; Bogoslovsky, 1978.

129a Hsin, 1972, p.22.

130 The PRC in 1975, 1978.

regions”, for example in Inner Mongolia. Marriages were regulated. According to the refugees, Chinese men were allowed to marry Tibetan women, but Tibetan men were forbidden to marry the Chinese. Tibetans who were in government service could marry any Tibetan woman, but a serving Tibetan woman could not marry a Tibetan who was not in government service. There were cases of forced marriages, when Tibetan women were forced to marry the Chinese.¹³¹

One of the organizers of the Cultural Revolution, who was announced as the successor to Mao Zedong, was Lin Biao. In the early 1970’s, he quarrelled with almost the entire Politburo. In 1971, he left China by plane, but on the way it crashed in Mongolia. In August of 1973, the 10th Congress of the CPC took place in Beijing. Lin Biao was proclaimed to have been a bourgeois careerist, a schemer, a traitor, a counter-revolutionary, etc. The responsibility for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution was put onto him. A new campaign was launched: “Criticize Lin Biao, Criticize Confucius”. Confucius displeased Mao by acknowledging the role of the people as the foundation of the state, the legacy of generations, the importance of honouring the older by the younger. His concept of Sino-centrism was saved by the Maoists, though.¹³² At the same time, after 1973, they started to praise the Emperor Yingzheng (Qin Shi-huang, ca. 259–210 BC). He was famous for “burning books and burying scholars”, which signified the abandonment of the path of former rulers.¹³³ Laudatory articles began to appear that showed the similarity between the Chairman and the Emperor. Mao liked his authoritarianism, the unification of China, state administration through violence, aggression against neighbours, etc. The Chinese press of those years underlined the “merits” of the ancient Han military leaders who waged war against the Hunnu, ancestors of the Mongols.¹³⁴ Confucianists, who tried to make peace with these nomads, were blamed for trying to “enter into reactionary political alliance”. At the same time, it was claimed that, historically, the Hunnu were one of the nationalities of China.

The new campaign was used by the authors of the Cultural Revolution to settle scores with their opponents. Among the “minorities”, the main purpose was “strengthening the union of” the non-Han peoples with the Han, to struggle against “class enemies” and to praise the Cultural Revolution as a way to prosperity of the borderlands.¹³⁵ In Tibet, this campaign was held under the slogan: “Confucius, Lin Biao and the Dalai are three monks from the same monastery”.¹³⁶ The 14th Dalai Lama and his “clique” were portrayed as an external danger, and the 10th Panchen Lama and his supporters were the “internal danger”. This was despite the fact that it was five years since the Panchen Lama was imprisoned.

131 Rakhimov and Bogoslovsky, 1971, p.142–148.

132 Yurkov, 1981, p.4.

133 Wang Ming, 1975.

134 Tikhvinsky, 1979, p.196–198.

135 The PRC in 1974, 1977.

136 Shakya, 1999.

In Tibet, guerrilla operations continued. Not all of their units were formed and supplied by the CIA. In some parts of the TAR independent units were formed and had thousands of members. They attacked soldiers, governmental officials, destroyed communications, military installations, etc. More than one thousand soldiers of the PLA and cadres were killed or wounded. For example, in late 1966 – early 1967, in TAR, a revolt against the local authorities erupted with seven thousand people taking part.¹³⁷ In early June of 1968, in Sophu, Chumai, Jiangba and other places, more than three thousand Tibetans rebelled. They killed more than two hundred cadres. In Geji and Tsalamo more than one thousand Tibetans attacked the PLA troops and killed over three hundred soldiers. In August, the troops were attacked in Southern Tibet, 250 soldiers killed and nine military vehicles burned. In October, starving Tibetans attacked the food warehouse in Shigatse. One hundred soldiers were killed along with as many Tibetans. In early December, riots broke out in seven counties, killing dozens of workers that were engaged in the creation of communes. At the end of 1968, more than two thousand herdsmen from the Jage and Wangring counties attacked troops and agencies. One hundred soldiers and cadres were killed and wounded.

In 1969, in the Nyemo County, a young nun Trinley Chodron stated that she had been visited by a bird that had come from the Dalai Lama and told her to drive out the Chinese. She gathered a crowd of peasants, armed with swords and spears. The crowd attacked the local authorities. Soon the uprising spread to eighteen counties. Several more people declared that they were reincarnations of the Gesar. The rebels killed Chinese officials and military, as well as the Tibetan cadres that were associated with the Chinese. Some of them were executed, some had their hands cut off. The evidence for this is assembled in the Nyemo museum. The uprising was used by Gyenlog, who were seeking to eliminate the Nyamdrel cadres and to establish their own authority. The rebellion was suppressed by the army. Chodron and fifteen of her supporters were sent to Lhasa for a public execution. By now, this incident is well documented.¹³⁸ It can be concluded that this was an episode of the peasants' national liberation struggle of an eschatological, religious character, of which the warring factions of the Zao Fan have taken advantage. As was reasonably noted by Ts. Shakya, the Cultural Revolution, which attempted to erase Tibetan identity caused a deep fracturing of the self, and eroded the confidence of the Tibetans in their value system.

On May 1, 1970, a detachment of two hundred cavalry smashed and burned an automobile depot in Majiangdzong and cut the telegraph line between Lhasa and Shigatse.¹³⁹ The guerrillas controlled the settlements of Majiangdzong and Emodzong for a few days. The local peasants seized food stores and took all the agricultural tools. In May 1970, eight hundred Tibetans surrounded and fired the

137 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

138 Goldstein et al., 2009; Shakya, 1999; Shakya, Ts. Blood in the snows...

139 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.



A young man who was captured while trying to escape to India with his girlfriend. Deng Zinmei, student of the school 66th group in Lhasa, is the “chieftain of brigands”. His girlfriend was sentenced to 20 years in jail, following her attempt to escape to India. In prison, she was raped and then committed suicide (Woeser, 2006/permission from Woeser)

garrison in Chemo, to the west of Lhasa. 150 soldiers were killed. During the period from 1962 to 1970, a Tibetan unit of twelve people attacked Chinese troops on the border with India, Bhutan and Nepal. After their capture, four of the Tibetan guerrillas were executed, the rest were given six to twenty years in prison. In the summer of 1970, in South-western Tibet, an uprising started, which killed about one thousand Chinese soldiers.¹⁴⁰ After suppressing the uprising, the Chinese executed 124 people. During the same year, the people of Eastern Tibet rebelled against the creation of communes. The rebels attacked poorly guarded military transports and guard posts. Underground groups operated in Lhasa, Dingri and other cities.

In late 1969 – early 1970, mass arrests were conducted throughout the TAR, as well as show trials and executions.¹⁴¹ Gyenlog gangs were

suppressed simultaneously with the national liberation movement and popular protests. For example, at a mass rally in Lhasa, in January of 1970, nine young men and women from the underground organisation “Fight for the Independence of Tibet” were shot. And twenty-five people were shot in Shigatse during the summer.¹⁴² Others were given twenty to thirty year prison sentences. In February of that year, at a rally in Lhasa, thirteen people were shot, with no less than twenty being shot in other places. In October 1970, in Lhasa, twenty young people were executed.¹⁴³ Their families were forced to attend the executions, and then thank the authorities.

Fliers were posted on the walls of houses with pictures of the convicted and a description of their “crimes”: sabotage of enterprises, fighting the organization of communes, helping the refugees, etc.¹⁴⁴ In order to undermine the guerrilla movement, Tibetans were banned from living on their land in the hundred-mile

140 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

141 Bogoslovsky, 1978.

142 Bogoslovsky et al., 1975.

143 Khetsun, 2008.

144 Bogoslovsky et al., 1975.

zone adjacent to India and Nepal. At the same time the Chinese contingent was increased. In the early 1970's, its number reached four hundred thousand people.¹⁴⁵

As we remember, Mao Zedong came to power through a war that was supported from abroad. After that, Maoism was exported to India, Burma, Nepal, Bhutan, Peru, the Philippines and many other countries. Mao said:¹⁴⁶ "China is not only the political centre of the world revolution: it has also become the centre of world revolution in terms of military and technical support. We must provide them with weapons; now, we can openly give them weapons. <...> China must become the armoury of the world revolution". Since then, the number of victims of the Maoist underground around the world is counted in the hundreds of thousands. China provided assistance to the armed separatist movements of the Naga and Mizo tribes in India. In 1970–1980's, their leaders lived in Beijing and attended the Party schools there. Their militants were trained in China.¹⁴⁷ However, Mao and his followers denounced the Tibetan resistance as an activity that was inspired from abroad.

Meanwhile, according to current international law, guerrilla warfare is a legitimate form of struggle against an aggressor, against colonial and foreign occupation. Thus, according to Article 43 (1) of the Additional 1st Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, "the armed forces of a Party to a conflict consist of all organized armed forces, groups and units, which are under a command responsible to that Party for the conduct or its subordinates, even if that Party is represented by a government or an authority not recognized by an adverse Party".¹⁴⁸ Revolutionaries do not fall under this law because they are fighting with their own government and not foreigners.

The U.S. stopped helping the Tibetan guerrillas after having established economic relations with China. Mao Zedong, who criticized the USSR for improving their relations with America, now established close ties with this bastion of Western imperialism, and began to cooperate with Japan and the Federal Republic of Germany. In July 1971, the U.S. Secretary of State H. Kissinger paid a secret visit to Beijing via Pakistan, so as to prepare the ground for a visit by President R. Nixon. On July 8, 1972, Zhou Enlai, in an interview with U.S. Congressmen H. Boggs and G. Ford, was reported by them to have stated the following: the presence of the U.S. on the world stage is important because it acts as a guarantee of peace and stability.¹⁴⁹

Having established their relations with China, the U.S. betrayed Tibet, just as the United Kingdom did earlier. According to declassified U.S. documents, their support

145 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

146 Maoism without Embellishments, 1980, p.218.

147 Shakya, 1999, p.516.

148 Additional 1st Protocol...

149 Koloskov, 1977, p.210.

of the Tibetans was only meant to put pressure on China in a diplomatic game, and had nothing to do with the actual restoration of Tibetan independence.¹⁵⁰ Now the U.S. stopped funding the guerrillas. Their base in the Kingdom of Mustang was lost. In July 1974, the Dalai Lama appealed to the Tibetan guerrillas with a twenty-minute speech, urging them to lay down their arms.¹⁵¹ For many, this became a drama. Some committed suicide. The armed struggle had come to naught.

In the 1970's, for the first time since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, selected foreign journalists were allowed to visit Tibet.¹⁵² Ever since then, the Western press has once again been filled with publications, whose information has been obtained from the Maoist sources.¹⁵³ All the travel of foreigners within Tibet had to follow a pre-arranged program; they were closely followed by "guides", and specially selected Tibetans behaved according to a prearranged script.¹⁵⁴ Once again, the misinformation regarding "slaves", the "victims of feudal lords", stories about "human sacrifice", "the blossoming Tibetan culture", etc. was being spread. The flow of this "intellectual prostitution" (as defined by P. French) almost dried up in the 1980s. But then it was resumed. The "masters" of this genre still continue their work that was started in 1950's (see A.L. Strong, V.V. Ovchinnikov, A.T. Grunfeld, M. Parenti etc.). They publicise carefully filtered hodge-podge propaganda, folklore, myths, fantasies and some real excesses – in short, anything bad that one could find about old Tibet.¹⁵⁵ Recently, such propaganda has re-appeared in the former Soviet Union as well.

In recent decades, humanitarian assistance to the Tibetans was provided by private individuals and NGOs such as the Fund for Social and Resource Development, the Tibetan Institute, etc. From 1959 to 1992, the Government of Tibet in exile, the Indian Government and international sponsors, have invested over 1.5 billion Indian rupees into the education of Tibetan refugees.¹⁵⁶ The Government in exile spends 65% of its budget on education of Tibetan children. This does not include the high cost of training monks. The budget of the Tibetan Government in exile is formed mainly by contributions of refugees, many of whom have become successful businessmen. Beijing propaganda and its foreign associates never tire of counting how much money, where and for what purpose money is received by the Tibetan Government in exile.¹⁵⁷ However, if the government is legitimate, it has the right to receive funds from both its own people and from abroad.

150 Questions pertaining to Tibet...

151 Strokan, S. "Most living Buddha"...

152 Smith, 1996.

153 Great Changes, 1972, etc.; see French, 2004, p.373.

154 Iliin, 1978.

155 Schrei, J.M. A lie repeated...

156 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

157 For example, Baker, 2007.

Many Tibetan schools were formed in India and Nepal. The Tibetan Medicine and Astrology Institute, the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, and the Publishing Centre of Tibetan Culture were opened in Dharamsala. Tibetan cultural organizations began to spring up in other Indian cities. Young immigrants started to receive higher, including university, education. Meetings, conferences and other events were being held. In the 1970's, the Tibetan Government in exile started "radio broadcasting from abroad in Tibetan, targeting the interior of Tibet, fabricating and distributing a large number of inventions, exercising political provocations and stoking separatism".¹⁵⁸

The PRC authorities now prefer to hide information about the Cultural Revolution and the uprisings in Tibet. After all, even Mao Zedong admitted that it was not all good: 70% was good, but 30% were errors. Interestingly, back in 1949, speaking about the working methods of the Party committees, he gave the following assessment: "For example, how many per cent of success was achieved: 30 or 70%? Neither minimization, nor exaggeration would do".¹⁵⁹ In 1956 and 1957, Mao called Stalin's activity to be 70% good and 30% bad.¹⁶⁰ On the 31st of July of 1958, he shared his discovery with Khrushchev: "Of Stalin's ten fingers, three were rotten".¹⁶¹ By December 15, 1973, he found that the ratio of 70% good and 30% bad applied to Deng Xiaoping as well.¹⁶² And in our time, the work of Mao himself is announced to have been 70% good and 30% bad. Everywhere the same mysterious percentage. How was this calculated? Perhaps the source of this numerology was the first "wise" evaluation?

Meanwhile, there are other numbers that deserve attention. According to the Government of Tibet in exile, from 1949 to 1979, more than 1.2 million Tibetans died as a result of political persecution in prisons, from torture and starvation, with this figure not including the mass mortalities of refugees in camps in India due to heat and diseases. This figure is criticised by some authors.¹⁶³

China's official position is that the population of Tibet during the "peaceful liberation" was about one million people. Currently it is more than 2.3 million, thus there could not have been 1.2 million of mortalities.¹⁶⁴ This is not right, as the official figures relate only to the TAR, whereas 1.2 million is the total loss of Tibetans in Greater Tibet.

The Tibetan side, by referring to the State Statistical Bureau of China, gives the following details on the total number of Tibetans, from which the losses are

158 Champion of peace...

159 Mao, 1966, p.121.

160 Rakhmanin, 2005, p.118–119.

161 Zubok, 2001 (1), p.118.

162 Mao Zedong. On Deng Xiaoping...

163 For example, Sautman, B. How repressive...; The myth of Tibet...

164 "The one who expresses interests of the Tibetan people"...

to be subtracted. In November 1959, the TAR population was 1,273,969 people, but many more lived on the Tibetan lands that were annexed to neighbouring Chinese provinces. In Kham, which was partially converted into Sikang, there were 3,381,064 Tibetans. In Qinghai Province and Tibetan lands that were included in the Gansu Province (i.e. Amdo), the population was 1,675,534 Tibetans. This gives the total of 6,330,567 Tibetans.¹⁶⁵ The data for 1959 was taken from the Chinese population census of 1953 (the next census was in 1964). However, their interpretation by the Tibetan side has the following inaccuracy.

Here are the official Chinese census results of 1953 that were published in 1954.¹⁶⁶ The list of representatives of different nationalities of the PRC estimated the total number of Tibetans to be 2,775,622 people. The table of distribution of the population (not just Tibetans) in the provinces indicated that “Tibet and Chamdo” (the future TAR) were inhabited by 1,273,969 people. The Sikang Province had 3,381,064 people,¹⁶⁷ the Qinghai Province 1,676,534 people.¹⁶⁸ Summation of these numbers (for these provinces and the future TAR) produces 6,331,567 people.¹⁶⁹ But they were (and are) populated not just by Tibetans, so the figures for the provinces include all nationalities. Hence, the number of Tibetans was overstated in the Tibetan source.

But by how much? It would be easiest to agree with the Chinese figures, which is something that is usually done. But it is possible to conduct an extrapolation that would be based on the ethnic composition of these provinces. The original data for 1953 seems to be unavailable, but there is more recent information. Of course, this will give rise to errors caused by different methods of conducting a census at different times and by changing in composition of the population over forty-seven years. But these errors would not be higher than those of other available extrapolations.

According to the census conducted in 2000, Tibetans accounted for more than 92.8% of the population in the TAR. Prior to 1959, there were almost no other people there. Thus, the entire population “of Tibet and Chamdo” in 1953, can be considered to be Tibetan, i.e. 1,273,969 people. The percentage of Tibetans in populations of Qinghai (22.5%) and in Tibetan prefectures of Sichuan that formerly belonged to Sikang (65.22%) can also be obtained from the census of 2000.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, if these percentages are to be calculated from the total population of Qinghai and Sikang in 1953 (see above), it turns out that there lived 2,205,130 and 377,220 Tibetans, respectively.

165 Renmin Ribao, 10.11.1959 — in: *Tibet: the Truth*, 1993.

166 People’s Republic of China State...

167 In 1955 included into Sichuan as several Tibetan autonomous units.

168 The quoted source states 1676534, and not 1675534, this does not include the Gansu Province.

169 But not 6330567.

170 Department of Population...

However, in the early 20th century, the number of Tibetans in Amdo was estimated to be around five hundred thousand people.¹⁷¹ “The Yearbook of the Qinghai Province” of 1993 states that in 1957 there were 513,415 Tibetans there, the “Yearbook” of 1996 quotes a corresponding figure of 486,269.¹⁷² Apparently, the Qinghai figure that I calculated above is somewhat of an under-estimation: by the year 2000 the proportion of Tibetans there decreased due to the Han migration. For the same reason, the figure for Sikang can be also considered to be too low. But if these low estimates are added to 1,273,969, we get 3,479,099 people. Consequently, the Tibetan population was not 2,775,622 people, as was stated in the census of 1953, but much higher. And this is despite the fact that I did not take into account the Tibetans of the Gansu and Yunnan provinces (in 2000 there were more than half a million of them there). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the real total number of Tibetans in 1953 was more than 3,479,099 people.

As mentioned above (see Chapter 6), C. Bell¹⁷³ and P.K. Kozlov¹⁷⁴ estimated that during the first decades of the 20th century the total number of Tibetans was around four to five million people. This does seem to be close to the truth. Similar figures were quoted in the secret report by the Department of National Defence of the Canadian Government, dated October 6, 1950. It stated the number of Tibetans in the future TAR was estimated to be 1.5 to two million people, and in Sikang and Qinghai two million people.¹⁷⁵ That’s a total of 3.5 to four million. These figures are consistent with my calculations. In addition, they agree not with the reduction of the population of Tibetans in the early 20th century,¹⁷⁶ but with its underestimation by the census. Greater Tibet had no events that, by 1953, could reduce the population by a factor of nearly two. To the contrary, since the beginning of the 20th century, and until 1950 there should be a natural population growth.

Thus, in all probability, the total number of Tibetans in 1953 was slightly more than four million people.

It should be noted that the results of the first three censuses of Tibetans in the PRC (in 1953, 1964 and 1982) were inexact. They were based on household registration records and survey results.¹⁷⁷ According to a Chinese source, the “census was not carried out directly in Tibet and the area of Chamdo, but the local Tibetan Government, then headed by the Dalai Lama, made rough estimates and notified the Central Government about the population numbers”.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, one department of China produced different figures at different times. I have already

171 Kozlov, 1923, p.413.

172 Sautman, 2008, p.240.

173 Bell, 1992.

174 Kozlov, 2004, p.35.

175 Secret: CTC releases documents...

176 Quoted in Yan Hao, 2000, p.14.

177 Yan Hao, 2000.

178 China, Tibet – facts and figures 2005...

cited contradictory Chinese data on Qinghai. The future TAR, according to the census of 1953, had 1.274 million Tibetans; in 1959 this figure was reduced to 1.18 million,¹⁷⁹ and in 1991 to 1.05 million.¹⁸⁰ Did they change these numbers to “reduce” the loss of population since 1959?

Tibetan data on the losses of the Tibetan population during 1949–1979 caused by the Chinese occupation are listed in the following table:¹⁸¹

Cause of death	Ü-Tsang	Kham	Amdo	Total
Torture in prison	93,560	64,877	14,784	173,221
Execution	28,267	32,266	96,225	156,758
Killed in battle	143,253	240,410	49,042	432,705
Famine	131,072	89,916	121,982	342,970
Suicide	3,375	3,952	1,675	9,002
Beating	27,951	48,840	15,940	92,731
Total	427,478	480,261	299,648	1,207,387

The figures in the table above are based on the analysis of documents and information supplied by official delegations of the Dalai Lama that were sent to Tibet. A complete inquiry on refugees was undertaken by a special commission of the Tibetan Government in exile. Evidence given by the surviving witnesses that lived in particular Tibetan areas was at the core.

Many demographers do not believe this data to be accurate. According to them, one cannot come to conclusions based on the findings of questionnaires, especially since Tibetan exiles reported inflated figures for political reasons.¹⁸² However, it can just as easily be said that Tibetans in China would have provided minimized figures due to their fear of the authorities. So, should we just ignore the Tibetans altogether? Some advocates of this approach need to be reminded that such tactic is used in the denial of the Holocaust, where no complete documents of the killings were published, and much was based purely on testimonies that often contradicted each other. Generally, large losses cannot always be determined precisely. Even the losses of the Soviet Union and Germany that occurred during the 2nd World War remain controversial, and population losses of many countries that happened before the 20th century cannot be accurately estimated.

179 Shakya, 1999, p.504.

180 Sautman, 2008, p.240.

181 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

182 See review: Sautman, 2008, p.238.

P. French¹⁸³ wrote that the documents that were shown to him, from archives held in Dharamsala, did not support a figure of 1.2 million. The archive contained duplicates, some of the documents were not found, data about the same episodes that came from different informers in some cases differed, the number of women seemed too low. The complete revision of the reference data and calculations were never published by the author, and the information that he has provided does not allow us to estimate even an order of error. The main shortcomings, which were considered by French, were that the statistics apparently included random numbers, and unchecked data was repeated, while the losses in some sparsely populated parts of Northern and Eastern Tibet were implausibly high.

If these are major deficiencies, they do not seem to be of critical importance. It is not clear why the inclusion of numbers was recognized as random, and the data from refugees cannot be verified since the onsite (in PRC) information is not available. Big losses in sparsely populated areas of Tibet may be explained by the movement of people due to various reasons (fleeing from their homes, actions of guerrilla groups, movements of convicts, etc.). Moreover, in 1982, Northern and North-eastern Tibet areas exhibited an increased proportion of women to men, as compared with other parts of Tibet and China.¹⁸⁴ This was the result of losses from uprisings (not famine) that were still identifiable more than twenty years after the events. This is consistent with the data that French thought to be implausible. According to him, 500,000 Tibetans perished (although this figure was also not statistically justified). When assessing the total population of Tibetans, he followed the Chinese statistics (about 2.5 million). It turns out that 20% of Tibetans were killed.

Other sources state the Tibetan mortality figures range from 102,000 to 600,000 people.¹⁸⁵ These figures are based on expert estimates and extrapolations by various authors. In the USSR, following an analysis of the Chinese press, Tibetan losses were calculated to be more than 10%.¹⁸⁶

Particularly interesting results were obtained from several methods of modelling.¹⁸⁷ They deserve a mention. According to them, the losses were much less than 1.2 million people. However, the results of different methods were vastly different. The source data contained many assumptions. Therefore, the author himself acknowledged that they could not be used as a base for correct evaluation of losses during 1953–1964.

According to Chinese data that was used by Yan Hao,¹⁸⁸ the increase in the number of Tibetans in the years 1953–1964 was negative (–9.87%) for the first

183 French, 2004, p.408–414; French, 2008.

184 The population atlas of China, 1987 — in: Norbu, 2003, p.612.

185 See review: Source list...

186 Iliin, 1978.

187 Yan Hao, 2000.

188 Zhang, T. and Zhang, M., 1993 — in: Yan Hao, 2000.

time during the period that he studied (1953–1990). This implies that there was a decline in population from 2.775 to 2.501 million, or by 274,000. But, by 1982, the number had risen to 3.848 million (positive growth of 53.86%). Yan Hao believes that the main losses, in the battles and due to famine, were not as great as the Tibetan Government in exile believed them to be. Unfortunately, he did not provide information about mortality rates of Tibetans that were caused by hunger, punitive measures and in local battles by areas.

In addition, a famine took place in Tibet not only before 1964, but also in 1968 – 1973. So it is unlikely that there was a striking increase in population from 1964 to 1982 by a factor of more than 1.5 in just eighteen years. It is even less likely that such an increase took place just nine years after the famine, in the years of 1973–1982. It remains to be concluded that the original statistics and the calculations that were based on them contained estimates that were too low of the Tibetan population (at least until 1982) and the absolute value of its reduction after the PLA invasion. Thus, the calculations of Yan Hao do not refute the data of the Tibetan Government in exile.

If we take the number of Tibetans in 1953 to be four million people, then the losses amount to between 3% and 30%, according to different estimates. It is interesting to note that the authors who accept the “small” losses (from one hundred to several hundred thousand people), also accept the under-estimation of the total number of Tibetans in 1953 at 2.8 million.

Let’s look at particular numbers. According to Chinese estimates, the number of Tibetans in Qinghai decreased from 477,994 people in 1959 to 408,132 in 1963, or by 14.6%.¹⁸⁹ This decrease is linked not only to deaths from starvation, war and imprisonment, but also to migration. Among the emigrants there were 20,000 Amdowa (inhabitants of Amdo). B. Sautman concludes that, in Amdo, around 20,000 deaths could have been due to hunger, which is five times less than what was reported by Tibetan exiles (see table above). According to Sautman, starvation was less pronounced among Tibetans than non-Tibetans, as the Tibetans mainly lived sparsely, in villages, while the economic scheme of accelerated development (the Great Leap Forward) was easier to implement in densely populated areas. However, this was just the reason why Tibetans should have been more severely affected by the interchange of products. In addition, some of the Amdowa live in the Gansu Province. Further, the losses in Amdo should be counted starting from 1953 and not 1959. Also, the famine took place after 1963 (see above). The conclusions about the lack of hunger in Central Tibet are also wrong, as they are supported by population estimates from 1958, 1959, 1962 and 1969, however the first census after 1953 took place in 1964.

¹⁸⁹ Sautman, 2008, p.241–242.

On the other hand, the total number of deaths in Qinghai (Amdo) caused by famine is estimated to be 900,000 people, in Sichuan (which includes Kham) this figure is nine million, with Tibetans being particularly affected.¹⁹⁰ The 10th Panchen Lama, who knew the situation well and was loyal to Chinese authorities, stated that 10% – 15% of the population were arrested in Tibet¹⁹¹ and more than half of them died (see Chapter 8). That is, just in the TAR alone, more than 64,000 – 96,000 people died in prisons between 1959 and 1962. These figures are similar to the values provided by the Tibetan exiles (see table). The evidence that the Panchen Lama presented was checked by officials from the Department of the United Front of the CPC. In January 1961, the results were sent to the Central Committee, which accepted them.¹⁹² Thus, there are no grounds to doubt their validity.

Nevertheless, sceptics believe that there is no evidence of repressions taking place in Tibet specifically. M. Parenti believes that such a thing is impossible, since the Chinese Army in Tibet was short of people.¹⁹³ Maybe he does not know that the enemy could be destroyed bit by bit, or have the individual bits sent to concentration camps. B. Sautman¹⁹⁴ advanced a number of arguments, why we must not accept a figure of 175,000 Tibetans dying in custody. His arguments are difficult to accept. According to Sautman, there is no evidence that Tibetans were disproportionately imprisoned or subjected to a harsher prison regime than non-Tibetans. (But why not? After all the revolt was suppressed in Tibet and not in the whole of China, and the proportion of clergy was also the highest in Tibet. One can expect that the percentage of imprisoned there was also above average. According to testimonies from Tibetans, they were discriminated against in prisons, as mentioned above.) Based on the high numbers of a 5% annual mortality rate of 10 million detainees each year, the death of 174,000 could be achieved if, from 1950 to 1979, no less than 116,000 Tibetans were jailed each year, which is about 3% – 4% of the Tibetan population. If one assumes that more than 50% of all executions, deaths through torture, and suicides of Tibetans also took place in prison settings during that time, then about 450,000 or some 10% of all Tibetans were jailed in each of these years. (And why was this not possible, if the repressions affected almost every Tibetan family?) The major PRC political campaigns, which led to imprisonments and deaths, affected Tibetan areas more lightly compared to China proper. (This is not true. The “class struggle” was in full swing in Tibet.) If Tibetans died in custody at the same rate as in China proper, the total number of Tibetan deaths would have been no more than 75,000 – 100,000. (But what if the rate was different?)

190 Becker, 1996 – in: Blondeau and Buffetrille, 2008, p.89.

191 His Holiness the Panchen Lama...

192 Barnett, 1997, p.xv–xvi.

193 Parenti, M. Friendly feudalism...

194 Sautman, 2008, p.245–246.

So, by all reports, it appears that the “democratic reform” led to the death of a large part of the Tibetan nation. Exact statistical data on this subject can only be obtained from the PRC. However, even if that data is there, it is not available to independent researchers. Local-level data was generalized and has only been published by the Tibetan Government in exile. Although it may contain errors, the data is in better correspondence with the known facts than any other existing estimates. With respect to the total population of Greater Tibet in 1953 or 1959, the Tibetan side appears to provide numbers that are too high, while the Chinese provide numbers that are too low.

It must be emphasized that the Cultural Revolution swept not just through Tibet, but through the whole of PRC. One of the greatest cultures of the world, the Han culture, suffered irreparable damage. The great relics, items of literary heritage, the immortal masterpieces of art and architecture were destroyed. Outstanding thinkers, artists, writers, scientists, holders of the ancient traditions of China, and followers of all religions were persecuted, harassed and tortured, and many of them perished.

In Beijing alone, during the Cultural Revolution, 4,922 of 6,843 historic monuments were smashed,¹⁹⁵ 2,357,000 historical books were destroyed along with 185,000 paintings and calligraphy scrolls, more than a thousand ancient steles were crushed, etc.¹⁹⁶ In Beijing, the museum that was created after the excavation of the tomb of Ming Emperor Zhu Yijun (era name: Wan-li, lived in 1563–1620) was destroyed. The remains of the Emperor and his two wives were pulled out of the museum by Red Guards, and were “condemned” and burnt in front of the tomb. Many artefacts were stolen or destroyed. The unique Changlang Gallery had fourteen thousand paintings in traditional “Guohua” Chinese style, which were displayed along its entire length of 728 m. The Red Guards painted over them with dye.¹⁹⁷ A part of the Great Wall of China was also destroyed.

Many of the Chinese Buddhist temples were closed by August of 1966.¹⁹⁸ They were converted to dormitories, centres of Hong Wei Bing crowding and propaganda. At the same time, students and teachers of the Central Institute of Arts lit the “revolutionary fire” of destruction of old sculptures. Ancient Buddha statues were smashed with axes and iron bars. In September, the Red Guards went to the “feudal temples” in the Guangxi Province, burned pictures of the Buddha and other “objects of superstition”, and installed portraits of Mao and copies of his “Quotations” book instead. At Tsinghua University, people began to worship the mango fruit that was bestowed by the Chairman. When the fruit started to decay it was covered with wax, put on public display, and its copies were sent to various city organizations.¹⁹⁹

195 Jung Chang and Halliday, 2007.

196 Usov, 2006, p.65.

197 Usov, 2006, p.57.

198 Kuznetsov, 2006.

199 Usov, 2006, p.150.

The Red Guards smashed the Baima Si (White Horse) Temple in the city of Luoyang. This ancient Buddhist temple in China (the earliest Chinese Buddhist temple) was established in 68 AD. Ceramic statues of the eighteen Arhats which were over one thousand years old were destroyed, and books that were nearly two thousand years old were burned. In the Tian Tai Temple (in the Dai area, Shaanxi Province) that was built 1,500 years ago, all of the statues and frescos were destroyed. In Yunnan, the Hansa Temple was destroyed, which was an object of worship for local and foreign Buddhists. The “Rebels” dispersed the monks of the famous Buddhist Wutaishan complex, burned old manuscripts, and destroyed some of its sixty temples.²⁰⁰ The Buddhist monuments of the Tang era were smashed in Xian.²⁰¹ One woman from Sichuan recalled her journey by steamship along the Yangtze in 1975: shattered temples, overthrown statues, and defiled ancient pilgrimage places.

The temples, the house and the tomb of Confucius were ruined. The Louguan Temple, where Laozi left the great Tao Te Ching book 2,500 years ago, was destroyed. The Red Guards destroyed many other Taoist temples, and many of their monks were sent to communes. As in Tibet, in China the demolition of monuments was supervised by specialists who took the most valuable items to the state treasury, and left the rest to be taken away for melting or to fill landfills.²⁰²

In Xinjiang, ancient Uighur copies of the Koran were destroyed, and the mullahs and ulama were taken through the streets with cut pig heads tied to their necks. The mosques were used to breed pigs for state needs, and Muslims were ordered to eat pork. Many mosques were destroyed. Many books were banned.

Christian churches were also closed and destroyed. In particular, all Orthodox churches were closed, their priests were repressed, and many were killed. Famous St. Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral in Harbin City was demolished in 1966. Headstones from the two Russian cemeteries in Harbin were used for paving embankments (however, part of the tombs were transferred to another place earlier, in 1959). Some of the stones were laid with the inscriptions facing up.

Across China there was widespread “confiscation” and destruction of personal property, which the Red Guards, who conducted the searches, considered to be suspicious: scrolls, antiques, jewellery and religious objects, etc.²⁰³ In Beijing only, over a period of just one month of searches, the following was seized: 5,155 kilograms of gold, 17,260 kilograms of silver, about 55.5 million yuan in cash, six hundred units of material wealth and jewellery. From 1966 to 1976, 520,000 houses and rooms were “confiscated”. By October 1966, 397,400 people were labelled as “scum” and expelled from the cities.

200 Courtois, S. et al. *The Black Book...*

201 Gorbunova, 2008, p.148.

202 Jung Chang and Halliday, 2007.

203 Usov, 2006.

In various places in China, people were flayed, beheaded, boiled in resin, pierced with nails, had their fingers crushed, hearts cut out and eaten, children were torn in half, etc.²⁰⁴ In the Guangxi Province, one night, a man was tied to a tree and had his liver slowly squeezed out through a small cut. The liver was then boiled and eaten, and the victim was left to die.²⁰⁵ Brains of the dead were sucked through metal pipes, and human flesh was roasted. In Gansu, fifty people were tied to cars and stabbed with knives until they turned into a bloody mess. In total, fifty to a hundred different kinds of torture were used during the Cultural Revolution.

In the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the Mongols suffered more than the other people.²⁰⁶ Tens of thousands of them were massacred on charges of supporting the People's Party of Inner Mongolia, the organization that was trying to reunite the territory with the MPR.²⁰⁷ According to Chinese data, 346,000 were persecuted by the case of this Party, out of which more than 16,000 perished.²⁰⁸ Altogether, the autonomy lost about 10% of its Mongolian population.²⁰⁹ As a result of repressions, re-distribution of land and the influx of the Han, the Mongols became a "minority nationality" on their own land. At the beginning of the 21st century, they constitute about 18% of the total population of Inner Mongolia.

As in Tibet, the lands of the Mongols were subjected to gangs of Red Guards destroying traditionalism, terrorizing the people, instilling Chinese language, etc. In 1966, in Ordos, they smashed one of the main Mongolian relics, the yurtas, where for nearly seven hundred years, the personal belongings of Genghis Khan and his relatives had been kept.²¹⁰ The mausoleum, where these yurtas were situated, had almost everything destroyed and stolen by the Red Guards. It was later converted to a salt warehouse. Only three saddles of the Great Khan were saved by a Mongolian herdsman.

The total death toll caused by the rule of Mao Zedong in the PRC (including repressions and famine) according to various estimates, ranges from thirty to eighty million people.²¹¹ Of them, up to twenty-seven million died in prisons and labour camps.²¹² Nearly fifty million people were taken to labour camps at some point.²¹³ According to official Chinese data, about one hundred million people were affected by the Cultural Revolution. Many became insane or sick, and their number was

204 Usov, 2006, p.60–64; The Nine Commentaries, 2005, p.32.

205 French, 2004.

206 Blondeau and Buffetrille, 2008, p.73.

207 Bache. 50 years of turmoil...

208 Usov, 2006, p.147.

209 The Eight White Ordon...

210 The Eight White Ordon...

211 Pirman, K. Ignorance...

212 Jung Chang and Halliday, 2007.

213 Courtois, S. et al., The Black Book...

not recorded by the statisticians.²¹⁴ These losses were the biggest in the history of China, Tibet and Mongolia. Almost all the Chinese youth of those years passed through their education with hatred. One can only admire the Chinese people, whose traditionalism the Maoists failed to completely eradicate.

On 9th September 1976, Mao Zedong died, together with the Cultural Revolution. As a result of his leadership, Tibet looked like Hiroshima after the nuclear bombing.²¹⁵ Almost every Tibetan family suffered from repressions. The delegation of the Dalai Lama, that visited their homeland after the death of Mao, “did not meet one single individual who was happy, who said something pleasant about the conditions, or who did not have a story of oppression and suffering to tell”.²¹⁶

The Maoists used methods to manipulate the crowds that were similar to those used by Hitler. “Our individual characters and identity were to be extinguished in the fire of revolution, and we were to foster, from collective living, new uniform characters whose only object of worship would be an impersonal Motherland, personified by a living deity, Chairman Mao”.²¹⁷ This chairman dreamed of obliterating, from the minds of his subjects, their country’s past.²¹⁸

Having declared their unity with the Tibetan people, the occupiers utilised violence and lies to “mobilize the masses” for torture, murder, destruction of religion and culture. In return, they built Chinese-style industries, infrastructure, agriculture, education and health care. Propaganda presents these as the greatest achievements. In reality, Tibet was turned from a unique civilization into China’s backward periphery.

While Tibet was not formally at war, the “peaceful” period from 1951 to 1976 represented a purposeful elimination of spirituality, of everything that was Tibetan. There was extermination, “re-education” and forced sinicization of people. As a result, 3% to 30% of Tibetans perished. “The killings were organized by the State. Only a small percent of them are on the conscience of the Red Guards”, while most of the destruction was carried out on the initiative of the authorities.²¹⁹ Mao knew that well.

According to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was adopted on 9th of December 1948 and became active on January 12, 1961, “genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as

214 Usov, 2003.

215 Lukin, A. World view...

216 Norbu, 1999, p.280.

217 Norbu, 1999, p.189.

218 Jung Chang and Halliday, 2007.

219 Jung Chang and Halliday, 2007, p.576 etc.

such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”.²²⁰

The Committee on the Rule of Law International Commission of Jurists, associated with the UN, concluded:²²¹ “Acts of genocide have been committed in Tibet in an attempt to destroy the Tibetans as a religious group, and that such acts are acts of genocide independently of any conventional obligation”. The Committee cited the following proof of this statement: “(a) that the Chinese will not permit adherence to and practice of Buddhism in Tibet; (b) that they have systematically set out to eradicate this religious belief in Tibet; (c) that in pursuit of this design they have killed religious figures because their religious beliefs were an encouragement and example to others; (d) that they forcibly transferred large numbers of Tibetan children to a Chinese materialist environment in order to prevent them from having a religious up-bringing”.

Similar actions of the Maoists against other nationalities do not refute these conclusions. Consequently, their actions in Tibet can be qualified as genocide, regardless of which of the above estimates of population losses one considers to be credible.

While stressing the crimes of the Japanese militarists against the Chinese people, the CPC conceals its own, one of which was the Cultural Revolution. This chaos directed and produced “from above” activated the most morbid of human instincts. This was the real “formation of the new socialist man”, whose brain was filled with the Mao Zedong Thought.

This is the darkest page of the entire history of the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization. The little that was left from its centuries-old heritage by 1966 had been destroyed almost completely. Responsibility for this rests with Mao Zedong and his Communist Party. Mounting these accusations against any particular nation as a whole is as wrong as accusing the German nation for the crimes of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party.

220 United Nations. Convention...

221 Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, 1960, p.3, 13–14.

CHAPTER 10

Reconstruction and Modernization



Hu Jintao, the PRC Chairman stated that:¹ “The credit for the remarkable achievements of Tibet in the past fifty years goes to the wise decision-making and correct leadership of the three generations of central collective leadership of the Party with comrades Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin at the core respectively during different historical periods in Tibet’s development”. We already know about the period of Mao Zedong. Now, let’s see what happened after.

Following the death of the “Great Helmsman”, Deng Xiaoping and his reformist team won the race for the position at the head of the CPC. A former Political Commissar of the South-western Military District, one of the organizers of the invasion of Tibet, and then the target of the Cultural Revolution, he was guided by the old Chinese proverb: “Black cat or white cat, if it can catch mice, it’s a good cat”. Thus, in economics the colour did not have to be red! In 1978, he initiated reforms that were supposed to bring China out of a deep crisis. “Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a product of the basic tenets of Marxism and the case of China’s modernization, scientific socialism... This development process will inevitably have to abandon certain points of view of our predecessors, which, due to historical limitations, bear elements of utopia; reject dogmatic understanding of Marxism and erroneous views attributed to Marxism”.² Basically, Mao Zedong’s warning was realised:³ “After not much time ... the whole country will inevitably turn to counter-revolutionary restoration, the Marxist-Leninist Party will certainly turn into a revisionist party”. And “revisionism that comes to power is the coming to power of the bourgeoisie”.⁴

The Chinese people enthusiastically supported the new course. Since then, the whole world has admired the success of the Han people in private enterprise. Millionaires and billionaires have appeared in the PRC. Many members of the CPC are successful businessmen. The communist education of the masses, with which Mao Zedong was engaged until his death, turned to dust.

1 Hu Jintao Full Text of Speech...

2 13th National Congress, 1988, p.63.

3 The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1970, p.20.

4 Mao Zedong. Speeches and articles...

The success of the reforms of Deng Xiaoping is largely due to the fact that China attracted foreign (Western) investment, and then integrated into globalization.⁵ In January 1979, China and the U.S. established diplomatic relations and signed an Agreement on trade relations in July of that same year. In the Agreement, both mutually granted each other the status of the 'most-favoured' country. Since then, their relations have been developing so successfully that by the end of the 20th century, the U.S. was the second largest trading partner with China (after Japan), and China was the fifth largest trading partner with the United States. America became the most important source of investment in the Chinese economy. By 2005, China's dependence on foreign technology had reached 50%.

Foreign countries played an important role in establishing and maintaining the power of the CPC. Without the Soviet Union there would be no People's Republic of China, without the powers of the West there would be no economic miracle in the PRC. All the talk that the U.S. is trying to split China is baseless.

In 1981, the CPC Central Committee acknowledged that the main tenets of Mao Zedong, that justified the Cultural Revolution, "do not match the criteria of Marxism-Leninism, or the Chinese reality".⁶ At the same time, "Comrade Mao Zedong was a great Marxist, a great proletarian revolutionary strategist and theorist. <...> His achievements have main place, and mistakes are minor. His efforts in the creation and development of our Party and the PLA, the liberation of all the people of China will never be forgotten".

This assessment is not surprising. For the Communists, a revolution can only be good and counter-revolution only bad. So they decided that the Cultural Revolution was not a revolution. Instead, it was conducted by a "counter-revolutionary group" headed by Lin Biao and Jiang Qing. This was despite the honest confession of the latter:⁷ "I was nothing but Chairman Mao's dog. I have bitten those whom Chairman Mao has told me to bite".

Many believe that China has left Maoism in its past. That is not quite true. Maoism was never rejected. The current CPC "are guided by Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents".⁸ The ideas of the three represents are as follows: The CPC represents the advanced productive forces, the advanced Chinese culture and the absolute majority of the Chinese people.⁹ "Mao Zedong Thought, as a result of the application and development of Marxism-Leninism in China, represents the right theoretical principle that was proven in practice and generalization of the Chinese

5 On trade balance...; On economic relations...; Degree of dependence...

6 Resolution on Certain Questions, 1981, p.34, 58-59.

7 Jung Chang and Halliday, 2007, p.631.

8 The CPC charter...

9 Modern China...

revolution, the essence of collective wisdom of the Communist Party of China. <...> Determined defence of the socialist way, of people's democratic dictatorship, of leadership by the CPC, Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought is the cornerstone of our state".¹⁰

On January 10, 2001, the Chairman Jiang Zemin stated:¹¹ "Our country is a socialist state, and if our spiritual core, that is Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, is undermined, if our common ideal of building socialism with Chinese characteristics is undermined, we can come to ideological confusion and social chaos that will result in disaster for the state and the nation. Therefore, adhering to the thesis of Marxist governing and the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics is linked to the destiny of the Party and the State". Thus, the capitalist economy of China is combined with the communist ideology. This is how the CPC legitimizes its authority under the new conditions.

Following the death of Mao Zedong the situation in Tibet improved. At the end of 1977, some of the prisoners were freed, and some returned to occupy high positions. About 90% of them were officials of the former Tibetan Government, and people with high qualifications. At first they were mostly given jobs as shepherds or agricultural workers.¹² But now the authorities of China are trying to support members of the older generation of Tibetans who belonged to the ruling class. They receive financial support and honorary positions.¹³

Starting in 1979, negotiations between representatives of the Chinese Government and the 14th Dalai Lama began to be held. In 1978, the freed 10th Panchen Lama once again became a member of the PC CPPCC of China. In February 1979, he confirmed that the living standards of the Tibetan people far surpassed those of the old days.¹⁴ In 1980, Beijing hosted the first working forum on Tibet. The 10th Panchen Lama was invited to participate in it. He stated that he continued to adhere to the positions expressed in the Seventy Thousand Hieroglyphs Petition. The years in prison did not break him. The Panchen Lama openly criticized the Party's position to justify a campaign against the rightists. His point of view was shared by Phuntsok Wangyal, who was not rehabilitated. The forum concluded that the main reason for the failure of the CPC in the TAR was in the left-wing deviation. The 1st Secretary of the CPC TAR was replaced. Finding a suitable candidate for replacement proved to be difficult, as all party activists were "leftists".

On 22–31 May 1980, Tibet was visited by the CPC Secretary Hu Yaobang with his delegation. He was shocked by the poverty of the population and stated

¹⁰ The CPC charter...

¹¹ Jian Zemin, 2004, p.567.

¹² Tenpa Soepa, 2008, p.127.

¹³ Garri, 2009.

¹⁴ Dalai Lama, 2000; Shakya, 1999, p.382.

that millions of yuan were spent in vain, the Chinese cadres were working poorly. At a closed meeting, he said that the visible results of the Chinese presence in Tibet are reminiscent of colonialism (as far as economy was concerned).¹⁵

Having returned to Beijing, Hu Yaobang called for radical reforms in Tibet: the exemption from taxes, and abolition of duties that provided free labour and compulsory quotas of state procurement over three years; to de-collectivize agriculture and stock breeding, and further privatize land and property; the autonomy in Tibet was to reflect its special circumstances; Tibetan administration at the county level was to have no more than two to three Han, and at a higher level no more than 30%.¹⁶ Han cadres, with the exception of the PLA, were required to be reduced by 85%, while those who were to remain there, had to learn the Tibetan language (the latter order was dropped). In addition, liberalization and diversifying of the economy was to be conducted, Chinese subsidies were to be increased, the Tibetan culture and religion were to be revived, and the restoration of some cultural monuments and monasteries was to be funded. The new directives of the Party were to be studied by the heads of provinces that included Tibetan lands.

A number of publications on the need to overcome the leftist view on Tibet appeared. In particular, it was announced that a reduction of national questioning to the class struggle was wrong; its essence was in the actual inequality of nations that was preserved under socialism.¹⁷ This was contrary to the doctrine of Mao. The correction of an error of collectivization, when in 1970 rich peasants were put into a separate stratum of the population – prosperous landed peasants characterized as exploiters – was now announced. It was proclaimed that the old Tibet did not have such peasants after all. The rehabilitation of those who were blacklisted as rich herdsmen and farmers, their agents, as well as landowners and cattle owners was performed. It was acknowledged that many wealthy “serfs” were blacklisted with the above. The confiscated livestock and tools were to be compensated. Traders were the next in line to be rehabilitated, having previously (in 1975) been ascribed to the category of capitalists. It became clear that feudal Tibet did not have capitalists.

Now people were allowed to wear their national dress, perform religious ceremonies, and revive their old traditions. Local laws changed to allow polyandry and polygamy in families, provided that these families were formed before the promulgation of the Tibetan marriage law and in the absence of demands to change the status quo by members of the family.¹⁸ Traditional burial ceremonies were allowed once again: the sky burial (feeding corpses to birds) and water burial (throwing corpses into rivers).

15 Smith, 1996, p.568.

16 Smith, 1996, p.569.

17 Bogoslovsky, 1996.

18 National regional autonomy...

Funds were allocated for reform conduction. However, a significant portion of grants and subsidies did not reach their destination due to the corruption and illiteracy of managers. Chinese cadres that were returning from Tibet tried to take with them as much wealth as they could, especially gold, works of art, and wooden furniture (the latter was in deficit in China at the time).¹⁹ When the majority of Han cadres were removed from the rural areas, the population started to restore the stupas and walls with prayers, etc. For the first time, parents were able to send their children to monks for education. For the first time, the younger generation was given an opportunity to learn the truth about the history and culture of Tibet. The restrictions that prevented refugees from visiting their relatives at home were partially lifted.

In the 1980's, the CPC carried out cleansing of the three categories of people who committed crimes during the Cultural Revolution. However, in Tibet, such cleansing did not take place, as the Communists did not have any other support there. The far leftists, having officially agreed with the new policy of the Party, remained radical. They continued to believe that it was necessary to reduce the influence of religion, that Tibetan culture was backward, etc. In 1983–1984, many far leftists were rehabilitated in China. A tendency developed to ignore the “errors” of the past in the hope that everything would resolve itself via new policies. In 1984, Hu Yaobang stated that the “old school” Tibetan cadres could be reformed.²⁰ He began to promote them. The rehabilitation of the far leftists made a bad impression on the new Chinese Communists in the TAR. The Panchen Lama later complained that the far leftists in Tibet did not abandon their far leftist prejudices and despite the crimes they committed during the Cultural Revolution, the Party gave them new positions of authority. We shall see that this led to serious consequences that can be felt today.

From 1985 to 1988, Wu Jinhua was the secretary of the Party Committee of Tibet Autonomous Region. He gave his first secretarial speech wearing traditional Tibetan clothes.²¹ By his order, posters and slogans from the time of Mao Zedong were removed in Tibet, and the situation regarding religion was improved, etc.

In January 1987, the conservatives in the CPC removed Hu Yaobang from power after having “criticised his mistakes”. It is said that far leftists in the TAR were celebrating this event.²² However, on March 28 1987, in Beijing, the Panchen Lama praised his policies and actions in Tibet to the Standing Committee of the NPC. He said that this was the only supreme leader who paid any attention to Tibet. The speech of the Panchen Lama was critical, yet constructive, and demonstrated loyalty to the PRC.²³ He spoke in some detail of the extermination of Tibetans during the

19 Smith, 1996, p.582–583.

20 Shakya, 2002.

21 Karmel S.M. Ethnic tension...

22 Shakya, 1999.

23 His Holiness the Panchen Lama's Warning to China...

uprising in 1959, and said that the Communists' governance brought good along with the bad. "If you cling to the attitude that you will always rule and suppress the minority nationalities, then there will be serious problems in the future". Those words proved to be prophetic.

In late 1988, Hu Jintao was appointed the secretary of the CPC Tibet Autonomous Region. Previously, he held a similar post in the province of Gansu. According to his staff, he tried to spend as much time as possible in Beijing, but not in Tibet.²⁴ This bore fruit. In 1992, he was transferred from TAR to the central party organs. Hu Jintao supported Ragdi, a Tibetan party official. Ragdi at one time headed the "Rebels", and then became a prominent member of the local Revolutionary Committee.²⁵ According to his official biography,²⁶ 1959–1961 he studied at the Central School of Political Science and Law (in Beijing), in 1961 he joined the CPC, 1962–1966 he worked in national security structures in the Nagchu County, 1966–1968 he was a worker of the commission of military control of Nagchu, 1968–1979 he was the Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Nagchu, and then the TAR. Starting from 1982, Ragdi was a Member of the CPC Central Committee. This strengthened his position among the Tibetan leadership. In 1993 he became a Chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC TAR, by 2003 he was a Deputy Chairman of the Government of TAR, and in 2008 he was an Honorary Chairman of the Committee for Development of the TAR. Many other leaders of the Cultural Revolution also occupied important posts (details see below).

Not surprisingly, the Chinese policy in Tibet became tougher, the methods and terminology of the Cultural Revolution started to be used. This was not entirely due to the cadres. An important role was played by the increasing tension between the Communist Party and the religion. The improved standard of living and economic liberalization led to a significant influx of money to monasteries in the form of donations and that did not suit the CPC.²⁷ In addition, the policy of Hu Yaobang was widely viewed as a threat to Chinese rule in Tibet.

At the Politburo conference in 1988, it was decided to accelerate the economic integration of Tibet into China, to strengthen the security mechanisms, to appoint more of the Party cadres there and to eliminate the possibility of the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.²⁸ In April 1994, at the 3rd working forum on Tibet, two major strategies were adopted: accelerating the economic development of the TAR by attracting significant investment and labour there, and conducting reforms in Tibetan Buddhism.²⁹ In 2002, Hu Jintao became the General Secretary of the CPC,

24 Tibet 2002.

25 Tibet 2002.

26 ChinaVitae: Raidi...

27 Dragon in the Land of Snows...

28 Tibet under the Rule of Communist China, 2001.

29 Andreev, 2006a, p.398.

and in 2003 the Chairman of the PRC. Not surprisingly, the hard-line policies in Tibet were not changed. At the same time China ignored the UN Sub-Commission's 1991/10 Resolution on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of the rights of small nations that was adopted on August 23, 1991, and contained serious concern about the continuing violations of fundamental rights, the threat of the destruction of culture, religion, and national identity of the Tibetan people. It called for the PRC Government to respect these rights.

The Tibetan People's Struggle, the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Refugees

In 1977, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme stated that the 14th Dalai Lama could return to Tibet, "if he wants to be with his people".³⁰ In 1979, Gyalo Dhondup, the elder brother of the Dalai Lama, arrived in Beijing following an invitation from the Government of the PRC. Deng Xiaoping told him that he was ready to discuss any issues, except for Tibet's independence.³¹ However, in 2008, after the death of Deng Xiaoping and repeated failure of negotiations, Zhu Weiqun, the deputy director of the Work Department of the Central United Front of the CC CPC, stated that Deng Xiaoping had never said this, and that it was all invented by the Tibetans.

On 2nd August 1979 a delegation of five people who were carefully selected by the Dalai Lama left Delhi and headed for Tibet via Beijing.³² The Chinese authorities accepted the request of the Dalai Lama to send three other delegations. Despite the measures taken by Chinese authorities, the delegations were enthusiastically greeted by thousands of people in Tibet and Amdo. Therefore, when the delegates arrived to Shigatse, Sakya and Gyantse, the local Tibetans were sent to do work in rural areas.³³ One of the envoys overheard a phrase uttered by a high-ranking cadre: "All the efforts of the past twenty years have come to nothing overnight".³⁴ Having returned to Beijing, the delegates said that they were shocked by the poverty and hopelessness of the Tibetans. In 1979–1980, the PRC was visited by three delegations of the Dalai Lama. The fourth was also being prepared.³⁵ But, on August 6, 1980, China declared that it could not accept it. After several more reminders, it was only allowed to visit the north-east of Tibet in 1985. Since then, delegations have not been allowed to visit the region. In July of 2002, Gyalo Dhondup did visit Beijing and Lhasa, but he was not acting as an official representative.

30 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

31 Gyelo Thondup reconfirms Deng Xiaoping's offer...

32 Dalai Lama, 1992, p.230–231.

33 Smith, 1996, p.567.

34 Dalai Lama, 1992, p.230–231.

35 Tibet: the Truth, 1993; Tibet 2002.

In 1982, envoys of the Dalai Lama once again held talks with the Chinese authorities, and suggested combining Greater Tibet into a single political and administrative unit inside the PRC, to provide Tibet with a status which was similar to Hong Kong.³⁶ That is, to implement the principle of “one country, two systems”. The authorities refused. At the talks held in 1984, they only agreed to discuss the status of the Dalai Lama and the conditions of his return. The refusal was explained by the fact that Sino-Tibetan relations were already established by the Seventeen Point Agreement, despite the fact that this Agreement was broken (see chapters 7 and 11).

Xinhua provided the following details of the refusal:³⁷ “The Dalai Lama spoke about his desire to introduce a formula of ‘one country, two systems’ in Tibet. It is also a reckless lie. What existed in old Tibet was a feudal slave system, in which the state and the church were one entity. This regime was abolished in 1959 during the then initiated democratic reforms. So should we really restore an old feudal system in Tibet? Dalai stresses his commitment to ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’, proclaims the need to restore ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ in Tibet. This absurdity is even more monstrous. The Dalai Lama, acting as the chief representative of the three biggest masters of the old Tibet, was imposing barbaric and morbid dominance of the feudal slave-owners. Could democracy and freedom exist in those conditions? Today, he is disguising himself by wearing a toga of a ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ supporter, which sounds like a wicked sarcasm and satire on democracy and freedom”.

This is a perversion of the truth. The real reason is simple: Hong Kong is inhabited by a majority of Han people, who must be loyal to Beijing “by definition”, whereas Tibet is inhabited by Tibetans, most of whom are “separatists”. Furthermore, even before his emigration, the 14th Dalai Lama began to reform the “feudal”³⁸ system (see Chapter 6), conducted democratic changes in the refugee community in India, and proposed a plan for the democratization of Tibet (see below). As for whose dominance in Tibet was more “barbaric and dark”, the feudal lords or the communists, and what was a true satire, can be judged from the previous chapters. As was aptly pointed out by the Chinese scholar L. Song,³⁹ “just as the Chinese disliked ‘two systems’, so the Tibetans disliked ‘one country’”.

During the 1980’s the 14th Dalai Lama and his people were able to achieve the internationalization of the Tibetan issue. This was an important achievement. A worldwide movement for Tibet’s freedom appeared, its members drew the attention of people, authorities and international organizations to the situation in Tibet, and it organized assistance for refugees, etc. Many countries formed non-governmental

36 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

37 Negotiations or splittist activity...

38 Or is it “feudal-slave”? Some communist functionaries confuse feudal and slave-owning societies, although they are supposed to know the historical materialism.

39 Song, 2007, p.42.

groups supporting Tibet.⁴⁰ In Russia alone there are Friends of Tibet societies in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kalmykia, Buryatia and Tuva. The Government of Tibet in exile was able to open their offices in Washington, New York, London, Tokyo, Zurich and Moscow. A lot of Tibetan culture and Buddhist centres were opened. These are especially important in countries where Tibetan Buddhism is traditionally practiced by all or part of the population, like in Russia, Mongolia, Bhutan, Nepal, India, and China (such a centre is open in Hong Kong, and possibly in other places).

Despite the “crackdown” on Tibet, contacts with representatives of the Dalai Lama and Chinese authorities continued. On September 21, 1987, a meeting of the Committee on human rights of the U.S. Congress and the Dalai Lama, promulgated a Five Points Peace Plan. These points are as follows:⁴¹

1. The transformation of Tibet into a zone of peace
2. China’s abandonment of the policy of population displacement that threatens the very existence of Tibetans as a nation
3. Respect for fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms of the Tibetan people
4. Restoring and protecting the natural environment and China’s abandonment of the use of Tibet for production of nuclear weapons and as a nuclear waste dump
5. Open negotiations on the future status of Tibet and on relations between the Tibetan and the Chinese peoples

On 15th June 1988, the Five Points Plan was expanded in the Strasbourg Proposal of the Dalai Lama. Its main provisions were as follows:⁴² “The whole of Tibet known as Cholkha Sum (Ü-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. The Government of the People’s Republic of China could remain responsible for Tibet’s foreign policy. The Government of Tibet should, however, develop and maintain relations, through its own foreign affairs bureau, in the field of commerce, education, culture, religion, tourism, science, sports and other non-political activities. Tibet should join international organizations concerned with such activities.

The Government of Tibet should be founded on a constitution or basic law. The basic law should provide for a democratic system of government... This means that the Government of Tibet will have the rights to decide on all affairs relating to

40 For more details see: Worldwide Tibet Movement...

41 Dalai Lama, 1992, p.248.

42 Dalai Lama. The Strasbourg Proposal...

Tibet and the Tibetans. <...> The Government of Tibet would seek to ensure this freedom by full adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the rights to speech, assembly and religion. Because religion constitutes the source of Tibet's national identity and spiritual values lie at the very heart of Tibet's rich culture, it would be the special duty of the Government of Tibet to safeguard and develop its practice. The Government should be comprised of a popularly elected Chief Executive, a bi-cameral legislative branch, and an independent judicial system. Its seat should be in Lhasa. The social and economic system of Tibet should be determined in accordance with the wishes of the Tibetan people, bearing in mind especially the need to raise the standard of living of the entire population.

The Government of Tibet would pass strict laws to protect wildlife and plant life. The exploitation of natural resources would be carefully regulated. The manufacture, testing, stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other armaments must be prohibited, as well as use of nuclear power and other technologies which produce hazardous waste. It would be the Government of Tibet's goal to transform Tibet into our planet's largest natural preserve. A regional peace conference should be called to ensure that Tibet becomes a genuine sanctuary of peace through demilitarization. Until such a peace conference can be convened and demilitarization and neutralization achieved, China could have the right to maintain a restricted number of military installations in Tibet. These must be solely for defence purposes. In order to create an atmosphere of trust conducive to fruitful negotiations, the Chinese Government should cease its human rights violations in Tibet and abandon its policy of transferring Chinese to Tibet".

Thus, the Dalai Lama renounced from the position of *demanding* Tibet's independence. Everything that he suggested is fully consistent with the principles of people's power, self-governing, the people's will, etc. It is consistent with all that is declared by Chinese propaganda.

Peacekeeping activities of the 14th Dalai Lama have brought him worldwide recognition. Over the years he has received many awards and honorary degrees from academic, religious and social organizations. On December 10, 1989, the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his peaceful and non-violent struggle for freedom in Tibet, and the preservation of its historical and cultural heritage. In his speech, the Dalai Lama elaborated on the Five Point Peace Plan, proposing the establishment of the Zone of Ahimsa (non-violence):⁴³ "The entire Tibetan Plateau would be demilitarised; the manufacture, testing, and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other armaments on the Tibetan plateau would be prohibited; the Tibetan plateau would be transformed into the world's largest natural park or biosphere. Strict laws would be enforced to protect wildlife and plant life; the exploitation of natural resources would be carefully regulated so as

43 Dalai Lama, 1991.

not to damage relevant ecosystems; and a policy of sustainable development would be adopted in populated areas; the manufacture and use of nuclear power and other technologies which produce hazardous waste would be prohibited; national resources and policy would be directed towards the active promotion of peace and environmental protection. Organisations dedicated to the furtherance of peace and to the protection of all forms of life would find a hospitable home in Tibet; the establishment of international and regional organisations for the promotion and protection of human rights would be encouraged in Tibet”.

The PRC leadership rejected the Strasbourg Proposal and avoided negotiations. The Dalai Lama made a new proposal, outlined in his address to Yale University in October 1991.⁴⁴ He wanted to visit Tibet while being accompanied by one of the Chinese leaders so as to assess the situation on the spot. During the visit of the Prime Minister Li Peng to India in December 1991, the Dalai Lama tried to get a meeting with him, but was unsuccessful. The Dalai Lama offered negotiations without any preconditions, and sent a delegation to Beijing with his personal letters to Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin in 1993. He reiterated his willingness to compromise. This proposal was also rejected.

According to Xinhua, “in 1992 and 1993, the relevant departments of the Central Government met with two personal representatives of the Dalai Lama. These representatives had promised not to disclose to other countries about the fact of these meetings or the contents of negotiations with the Central Government. However, following these meetings, they repeatedly violated their promises and not only disclosed the fact of the meetings to the foreigners, but also recklessly distorted the content of the talks, trying to misrepresent the true state of affairs”.⁴⁵ In fact, everything was quite to the contrary. The Tibetan support groups were unsuccessful in their attempts to obtain at least some information about the subject of these negotiations from Dharamsala. The Tibetans were silent. Only in late 2006, after the information about these meetings was repeatedly covered by the Chinese media, Lodi Lodee Gyari (Special Representative of the Dalai Lama in these negotiations) openly talked about the subject, as he was compelled to respond to the accusation of distorting the contents of the negotiations, which was “planted” by the Chinese in the media.

Meanwhile, the refugees made a number of democratic changes in power structures and the constitution of future Tibet, and developed procedures for the transfer of power from the power structures in current Tibet and in exile. In January 1992, the Dalai Lama presented the “Guidelines for Future Tibet’s Polity and Basic Features of Its Constitution”, in which he stated:⁴⁶ “I will not play any role in the future

44 The Biography of His Holiness the Dalai Lama...

45 Negotiations or splittist activities...

46 Dalai Lama. Guidelines...

government of Tibet, let alone seek the Dalai Lama's traditional political position in the government". "The legislative power of the Tibetan Government will be vested in the two chambers, namely the House of Regions and the House of People. Bills passed by them must receive the President's assent before becoming law. The House of People will be the highest law-making body. It will consist of representatives directly elected by citizens from all constituencies, which will be demarcated in accordance with population distribution. The House of Regions will consist of members elected by the assemblies at regional level. A limited number of members (the number to be specified in the constitution) in this House will be nominated by the President". During a period that would take place between the withdrawal of Chinese troops and the entry of the constitution into force, responsibilities of state administration will be borne by the Tibetan functionaries who now work in Tibet. During this transitional period, an interim President will be appointed, to whom the Dalai Lama will transfer his political power and responsibilities. Hence, the Tibetan Government in exile will be considered dissolved ipso facto.

In 2001, the Dalai Lama pronounced himself "semi-retired" following the first direct election of a Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government in Exile. Samdong Rinpoche became the Prime Minister. Now there are three branches of the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala: legislative (Parliament), executive (Government – Tibetan: Kashag) and judicial (Tibetan Supreme Judicial Commission). The Constitution, known as the "Charter of the Tibetans in Exile" is in force. Of the forty-six members of Parliament forty-three are elected by the people and three are nominated by the Dalai Lama. The Kashag contains the following major departments: education, finance, religion and culture, domestic affairs information and international relations, security and health.

On May 2011, the Dalai Lama ratified the amendment to the Charter of Tibetans, which fully vests the Central Tibetan Administration with the powers and responsibilities formerly held jointly by him and the Central Tibetan Administration to represent and serve all the people of the whole of Tibet.⁴⁷

While in exile, the Tibetans, under the leadership of the Dalai Lama, have managed to revive their religious practices and preserve cultural traditions that had fallen into decay in their homeland. In India, monasteries Sera, Drepung and Ganden were revived (among others), and religious education was fully resumed, along with tantric practices, receiving prophecies from the state oracles, and searches for reincarnated lamas. The Dalai Lama sees his role as maintaining not just the tradition of the Gelug sect to which he belongs, but also all of the other traditions of Tibetan sects and denominations.

According to the Department of Information and International Relations of the Tibetan Government in Exile, in 2007, the number of Tibetan refugees was about

47 His Holiness the Dalai Lama Ratifies Amendment...

145,000. They live in different countries, but mainly in India, Nepal and Bhutan, where there are fifty-eight Tibetan settlements. Tibetan exiles have founded more than two hundred monasteries and nunneries, which are inhabited by about twenty thousand monks and nuns.⁴⁸ There are over eighty-four Tibetan primary, lower and upper secondary schools in India and Nepal. Many Tibetans enrol into colleges. The proportion of college students from the total number of emigrants is 7.5%, while in the PRC it is 0.85%. The same figures for universities are 4.3% and 0.7% respectively.⁴⁹ The exiles publish over forty periodicals, including more than ten newspapers. They have more opportunities for education and access to information than their compatriots in China.

The number of organizations of Tibetan exiles are increasing. Not all of them share the compromising approach of the Dalai Lama. In 1991, the Gu Chu Sum Movement was founded in order to help former political prisoners. Currently, it includes all those who participated in politics in Tibet, and then were arrested and tortured prior to emigration. They believe that restoration of the independence of Tibet must be the goal. Members of the Tibetan Youth Congress, which was founded in 1970 and now contains about thirty thousand people, proclaim that one of their goals is to fight for the complete independence of Tibet even at the cost of their lives.⁵⁰ This is the largest of the Tibetan organizations. Residents of Tibet also call for full independence, the return of the Dalai Lama, the withdrawal of the PLA and for China's general departure from their country. The massive popular unrest, riots and demonstrations that took place under such slogans are a consequence of the dissatisfaction of the people, and not of the "conspiracy of the Dalai clique".

Under these circumstances, the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach is quite moderate and not contrary to the basis according to which Deng Xiaoping had agreed to negotiate. The Middle Way Approach contains the following major components:⁵¹ "Without seeking independence for Tibet, the Central Tibetan Administration strives for the creation of a political entity comprising the three traditional provinces of Tibet; such an entity should enjoy a status of genuine national regional autonomy; this autonomy should be governed by the popularly-elected legislature and executive through a democratic process and should have an independent judicial system; as soon as the above status is agreed upon by the Chinese government, Tibet would not seek separation from, and remain within, the People's Republic of China; until the time Tibet is transformed into a zone of peace and non-violence, the Chinese government can keep a limited number of armed forces in Tibet for its protection; the Central Government of the People's Republic of China has the responsibility

48 Tibetan exile monasteries...

49 Decision of History, 2008, p.3.

50 Tibetan Youth Congress...

51 His Holiness's Middle Way Approach For Resolving the Issue of Tibet. – <http://www.dalailama.com/messages/middle-way-approach>.

for the political aspects of Tibet's international relations and defense, whereas the Tibetan people should manage all other affairs pertaining to Tibet, such as religion and culture, education, economy, health, ecological and environmental protection; the Chinese government should stop its policy of human rights violations in Tibet and the transfer of the Chinese population into Tibetan areas; to resolve the issue of Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama shall take the main responsibility of sincerely pursuing negotiations and reconciliation with the Chinese government”.

In 2007, the Dalai Lama was awarded the United States Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award in that country. Despite the opposition from the authorities, this event was celebrated in Tibet. China issued its standard protest against “interference in its internal affairs”.

Despite improvement in the situation after the death of Mao, political persecution was not stopped. In May 1982, 115 Tibetan political activists were arrested and declared to be “criminals” and “black market dealers”.⁵² This was followed by new arrests and executions. By the end of November 1983, 750 political activists were arrested in Lhasa alone. Since 1986, in various parts of Greater Tibet, demonstrations with opposition to Chinese rule take place nearly every year.

After the Dalai Lama promulgated the Five Point Peace plan, the PRC's propaganda launched waves of criticism against him. In response, on the 27th of September and 1st of October of 1987, in Lhasa, demonstrations under the slogan of independence for Tibet were organized by the monks of Drepung and Sera.⁵³ The police shot at the demonstrators, dozens were killed and seriously injured, and at least 2,500 people were arrested.⁵⁴ In 1988, the Chinese authorities ordered the monks to organise the Monlam Festival in Lhasa.⁵⁵ But the monks refused to stage celebrations, when many of their countrymen were arrested. The festival was still forced to go ahead. This resulted in a new confrontation. On March 5, the police stormed the Jokhang. Killings of monks were reported. On December 10, 1988, yet another demonstration took place near Jokhang. A western journalist testified that at least one of the officers had ordered the soldiers to “kill the Tibetans”. As a result fifteen died, 150 were seriously wounded and 2,500 people were arrested.⁵⁶

On March 5, 1989, there were new waves of unrest in Lhasa, which lasted for three days. According to the Chinese journalist Tang Daxian, who was present there, several hundred people were killed, several thousand were injured and three thousand were arrested.⁵⁷ According to official figures, more than one hundred

52 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

53 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

54 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

55 The New Times, 2008.

56 Tibet: the Truth, 1993; Smith, 1996, p.617.

57 Events in Lhasa March 2nd–10th 1989, Tang Daxian, London: TIN, 1990, June 15 — in: Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

people were killed and wounded, more than nine hundred shops were wrecked, along with twenty-four governmental institutions, enterprises and educational institutes, and twenty cars were burned.⁵⁸ Hu Jintao, who was appointed secretary of the CPC TAR shortly before then, imposed martial law and curfews. The army took control of all the monasteries and temples, all religious activities and visits of journalists were banned. Portraits of the 14th Dalai Lama were banned in Tibet. Martial law in Lhasa lasted from March 7, 1989 until May 1, 1990.

On 10th April 1991, before the 40th anniversary of the occupation of Tibet, 146 “criminals” were arrested. Announcements of even more arrests of protesters were made.⁵⁹ On the day of the anniversary, a curfew was announced in Lhasa. Searches and raids were conducted in February of 1992. Groups of ten Chinese broke into the homes of Tibetans and arrested anyone who was found to possess “sedition”: photos of the Dalai Lama, or tapes and books containing his speeches and teachings. They arrested more than two hundred people.

According to the Tibetan exile organizations, from September 1987 to mid 1995, more than two hundred protest demonstrations were held in the TAR. From 1993 to 1998, the number of demonstrations increased by a factor of 1.5 as compared to the 1987–1992 period. In other Tibetan regions this increase was up to 130%, the number of arrests in Lhasa had increased by 15%, in other parts of TAR by 250%.⁶⁰ According to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), from 1987 to 2007, more than five thousand Tibetans were arrested for political reasons. Of the ones that were arrested, over a thousand were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Eighty-eight deaths that occurred in prisons due to torture and ill-treatment were documented.

In 1990–1991 and 1998, mass protests took place in the Drapchi Prison.⁶¹ On the 40th anniversary of the uprising of 1959, authorities brought a lot of the police force into Lhasa, where they organized round the clock security patrols and strict control of places with a high concentration of people. Several people, who started shouting protesting slogans, were immediately arrested. Loudspeakers broadcasted warnings about bad consequences for those who tried to organize protests.⁶² In 2000–2007, repression continued, punishable offences included chanting of banned slogans, displaying the banned Tibetan flag, spread of anti-Chinese pamphlets, posters and leaflets, singing songs about independence, and in particular, storage of photographs, CDs, videos and books of the 14th Dalai Lama, and calls for freedom.

Even knowing the grave consequences, Tibetan patriots did not stop their public protests. For example, on August 1, 2007, a nomad Rongyal Adrak was

58 A champion of peace or an inspiration for disorder...

59 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

60 Marshall, 1999, p.6 — in: Tibet under the Rule of Communist China, 2001.

61 Behind bars: prison conditions in Tibet...

62 Atmosphere of martial law...



*Rongyal Adrak, fighter for the freedom of Tibet
(TCHRD)*

arrested in the Lithang area.⁶³ At a local festival, he took the podium, where he called for the return of the Dalai Lama, the release of the 11th Panchen Lama⁶⁴ and Tibetan independence, while in the presence of officials and a crowd of Tibetans. He called on compatriots to stop conflicts over land and water, and condemned a monk who was actively participating in “patriotic education”. Despite the demonstration of support, he was jailed for eight years. His neighbours and nephew were jailed for five to ten years for “liaising with the separatists”, “splittist activities” and “divulging state secrets”. Information about these events was leaked to media abroad.⁶⁵ Local

Tibetans were promised jail sentences of three to ten years for any actions of solidarity towards the victim.

In 2008, the Tibetans staged further protests, which were the largest since 1959.⁶⁶ They led to the closure of the TAR and some other Tibetan areas. Many thousands of people took part in the protests. The demonstrations began in March, and they were devoted to the 49th anniversary of the 1959 uprising and scheduled to coincide with the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. The Dalai Lama was accused of trying to disrupt the Games. However, he always supported these Games and opposed proposals to boycott Chinese goods.

It all began on March 10. In the evening, about three hundred Drepung monks started a peaceful march to the Bharkhor Street in Lhasa. They were stopped by the police, the road to the monastery became blocked, and apparently a few people were detained. The same day, about fifteen monks of Sera tried to organize protests at Bharkhor. According to reports, they were arrested. The next day protests continued. Drepung and Sera were blocked by security forces. According to Tibetan exiles, in Kardze, three Tibetans were killed and another ten wounded. Ganden was blocked on March 12, then other monasteries and temples (including Jokhang and Ramoche). On March 13, in Lhasa, restrictions were imposed on the movement of students, especially around the university, and five were arrested.

⁶³ A Tibetan arrested in Lithang...

⁶⁴ See below for more on this problem.

⁶⁵ Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2007; Nikolsky, V. In Sichuan...

⁶⁶ For chronology of events see: Uprising in Tibet 2008...

On March 14, in Lhasa, there were mass demonstrations and pogroms against the Han. Riots also hit some Muslims. But the Tibetan Muslim Youth Federation issued a memorandum that laid the responsibility for these events onto the Chinese Government, and supported the peace-keeping activities of the Dalai Lama.⁶⁷ According to Chinese data, during the riots nineteen people were killed, 623 were wounded.⁶⁸ One hundred and twenty houses were set on fire, along with eighty-four cars, and over a thousand Han and state-run shops, businesses, banks, police stations, etc. It was an explosion of people's indignation against sinicization of Tibet. According to the newspaper *Renmin Ribao*, the damage to Chinese traders in Lhasa alone was about two hundred million yuan. Most of the Han people fled the Tibetan part of the city and accumulated in Lhasa's China town. There is information (the credibility of which has not been verified) that the pogroms were provoked by Chinese intelligence agents disguised as Tibetans, and that the goal was to arrest the disaffected before the Olympics.⁶⁹ At the same time the Western media spread around the image of Chinese soldiers dressing up as monks.⁷⁰ Later it emerged that this was a scene from an old feature film.

Protests occurred in more than sixty localities of Greater Tibet, Beijing and Lanzhou. Almost everywhere they were crushed by Chinese security officials, regardless of whether they were rebellions or peaceful demonstrations. According to Chinese data, during the period from 10th to 25th of March, in areas that were populated by Tibetans in the TAR, Sichuan, Qinghai and Gansu, there were 150 cases of serious violence in the form of beatings, pogroms, looting and arson, which all affected a lot of people – thousands of houses were burned.⁷¹ Demonstrators were dispersed, arrested, and sometimes crowds were fired on with live ammunition. There were reports of deaths of women and minors. According to Tibetan sources, the authorities disarmed the Tibetan police, because they did not trust them.⁷² Security forces raided monasteries, conducted arrests, beatings and frisk searches of monks in search of “subversive material”^{72a}. Some monks committed suicide. Mass searches in the houses of ordinary people of Lhasa were carried out. As one Lhasa inhabitant later recalled, they slept wearing street clothes, because police could come and not even give them time to put on pants.⁷³ There is information about pogroms in homes that were raided by the police.⁷⁴

67 Memorandum from the Tibetan Muslim...

68 Skanavi, A. Sharp corner...

69 Chinese regime...

70 For example, Tibet riots orchestrated...

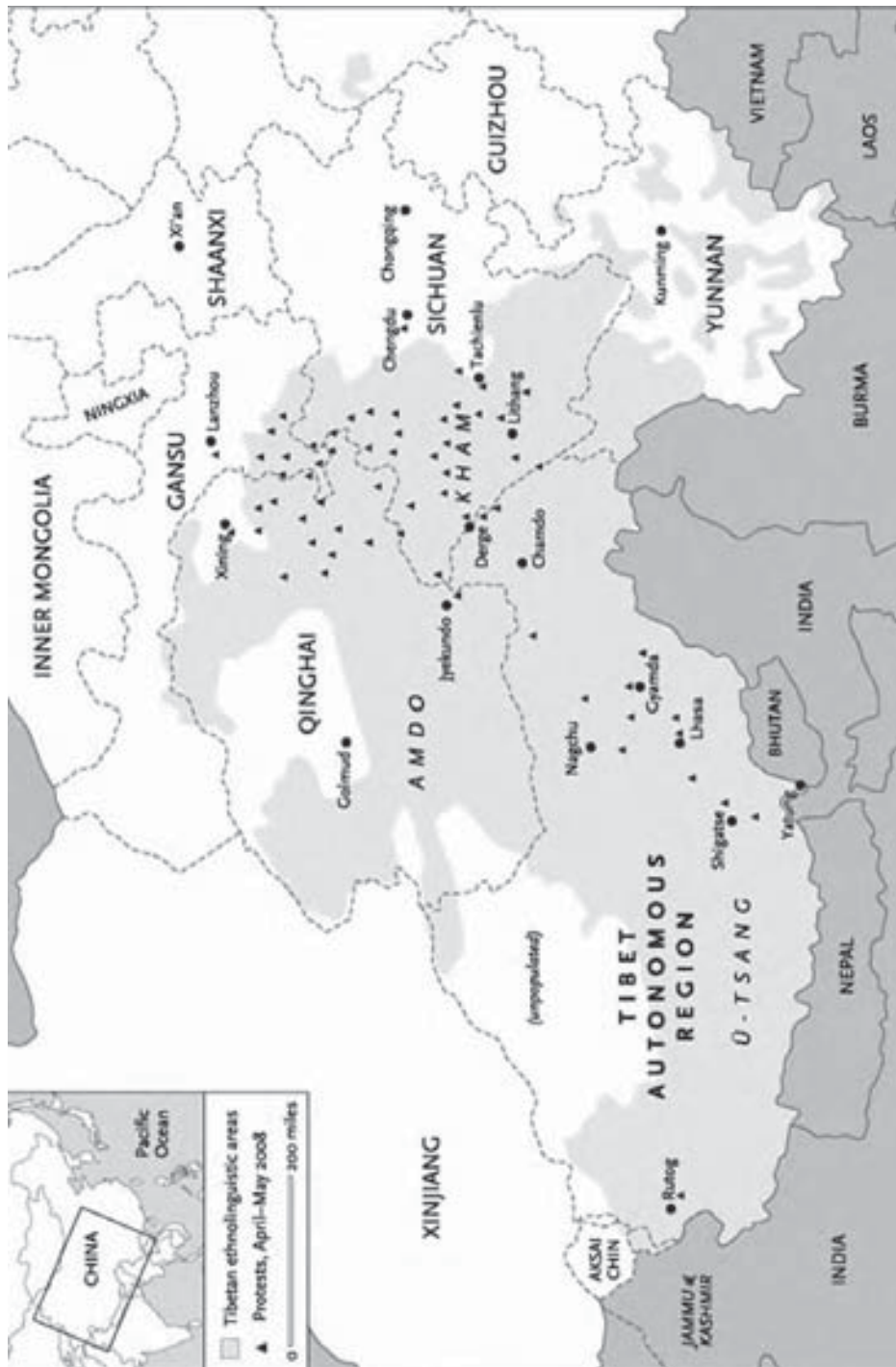
71 Behind the scenes...

72 Frenchman's travels in Tibet...

72a Woesser, Ts. A record...

73 Frenchman's travels in Tibet...

74 Uprising in Tibet 2008, p.103.



Locations of the Tibetan protests in April – May 2008 (T. Shakya)

Tibetans, in contrast to the Han people, were long deprived of freedom of religion and movement. On March 15, the Supreme Court, prosecutor's office and the TAR Public Security Bureau issued Notice Number 1, which suggested that participants of riots surrender before the 17th of March.⁷⁵ Offenders who surrendered were promised an easy or reduced sentence. Authorities promised to severely punish people assisting the offenders, and to reward people informing against them. According to a witness,⁷⁶ local television advertised a certain reward, but in reality the actual reward was ten times less. Prisons were overcrowded, and detainees were beaten.

Similar methods of pacifying people were used outside of Lhasa. For example, in the Kirti Monastery (Ngaba, Sichuan), 572 monks and dozens of laymen were arrested.⁷⁷ Eight people were killed, and two monks committed suicide. Some of the people that were arrested were driven through the settlement in a truck so as to intimidate the residents. The arrested people were treated, for example, in the following way.⁷⁸ A thirty-eight year old Tibetan woman, the mother of four children, was arrested for being the first to have pulled down the door plate of the township office during the demonstration. Aggravating her circumstance was the fact that her husband was hiding from the authorities. After nine days, she was released. Her body was covered with numerous bruise marks, she was unable to speak and eat food, was constantly vomiting and could hardly breathe properly. The hospital refused to treat her. She died twenty-two days later. The authorities banned the monks from performing her funeral rites.

The Tibetans who were arrested for peaceful protests in Labrang were beaten with batons and called "animals" and "fools" because they did not understand commands in Chinese.⁷⁹ A questionnaire was handed out to all who attended the monastery: Who are your family members? Why have you come to the monastery? What do you think about the state of Buddhism? Are you listening to foreign broadcasts? Have you been abroad? etc.⁸⁰

The note Number 2 issued by the People's Government of Ganzi (Kardze) Prefecture stated that those monks who did not participate directly in the uprisings, but who did not express their clear attitude towards them, and who could not properly manage the monks that did take part in these disturbances, must be subjected to scrutiny during critique and re-education, their behaviour needs to be thoroughly investigated at the general meeting of the monastic community.⁸¹

75 China's midnight deadline...

76 Letter from Lhasa...

77 China arrest over 572 monks...; Nikolsky, V. Chinese authorities...

78 Tibetan woman dies after 9 days of continuous torture...

79 Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2008, p.21–30.

80 For its translation see: Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2008, p.102–104.

81 Full text see: Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2008, p.117–118.

On the 3rd of April, the Ministry of Public Security of China reported that law enforcement agencies of TAR, Sichuan, Qinghai and Gansu conducted searches in monks' dormitories and seized 185 firearms and 2,139 bladed weapons respectively, 14,367 rounds of ammunition and 3,862 kg of explosives.⁸² A lot of banned flags, posters and publications were also confiscated. 2,200 people were arrested, including more than five hundred monks.⁸³ However, it is unclear why these weapons (if the rebels really had them) were not used during the riots? Only eight weak explosions in the Markham County, from which no one was hurt, were recorded.⁸⁴ As a consequence, dozens of monks were arrested, and four of them were given from four to eight years of imprisonment, although, the monks legally purchased the explosives for construction work.

According to Tibetans, during the clashes 120 Tibetans were gunned down, sixty-five hundred people were arrested, one thousand went missing.⁸⁵ 1,157 were later released.⁸⁶ The arrival ceremony of the Olympic torch in Lhasa was reduced to two hours under the pretext of an earthquake in the Sichuan Province that occurred shortly before. After the Olympics, authorities released some prisoners, as was promised. In autumn of 2008 verdicts were delivered to dozens of monks.⁸⁷ They received from one to twenty years in prison. On October 27, five more Tibetans received jail terms that ranged from eight years to life.^{87a} Such punishments were handed out not for murder or terrorism, but for the distribution of CDs "containing splittist ideas", leaflets with "calls for an uprising", the "illegal transfer of information on the events in Lhasa abroad", etc. The two stores arsonists were sentenced to death (one of these was suspended).⁸⁸ According to Chinese data, by February 2009, 953 suspects in violent acts were under arrest in the TAR. According to TCHRD, by March 2009, information on the deaths of about seventy Tibetans was confirmed. And of the sixty-five hundred people that were arrested, about five thousand remained in custody.

In the monasteries, "patriotic education" (started as early as Mao Zedong) was intensified. In addition to the usual "brainwashing", it included tests which determined if monks were allowed to continue to stay in their monastery. In April 2008, in the Ngaba county, this campaign was extended to the laity. Threatened with arrest, authorities demanded people to accept the following terms: I oppose the Dalai Lama, I will not keep his photos at home, the Dalai Lama does not affect my thinking,

82 According to Law enforcement agencies in China ... Other sources (www.phayul.com) have stated differently: 176 guns, 13,013 bullets, 19,000 pieces of dynamite, 7,725 pounds of explosives, two hand grenades and 350 daggers.

83 In a number of monasteries...

84 Nikolsky, V. Three Tibetan monks are arrested...

85 Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2008.

86 More than a thousand rioters were released...

87 Nikolsky, V. Three Tibetan monks...

87a Nikolsky, V. TCHRD...

88 Blamed for arson...

I will not follow splittism and conspiracy to create a split among the nationalities, I like the Communist Party, I will follow all of its directives, I am grateful for its great care.⁸⁹ Cleansing of party cadres was performed in the TAR. Some Tibetans lost their posts, all Communists were banned from being religious and from having cult objects and Tibetan religious texts in their homes.⁹⁰ They were also ordered to bring any of their children home who were being educated in India.⁹¹

The authorities organized an information blockade of Tibet, a campaign against the Dalai Lama and initiated a wave of Han nationalism around the world. Nationalism was carefully measured for fear that it could spark claims against the CPC. On September 4, 2008, a fan portal of admirers of President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao was launched on the Internet site “Renminwang”.⁹² Forty thousand people registered in just four days. However, five months later, the Chinese Prime Minister shared the fate of U.S. President George W. Bush, the initiator of the occupation of Iraq. On February 2, 2009, during Premier Wen Jiabao’s speech at Cambridge University, a graduate student threw a shoe at him. On June 2, 2009, the British court acquitted the offender.⁹³

New publications about the “fact” that Tibet was always part of China started to appear, for example, the books “Real Tibet” and “History of Tibet Liberation”. Over a hundred scientists, old Party officials and generals who participated in the “liberation” took part in the composition of the latter.

On April 30, an exhibition “Tibet Today and in the Past” was opened in Beijing, designed to show the miserable life of Tibetans under feudalism and their happiness under socialism.⁹⁴ Such exhibitions were staged in Tibet before the Cultural Revolution (see Chapter 8), and in 1991 another one was staged in Beijing. Many of the photos, as before, were contentious and questionable, sources and filming locations were unknown. Tibetans told me that the blinded man whose pictures always appear in such exhibitions, was a former Chinese spy. In 1959, Soviet journalist M. Domogatskikh described seeing a photo of a blinded man that he saw at a similar exhibition in the Jokhang – was it the same man? The reporters were also approached by someone who said that he was blinded during an uprising in Eastern Tibet.⁹⁵ The famous Chinese and Tibetan writer Tsering Woeser, who knows the situation in China and Tibet from the inside, states that the CPC Government intentionally demonizes the history of old Tibet.⁹⁶ One might add that there is evidence of Chinese fabrication of other

89 Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report, 2008, p.92.

90 Gabuev, 2008; Tibetan communists...

91 Nikolsky, V. Government officials...

92 Fan-portal...

93 Nikolsky, V. The court acquitted...

94 The gala exhibition...

95 Domogatskikh, 1962, p.44.

96 Tibetan writer...

materials too. For example, there is detailed information about falsification of a number of photographs used as evidence of the atrocities by the Japanese Army in Nanking during the 2nd World War.⁹⁷

A large number of “independent” persons and organizations started promoting the position of the CPC on the Internet in different languages. The standard “serf recollections” about sorrows of feudalism newly emerged.⁹⁸ Lies designed to discredit the Dalai Lama appeared in large amounts. For example, H. Harrer (see Chapter 4) was declared to be his mentor, and “the majority of beliefs and religious requirements” of Aum Shinrikyo were “borrowed from the Dalai Lama”.⁹⁹ This statement that appeared on the Internet portal “Renmin Ribao Online” is not true. That is obvious to anyone who remembers the broadcasts of this organization during the early 1990’s, for example, by Russia’s Mayak Radio, as well as further developments.

All this was supplemented by a mass mailing of virus software that was designed to disrupt the work of pro-Tibet Internet sites, and by simultaneously acquiring addresses of “internal enemies”.¹⁰⁰ Foreign chat rooms and forums became infested by a large influx of undercover CPC agents. By May 2008, special online propaganda courses were attended by 127 Chinese officials.¹⁰¹ Beijing also hired PR-managers to raise its prestige.

But not all of the Han people succumbed to the propaganda. Even in China, where the information is carefully filtered, some of them not only supported the struggle of the Tibetans, but also began to openly criticize the policy of their leaders. Some of these brave souls were placed under house arrest, others were put in prison, and there were reports of torture. But in other countries many citizens of other nations proved themselves to be agents of the CPC influence.

The Russian media generally portrayed a reserved picture of events. But many of them carried a clear message: China is fighting against separatism that was organized by the United States through the Dalai Lama. Arguments that were provided were the same as those used in Beijing propaganda. The Western media, which had access to more information, also disclosed more facts. However, they, as usual, had the theme of “abused human rights”, although the essence of the problem, in my opinion, is not in this, but in the mortal threat for the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization. Some made wrong parallels with the Soviet Union. Beijing propaganda successfully utilised their technical and factual errors. An “independent” website “Against CNN” was set up, where they carefully emphasized these errors and angrily repeated the CPC propaganda. Sometimes the position of the PRC was articulated by the liberal Western media, such as Radio Liberty.¹⁰²

97 China: 20th century...

98 See, for example: Tibetan woman – a former serf...

99 In the light of truth: friendly relations...

100 Nichols, S. Malware writers target...; Cyber attacks target...

101 Chinese agents...

102 Ah, “Liberty”...

The West had put moderate pressure on China, while at the same time not spoiling their relationship. The Russian Foreign Ministry fully supported China's actions. On April 10, the European Parliament adopted a resolution urging EU leaders to consider not participating in the Olympic opening ceremony on Aug. 8, 2008, if the PRC authorities did not resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama. Beijing took it seriously. Nevertheless, its reputation suffered. Many countries have staged demonstrations against Chinese policies in Tibet. After their experience at the Beijing Olympics, the International Olympic Committee in the spring of 2009 abolished future global Olympic torch relays.¹⁰³

By July 2008, China had held two rounds of talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama, which took place on his initiative. Unfortunately, no progress was made. China only used them for propaganda of its Olympic games. The reaction of the CPC to the compromising proposals of the Dalai Lama remained the same as before:¹⁰⁴ he must abandon the policy for Tibetan independence; to stop activities aimed at "splitting the motherland"; openly recognize Tibet as an inalienable part of China, and Taiwan as a province of the PRC, the Government of the PRC as the sole legitimate government for all of China. Since neither the Five Point Proposal, nor the new proposals, according to the Chinese side, "excluded the root of the requirements of independence of Tibet," these documents, they argue, cannot serve as a basis for negotiations.¹⁰⁵ The Tibetan side should fully agree not only with the current situation in Tibet, but also with the falsification of history – to recognize that Tibet was formerly a part of China.

According to Xinhua, "the Dalai Lama... and his followers still do not stop the incitement propaganda in the Tibet Autonomous Region, aimed at splitting the motherland. In Lhasa and other places they provoke unrest, organize bombings and other violent terrorist acts".¹⁰⁶ This is not so. The Dalai Lama consistently advocates non-violence. The uprisings in March 2008 ended after his threats of resignation, "if violence did not cease". Peaceful marches, plebiscites, and in general, any activity of the Dalai Lama, aimed at drawing attention to the problems of the Tibetan people, are interpreted by Beijing as "activities to split the motherland", and the pleas for genuine autonomy as an attempt to return to feudalism. In fact, the leadership of the CPC does not want any agreements, but ongoing negotiations are needed for the international image of China. The Chinese side is constantly trying to change their content, and instead of discussing the situation in Tibet, they have been negotiating on the status of the Dalai Lama in case of his return.

Under these circumstances, in July 2008, the Tibetan delegation was forced to abandon the negotiations in this format. The Tibetan envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen

103 IOC canceled...

104 The question of Tibet...

105 Negotiations or splittist activity...

106 Negotiations or splittist activity...

stated: “We do not see the slightest benefit from the continuation of the dialogue, since lack of political will on the part of the Chinese leadership to seriously discuss the Tibetan issue is obvious”. Nevertheless, in October 2008, the negotiations were renewed, but, yet again, with no success. As a result, in November, an urgent congress of Tibetans was convened in Dharamsala, which was attended by over five hundred delegates. Most approved the Middle Way of the Dalai Lama, but in its “hard-line version”, which was to demand genuine autonomy for Tibet. By a decision made during the meeting, the Government of Tibet in Exile announced the end of fruitless negotiations with the PRC.¹⁰⁷

In 2009, in different parts of Tibet, spontaneous protests sparked up yet again, although with less intensity. People chanted slogans in favour of independence and wishing longevity to the Dalai Lama, scattered leaflets, etc. The protesters were detained and beaten.¹⁰⁸ The protests began close to Losar (the Tibetan New Year celebrated on the 25th February) and the 50th anniversary of the uprising of March 10. In January, the walls in Lhasa in the Tibetan part of the city were pasted with handwritten posters calling for the non-celebration of Losar.¹⁰⁹ “A thousand people were arrested; thousands more disappeared without a trace. Kind-hearted Tibetans, who remain in safety, please do only two things. No need to sing, dance, play and let off fireworks. Let’s only do these two things: Let’s remember the dead and pray for the living”.

In response, authorities took unprecedented measures that stopped serious demonstrations. In fact, Tibetan areas were blocked off for several months. Thousands of soldiers and armed police were put in them.¹¹⁰ Multiple raids and detentions were conducted in Lhasa. Numerous armed patrols were put on patrol around Jokhang, snipers were put on nearby roofs. The Potala, which was closed in those days, was under the constant supervision of patrolling soldiers and plain clothed agents. Tibetans who were living outside of Lhasa were barred from entering the capital. During Losar, the authorities staged official celebrations. In some places, even the mobile phone networks were shut down. There were reports of punishments for Tibetans who sent SMS messages abroad about the situation in Tibet, and replacement of satellite TV by cable in some places, which made it impossible to watch foreign programs.

A Russian witness, who managed to “get through” before the blockade, was forced to change hotels (their owners were instructed not to accept him), to evade surveillance, and to use mountain trails in order to circumvent roadblocks.¹¹¹ This is despite the fact that his papers were in order. He learned that on the anniversary

107 Nikolsky, V. Tibetan Government...

108 Nikolsky, V. In Kardze...

109 Nikolsky, V. In Lhasa...

110 Nikolsky, V. Beijing...; Nikolsky, V. SCMP..

111 A.S. A trip into the rebellious Tibet...

of the uprising there was unrest nevertheless, among Goloks and Khampa. But Chinese television didn't report neither on this, nor on the actual imposition of martial law.

By the 50th anniversary of the uprising, the authorities invented a new "holiday": "Serf Liberation Day". It was appointed to March 28, the day of signing of the well-known order for the dissolution of the Tibetan Government and the beginning of democratic reform (see Chapter 8). This "holiday" offends the national feelings of the Tibetans.¹¹² A series of events were timed to coincide with it, such as dances, singing of revolutionary songs, international tours of the CPC Tibetologists, and a massive campaign in the media. A commemorative red badge was produced, showing the flag of China over the mountains. It was based on the Maoist song "Over snow-capped mountains rose the red sun". One of the most significant events was the launch of a new Chinese website about "human rights" in Tibet.¹¹³ The introduction of this "holiday" was considered by the Central Tibetan Administration as provocative, contributing to the destabilization of the region.¹¹⁴

As was noted by the Dalai Lama in his statement on the 50th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising of 1959, "here are also ultra-leftist Chinese leaders who have, since last March, been undertaking a huge propaganda effort with the intention of setting the Tibetan and Chinese peoples apart, and creating animosity between them".¹¹⁵

Immediately before the "holiday" and immediately after, the news broadcasts on the TAR TV channel (XZ TV) showed a series of endless party conferences in Lhasa.¹¹⁶ Five or six Chinese and Tibetan partocracy officials and three Chinese generals took turns to preach from the podium about the achievements of the TAR. The news culminated with a display of Tibetan songs and dances performed before the delegates. Other places in the huge hall of the theatre were filled up in about equal proportion with PLA soldiers and Tibetan supernumeraries in national costumes. The intervals between the news bulletins were filled with propaganda documentaries and a series of infinite "soaps" about Tibetan life in the middle of the 20th century. There were no more than five to seven documentaries, which kept repeating. They were also shown on the TV channel of the Qinghai Province, and another two to three channels. The idea was always the same – how it was bad in the past and how all is well now. The scenes shown in the newsreels were carefully selected: happy Tibetans applaud the PLA columns, which march into Lhasa; an old Tibetan woman putting a *kata* on the portrait of Mao; the PLA soldiers, shoulder to shoulder with Tibetan farmers, threshing grain, building houses and

112 Kitaev, S. March 28...

113 The first Chinese website has appeared in the internet...

114 Nikolsky, V. Behind the facade...

115 Dalai Lama. Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on occasion of the 50th anniversary...

116 A.S. A trip into the rebellious Tibet...

harvesting crops. Only a few ideologically correct episodes were mustered and the same footage was repeated every seven to eight minutes.

The behaviour of the authorities does not seem logical – rather than defusing the situation, they artificially exacerbated it. Why? Famous writer Tsering Woenser, who was familiar with the situation in Tibet where she was born and grew up, believes that such policies benefited the Tibetan officials who had risen to power during the Cultural Revolution. In one interview, she listed the people who occupied high positions in the TAR, having come from the Red Guards and “Rebels”. Here is some information on these officials:¹¹⁷

Ragdi: head of the “Great United Central” (a Red Guard organization during the Cultural Revolution) in the Nagchu area during the Cultural Revolution. From 1975 to 2003 he was the Vice-Secretary of the TAR (other posts see above). *Legchog* (or *Legqoq*): head of the “Great United Central” in the Shigatse area, and by 2008, the Chairman of the NPC in the TAR. *Pasang*: head of the “Little Red Guard” and the head of the “Great United Central” in the Lhoka (Chinese: Shannan) area. From 1971 to 2003 she was the Vice-Secretary of the TAR, by 2008 she is the Vice Chairman of the All-China Women’s Federation. *Lobsang Dondrub* (or *Lobsang Dhunzhup*): “Chief of Staff” of the “Serf War” (Red Guard organization) in the Tibet Nationality University in China. By 2008 he was the Vice-Chairman of NPC in the TAR. *Lhagba Phuntsog* (or *Laba Phuntso*): Chief Editor of the *Tempest War* newspaper, which belonged to the “Great United Central”. By 2008 he was the Chief Secretary in charge of Chinese Tibetan Studies Central. *Jampa Phuntsog* (or *Xiangpa Phuntso*): “Chief of Staff” of the “Serf War”. By 2008 he was the Vice-Secretary of the TAR. *Jangtso*: head of the “Great United Central” in Tamu Mechanical Factory. By 2008 he was the Vice-Chairman of the TAR. *Dekyi Tsomo* (or *Degyi Tsomo*): head of the “Serf War” in the Tibet Nationality University in China. By 2008 she was a Standing Member of the Communist Party of the TAR. *Bhuchung* (or *Buchong*): head of the “Great United Central” of Chonggye county in the Lhoka area. By 2008 he was the Vice-Secretary of the TAR and the Secretary of the Regional Commission for Discipline Inspection of the TAR. *Pasang Dondrub* (or *Basang Dhunzhup*): from November 1969 to December 1970, served in the 409 unit of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) as a translator in Tibet. By 2008 he was a Standing Member of the Communist Party of the TAR, the Vice-Chairman of the Political Consultative Conference of the TAR and the Minister of the United Front Work Department of the TAR. *Yeshe Tenzin* (or *Yixi Tenzin*): was originally associated with the “Rebel Central” (another Red Guard organization during the Cultural Revolution), but later he joined the “Great United Central”. By 2008 he was the Vice-Chairman of the Political Consultative Conference of the TAR.

117 Woenser, 2008.

Woeser writes that they are constantly engaged in campaigns against the Dalai Lama, distributing Chinese nationalism. According to the writer, this ruling stratum was undermining Chinese Government talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama. "In fact, we can say that these Chinese-Tibetan officials, who came into power during the Chinese Cultural Revolution in Tibet, have created a private fiefdom that allows them all to speak with the same voice". The writer recommends that the Chinese government should remove this "stumbling block", if it wants to resolve the Tibetan issue. But can it actually do this? Obviously, it has not yet been able to find any other support amongst the Tibetan people.

This is hardly surprising as the former Hong Wei Bing and Zao Fan continue to use clichés of the Cultural Revolution. It is more interesting to understand how Beijing propaganda attempts to convince the world to accept them. Its methods have not fundamentally changed: facts are quoted out of context, distorted, interspersed with slogans, falsifications and fabrications. I have already noted that an inexperienced reader has a hard time figuring out which part of it is true and which is not, so they eventually end up believing everything.¹¹⁸ This is exactly what the propaganda aims to achieve. If we compare the propaganda style that was spread during the times of Mao with its present version, it turns out that the constant praise of the Chairman, the Communist Party and communism have been replaced with talk about democracy, prosperity, recovery, etc., executed in the style adopted by the "world community". However, the basic content has remained the same: Tibet has been a part of China since the Middle Ages, the Communist Party is always right, people chose socialism, the unrest in Tibet was instigated from abroad. Many far leftist terms have also been preserved with phrases like "dark and backward feudal serfdom" being constantly coined. Many of them are taken from the old arsenal of the Soviet Bolsheviks: "masters of their country", "united front", "agents of imperialism", "backward feudal system", "democratic reforms", "exposing the traitorous activities", etc.¹¹⁹

Currently, the activities of Chinese Internet propaganda agents and hackers have become global. Undoubtedly, they are directed from China, while Chinese security forces and the Army are engaged in computer intelligence gathering.¹²⁰ The old-fashioned red propaganda is distributed using high tech electronic and PR technologies. By 2009, the total number of Chinese web pages has passed the two million mark. There, we can find hundreds of thousands of pages that articulate Beijing's position on Tibet in different languages. Aggressiveness and bluntness of propaganda testify to its lack of validity. However, as was said by Joseph Goebbels, "a lie repeated a thousand times becomes the truth".

118 Kitaev, S. Conflict in Tibet...

119 Cf.: Mongolian People's Republic, 1952; Concerning the Question of Tibet, 1959, c.205–246.

120 Goetz and Rosenbach, 2009.

German scholar K.A. Holtz argues that the international influence of the CPC is not limited to propaganda. In his view, the joint studies of foreign and Chinese scientists are conducted only in a way that is acceptable to the CPC, some Orientalists had relatives in China, others owned an apartment there, many experts on China taught the Chinese language for many years, and built their careers on this large investment.¹²¹ Holtz emphasizes that establishing connections in China is profitable. In order to preserve them, the main tactic is not to irritate the CPC. As a result, self-censorship manifests itself in many ways. The terminology of the Communist Party is adopted by Western publications and teachings, where Party propaganda penetrates into foreign ways of thinking. Some economists who are working with China openly accept the services of the CPC.

The threat of feudalism restoration and the cruelty of punishments under that system in Tibet are still an important part of the communist propaganda. In Chapter 6, the methods of torture and execution were described, which were known in feudal Tibet. The Mao period was accompanied by brutality at a much larger scale (see Chapters 7–9). Now, let's discuss the current situation.

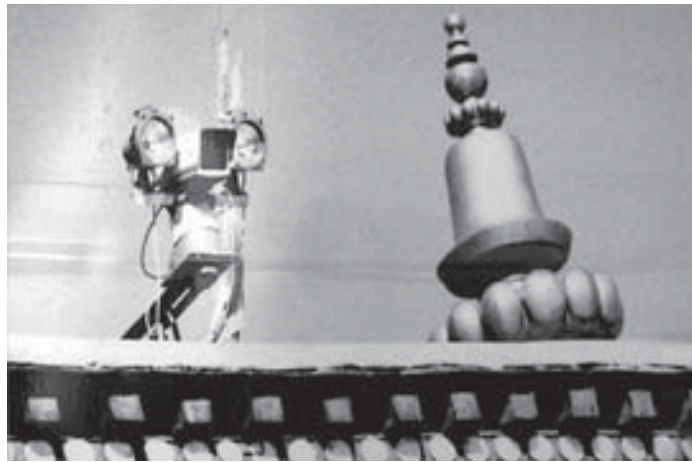
In order to identify sedition, various methods of surveillance were established by the CPC. The major streets of the Tibetan part of Lhasa, including Barkhor around the Jokhang, have surveillance cameras installed, the city has many spies and intelligence personnel in plainclothes. They have little interest in the foreigners themselves – they much prefer to know with whom these foreigners talk.¹²² It is wise not to hold discussions with the Tibetans, which may cost them their freedom.

Chinese legislation prohibits torture and is designed to provide inmates with normal living conditions and treatment. Here is the official Chinese stance:¹²³ “The legitimate rights of the perpetrators are protected by law. Discrimination against minorities and the religious people who have committed crimes is not allowed. Moreover, their customs are respected. The keep of criminals, including food, clothing, and shelter is provided for by the State. Taking into account the customs and habits of representatives of minority nationalities with regard to nutrition in detention centers and prisons in Tibet, there are special kitchens, which are regularly supplying prisoners with ‘zanba’ (tsampa, the Tibetan dish made from flour, butter and salt), butter tea, sweet tea, etc. Health care is provided in the prisons of Tibet. On average, there are more doctors allocated per each prisoner here than in prisons of other regions. Prisoners have the right to rest on weekends, the days of state and national traditional holidays. As according to the law, while serving their sentences, prisoners are entitled to monthly visits from their relatives, they can have their sentence reduced, be put on parole, as well as rewarded”.

121 Holz, K.A. Have all the experts...

122 French, 2004.

123 New progress in the protection of human rights, 1998.



1



2



3

1 – Surveillance camera on the roof of a monastery in Lhasa. 2 – Tibetan demonstrators detained in a local police station, Lhasa, 3 – Chinese military in the streets of Lhasa (photo: AFP)



1



2



3

1 – Public Security Bureau staff on drill below Potala Palace, Lhasa; 2 – Chinese PSB staff on a Lhasa street, 2008; 3 – satellite dishes confiscated from the Tibetans, to cut off their access to information from abroad. Labrang, Amdo, May 20, 2009 (Nikolsky, V., Novaya tsenzurnaya initsiativa...)

There are three types of pre-trial detention: a compulsory call, a criminal arrest and an ordinary arrest. Also, there are two types of punishment that do not involve imprisonment without prior judicial review: location monitoring of a person that can last up to three years and awaiting trial on bail. A person may be arrested and await trial for seven months or longer if new evidence is uncovered. The arrested may be told of their arrest status after a few days, months or even years. Another disadvantage of this system of justice is that witness testimonies are hardly used for the purposes of defence.¹²⁴ During the pre-trial detention period there is no need to notify relatives of a detainee because formally he has not been arrested yet. Arrest warrants are not always issued or produced.¹²⁵

One thing that is invariably used is torture. Information about them does not come from the authorities, but mainly from former prisoners. To some extent, these accounts may be exaggerated. But the accounts of torture are widespread, come from different sources, at different times and from different places. All this indicates the frequent use of torture and allows one to draw some conclusions. The Chinese guiding principle is well known – “Leniency for those who confess, severity for those who resist”.¹²⁶ One police officer has admitted that 100% of detainees in Amdo are tortured, and one judge from Xining has stated that not a single case goes to court before the detainee is beaten by the police, and if it is a case of a Tibetan political prisoner, the beating is much more severe.¹²⁷ Tibetans also take part in arrests and torture.

One of the Chinese security officers who escaped from Eastern Tibet revealed that thirty-three types of torture were applied to prisoners.¹²⁸ At the same time, new types are being invented all the time. According to the testimony of former prisoners, they were beaten (by feet, fists, rifle butts, iron bars, knuckle dusters, etc.), hung by their arms, humiliated, intimidated, forced to look at other people being tortured, tortured with electricity, burned with cigarettes (this is sometimes followed up by sprinkling the burns with hot pepper), bitten by dogs, and forced to sit in the sun for long periods of time. Women were kept naked in front of male staff and were tortured by electric batons being inserted into their ears, vagina or anus, which has serious health consequences. Women and girls were raped.¹²⁹ Some detainees were forced to drink urine through a rubber hose that was tied to their mouth, some had bamboo needles driven in under their fingernails, some were beaten with a stick with bent nails or several belts tied at the end, some had their ankles beaten with a hammer, some were put in front of thick smoke so that it

124 Prisoners of Tibet, 2006.

125 Torture in Tibet, 2000.

126 Behind bars... This is Mao Zedong's aphorism (see Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1970, p.51).

127 Torture in Tibet, 2000.

128 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

129 Kuxing: Torture in Tibet...



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Torture of political prisoners in prisons in Tibet: 1 – electric shock gun (TCHRD); 2 – the technique of bundling a person by ropes (TCHRD); 3 – scheme of hanging (Kuxing... p.50)

irritated their eyes, and some had their face splashed with boiling water or hot food with pepper.

The most popular methods of torture were using electric batons (86% of cases), standing for long periods (86%), sun exposure (69%), and forcing the donation of blood (50%).¹³⁰ Another common method used was beating without leaving obvious marks, but inflicting serious internal injuries. Some post mortem examinations that were performed at the request of detainees' relatives, revealed multiple bone fractures, ruptured internal organs, etc. Handcuffs and leg shackles of different weights were widely used as well. Some prisoners were forced to work while wearing shackles. These could be worn for up to twelve days, and handcuffs up to twenty-two days.¹³¹ In some cases, handcuffs with inside spikes were used. The arrestees were placed into solitary confinements that measured 2 x 1 meters, for a long time. After the trial, the usual methods of "re-educating" in prisons include hard labor, forced donation of blood, deprivation of water and food, dirty water, and "overload".¹³² Religious activities, including prayers, reading mantras, etc., are prohibited. People are drilling like in the army. The difference is that prisoners are poorly fed and constantly subjected to beatings: as punishment for not being able to stand without moving for four hours, as penalty for not completing work on time, etc.¹³³

Nyima, the nun, reported that she was arrested for chanting "separatist" slogans in the centre of Lhasa.¹³⁴ She was taken to a precinct and beaten with fists, boots, belts, and chairs, boiling water was poured over her body, she was burned with cigarettes, and prodded in the mouth with a wooden stick. Sometimes she was forced to stay motionless for extended periods of time under sun. Often, guards placed a water bowl on her head and newspapers between her knees and under her arms to make sure that she did not move. If any of the objects fell to the ground, she was beaten. The nun refused to say the standard phrase: that she recognized her mistakes and would work to reform her mind, so then the guards decided to "play soccer". The guards stood in a square formation and she had to walk up to each guard so they could kick her to the ground. Together with other women prisoners, she was forced to stand barefoot on ice. After several hours of excruciating pain, their bodies went completely numb. During this time a female prison guard came in wearing high heels and proceeded to stomp on the frozen feet of each woman. In the late afternoon they were forced to pull their feet off the ice, ripping the soles from their feet and leaving the ice soaked in blood.

130 Kuxing: Torture in Tibet...

131 Behind bars: prison conditions in Tibet...

132 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

133 Behind bars: prison conditions in Tibet...

134 Kuxing: Torture in Tibet...

Monk Lobsang Dhargyal spent a year in the Golok prison before his trial.¹³⁵ He was beaten, and during the entire period of imprisonment, he was handcuffed and his feet were manacled. According to the monk Jampel Tsering, hanging prisoners from the ceiling with a fire burning underneath, is a method commonly described by former prisoners. Often chilli is thrown on the fire, producing a thick smoke that enhances the burns. A rope was commonly used during interrogation, tied into complex knots for hanging and torture.

Another common practice is to let people die or to place them into a hospital following the torture sessions.¹³⁶ If a prisoner died, it was usually blamed on suicide or illness. From 1987 to 2001, of the 1,900 political prisoners of Tibet, forty-one (i.e. about 2%) have died as a result of maltreatment. According to TCHRD, during the period of 1987–2007, the deaths of eighty-eight people were reliably confirmed to have resulted from torture in Tibet (as of March, 2009). Centre staff also admit that many cases remain unknown. Since torture is prohibited by Chinese law (see above), its widespread use in Tibet is lawless. The authorities cannot be unaware of this. It can be concluded that the PRC use illegal methods, just as was the case during Mao Zedong.

There is evidence that Chinese police in Tibet have arrested and tortured not just Tibetans, but also some foreigners, including Russians, who were found to liaise with Dharamsala.¹³⁷ And one American jumped out (or was pushed out) from a window, following a long interrogation at the police station. He was trying to investigate the World Bank project of supporting the resettlement of Han and Hui farmers to the Tibetan lands.¹³⁸ As a result, he damaged his spine, fractured his heel bones and suffered a torn liver. The British and the Americans, who were arrested in Beijing for participating in demonstrations of support for Tibet at the Olympics 2008, said that during the interrogations that lasted for many hours they were chained to chairs and deprived of sleep.¹³⁹

In feudal Tibet, there were only two prisons. As for the current situation, here is a list of where the Tibetan political prisoners were held in 2001.¹⁴⁰ The TAR Prison (Drapchi Prison) in the north-eastern area of Lhasa, is the largest. It contains those who have the longest jail time. Of its nine buildings, two house political prisoners. The TAR PSB Detention Centre (the Sangip Prison) is located in the northern part of Lhasa. The Lhasa City PSB Detention Centre (the Gutan Prison) is 3 km east of Lhasa near the Kyichu River. TAR Re-education through Labour Centre (the Trisam Prison) is 10 km west of Lhasa near the Toelung bridge. Powo

135 Tales on terror, 1999.

136 Torture in Tibet, 2000; Tibet 2002.

137 Commentary on 25.03.2008...

138 French, 2004.

139 Nikolsky, V. activists from Britain and the U.S...

140 Annual Report 2001.

Tramo is in Tramo, 500 km east of Lhasa. There is also the Lhasa Prison (formerly known as Outridu). Tibetan Military Detention Centre is in the area Tsalgunthang approximately 11 km east of Lhasa. There is also Reform through Labour Facility in Tsethang: 10 km east of Chamdo. The Maowan Prison is located in Maowan Qiang Autonomous County, in the Ngawo Prefecture, Sichuan Province. In addition, there are correctional facilities in each prefecture, county and township in the Tibetan autonomous areas in Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan. Political prisoners are stationed there as well.

In total, according to the 2001 data,¹⁴¹ there are twelve prisons and thirteen labour camps in the TAR; thirty-two in Qinghai; six in Sichuan. There is no information on the exact total number of correctional facilities in Greater Tibet. More than half of all political prisoners in Tibet consist of the clergy. In the minds of most Tibetans, politics and religion are still linked, so the lack of religious freedom nourishes their political struggle.

Not surprisingly, many Tibetans want to emigrate abroad. However, the southern border of Tibet is strictly controlled. Moreover, in some cases Tibetans need official permission to move from place to place, even for a short time. During actual or projected public unrest, visitors are forced to leave Lhasa for their native villages.¹⁴²

One cannot simply visit the border areas of Tibet. According to TAR Regulations on the management of border areas, the citizens of China over sixteen years of age, who live in these areas, must have a PRC citizen identification card and a TAR border resident identification card.¹⁴³ Other dwellers of TAR, who would like to visit the border area, must have their identity cards and obtain a permit for visiting the border areas. Citizens of the PRC under the age of sixteen also have to obtain relevant certificates. "The compatriots living abroad", who want to visit these areas, must have border area certificates with their identity cards. Mapping, exploration, archaeological research, photographing, filming, scientific research, etc. is forbidden without special permits. Complex bureaucratic procedures need to be overcome by the Tibetans to even get permission for pilgrimages to the border's holy places: Mount Kailash and the Manasarovar Lake.

Going abroad is even harder, although some Tibetans do obtain the necessary documents and do travel. The passport that is necessary for travelling abroad is issued by the PSB office in Lhasa. This procedure is complicated and takes a long time.¹⁴⁴ Travel to India is difficult. It is easier to travel to Nepal by invitation. In order to obtain a visa to go there, one needs to gather signatures on the three papers at county, prefecture and province levels. Bribes do accelerate this process

141 Tibet: a human development...; Behind bars...

142 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

143 Tibet 2002.

144 Annual Report 2001.



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*Some prisons in Tibet, where political prisoners are kept (TCHRD): 1 – Drapchi
2 – Sangyip 3 – Trisam*



A Chinese military base, set up to control the Nangpa La pass that separates Tibet and Nepal (Dangerous Crossing, 2006)

somewhat. Nevertheless, the Tibetans legally travel not only to Nepal but also to other countries, including Russia and European countries. Tibetan exiles do visit the TAR, some even remain there. According to Xinhua, in a few years (as of February 1, 2002), more than two thousand Tibetans have returned from abroad to visit relatives or to stay.¹⁴⁵ In 2002, the TAR authorities called on Tibetan compatriots to return from abroad in order to visit their relatives and friends, to pray to Buddha, and to go sightseeing. Even those who took part in the past “splittist activities” were invited, provided that they were now acting “in support of the motherland”.

However, the stream of people wishing to leave Tibet is not drying up, and the authorities are trying to stop them. People find illegal ways of leaving the country, like through the highlands, where an unaccustomed man suffers from lack of oxygen. From 1991 to 2002, an average of 2,500 Tibetans left each year.¹⁴⁶ The most important route lies through Nepal. It is almost impossible to cross the mountains in other places. Only very few manage to pass there, as the routes lack suitable passes, and most are blocked by Chinese frontier guards. Most of the refugees escape to Nepal during the four winter months. One of the reasons for this is the weakening of Chinese border control. Many believe that there is good visibility during winter, and the presence of ice on the snow surface is favorable for the escapees, allowing them to make use of passes that at other times are unreliable.¹⁴⁷ Other hazards, apart from the Chinese patrols, include lack of water and fuel for cooking, starvation, dehydration and exhaustion. During snow storms, with temperatures dropping to -40° C, people can lose their way, and suffer from frostbite and snow blindness.

145 Tibet 2002.

146 Dangerous Crossing, 2003.

147 Annual Report 2001.



Frostbitten toes of a Tibetan refugee after crossing the mountains to Nepal (Dangerous Crossing, 2005)

Many refugees arrive completely exhausted and frostbitten.

Many are detained while still in Tibet, others die from accidents and Chinese bullets. For example, during six months of 2001, the Chinese security forces detained 2,500 Tibetans who were trying to leave.¹⁴⁸ On September 30, 2006, the shooting of a refugee group at the Nangpa La pass was captured on video by a Romanian cameraman.¹⁴⁹ The slaughter was witnessed by a large group of foreign alpinists who told the media about it. About seventy Tibetans, mostly children, went to Nepal. After having found them, three to five members of the PRC People's Armed Police opened fire. A seventeen-year-old nun

was killed, and a thirteen-year-old boy was wounded and later died. Thirty-six people made it to Nepal, the rest were captured by the Chinese. The video of this massacre was posted on the Internet. Later, a mounting of it appeared, made so that it looked like a fake.



The people's armed police with a group of Tibetan children who were detained on the Nangpa La pass when they tried to escape from Tibet to Nepal (Dangerous Crossing, 2006/foto: Pavle Kozjek)

148 Annual Report 2001.

149 Dangerous Crossing, 2006; Chinas massacre in Tibet...; Western alpinists...

In 2003, in the area of Shigatse, a special prison for Tibetan refugees that were caught on their way to Nepal or back was built. It is called the “New Reception Center of the Land of Snows”. According to witnesses, the majority of unlucky escapees are given jail terms of three to five months.¹⁵⁰ In other places, the punishment ranges from ten days in police custody to one to three months in prison.¹⁵¹ The prisoners are usually beaten or administered electric shocks, and forced to do hard labor on the construction of local roads. “Education through labor” is widely used. The food is always bad. Many pay a fine of 1,700–5,000 yuan and sign a promise (along with their relatives) that they will no longer attempt to escape. If the Chinese catch a Tibetan guide, he faces a long sentence, and treatment that is worse still. Refugees say that women are treated better than men: women are only beaten with belts, while men are tortured with electric batons and electric cattle prods.¹⁵² In 2001, officials warned Tibetans about confiscation of land and imprisonment of relatives, if they try to flee abroad.¹⁵³

In Nepal, the refugee may be arrested by local police. In this case, all his possessions can be taken away. But the worst scenario is to be deported to the Chinese frontier guards. For example, in 2001, deportation of fifteen refugees took place. But the total number is probably higher.

Being subjected to pressure from Beijing, the Nepalese authorities have tightened border controls, dispersed demonstrations of protesting Tibetans in Kathmandu, and closed the office of the Tibetan Government in Exile. China urges the Nepalese Government to consider Tibetan refugees as “economic migrants” or criminals.¹⁵⁴ In this case, they cannot attain the status of a refugee. In fact, the majority of refugees are leaving Tibet not because they are in search of a job. For example, in 2006, 45% of refugees were monks and nuns, 30% children and students wishing to obtain a Tibetan education, 20% peasants and only 5% nomads and the unemployed.¹⁵⁵ Parents send their children to schools for Tibetan exiles to get a proper education, one that has not been degraded by Chinese influence.

At the end of the 20th century, Nepal was engulfed in a civil war that was unleashed by the Maoist terrorists. They utilised the ideological arsenal of Mao: “surround the city with villages,” “fascist attacks of feudal tyrants upon the revolutionary people”, “rebellion against exploitation,” “people’s war”, “imperialist countries like Russia, France and Germany”, “discriminatory treaties”; their illegal armed groups were called “people’s liberation army”, etc.¹⁵⁶ Maoists killed local

150 *Dangerous Crossing*, 2004.

151 *Annual Report* 2001.

152 *Dangerous Crossing*, 2006.

153 *Annual Report* 2001.

154 *Dangerous Crossing*, 2005.

155 *Dangerous Crossing*, 2006.

156 E.g. Roy, 2008; <http://www.cpnm.org>.

officials, broke into villages, raped women, robbed and took away children who were from nine to fifteen years old,¹⁵⁷ the remaining residents were levied with taxes (“voluntary donations”). The dissatisfied were killed. Roads were blocked, cars were burned or blown up, and “donations” were levied on the visiting tourists as well. Tourists, though, were sometimes trivially robbed.¹⁵⁸ Using the remoteness of many mountain regions, weakness of the Government and crisis of the Royal power, the Maoists established control there. Regardless of this, according to the Maoist leader Prachanda, public unrest in the TAR is a “separatist violence”.¹⁵⁹ The United States allegedly stay behind it.

In mid-2008, the revolutionaries overthrew the monarchy in Nepal. In June, a meeting between the representatives of communist China and their Nepalese partners took place. The Nepali comrade stressed that his party “supports China’s policy in Tibet and considers China to be their best friend”.¹⁶⁰ After the Nepalese revolution, the U.S. did not remove the Maoist party of Nepal from the list of terrorist organizations, but did announce a partnership with it so as to “promote stability, democracy and peace”.¹⁶¹ During the elections, the Maoists achieved the majority of votes. This is not surprising. After my observations, the public was offered peace in exchange for votes, as if a man who has taken hostages offered not to kill them in exchange for power. Nepal started to monitor and reintegrate Maoist militants into their society. They were defined by the term “combatant”,¹⁶² that is, a guerrilla, not a revolutionary terrorist.

In Nepal, repression of Tibetan refugees increased. The responsibility for their detention was even accepted by the Maoist Youth Communist League.¹⁶³ On August 15, 2009, in Lhasa, a meeting was convened to discuss a Chinese proposal to suppress anti-Chinese demonstrations on the Nepalese territory.¹⁶⁴ This discussion was attended by almost all of the leaders of the security services of Nepal. And in October 2009, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Nepal stated that refugees had no right to convene demonstrations against “friendly” China in Nepal; that a state plan was in the works, designed to make the border more secure and free from infiltration of criminal elements; that the Cabinet of Ministers of Nepal endorsed a set of more than fifteen thousand policemen, including seven thousand armed police (APF) and seven thousand other units.¹⁶⁵ It seems that Beijing’s dream was

157 See for details: Maoists in Nepal...

158 Tourists and the Maoists...

159 Prachanda defends Chinese crackdown...

160 China and Nepal...

161 The United States announced adjustments...

162 See, for example, Nepalese newspaper “The Himalayan” on April 2009.

163 Nikolsky, V. People of Maoist Komsomol...

164 Nikolsky, V. In Kathmandu...

165 Nikolsky, V. Minister of Internal Affairs of Nepal...

becoming a reality: with the flow of refugees stopped, there would be no channel of information about the true situation in Tibet.

The PRC is trying to help the Nepalese Army in order to increase its influence in Nepal. Both “old” soldiers, as well as “new” Maoist militants are involved in the process. However, the Nepalese Maoists are still dependent on their local mountain tribes and are even forced to acknowledge their traditions and even participate in their Buddhist ceremonies. However, the establishment of contacts with the PRC, the Chinese military assistance, visits to China of Nepalese security forces – all of these strengthen the position of China in Nepal to the detriment of interests of India and the Tibetans in that country.¹⁶⁶

Despite the repression, the struggle of the Tibetan people continues. Its intensity is higher than in the territories of other “minority nationalities” of China. The scale of repression is much greater in Tibet as well. The data above clearly show that the extent and severity of arrests, torture and executions under socialism far exceed those in the feudal-theocratic period. However, people do not lose their hopes. Mao rightly said:¹⁶⁷ “The struggle, defeat, struggle again, defeat again, then struggle yet again and keep struggling all the way to the eventual victory – such is the logic of the people”.

Religion

After Mao’s death, religious life was quickly restored. In 1979, the Jokhang Temple was reopened along with the Drepung Monastery.¹⁶⁸ Barbed wire was removed from around the Jokhang. Pilgrims once again started to go to it. Much of this was due to the efforts of the 10th Panchen Lama. Tibetans started to rebuild the Ganden Monastery. Nevertheless, the restoration works were stalled in 1983. Many workers were arrested, quotas on the number of monks were introduced, and children under the age of eighteen became obliged to receive a socialist education. In 1982, the PRC government allocated 900,000 yuan for the repair of the Tashilhunpo monastery.^{168a}

During the 1980’s, the property that was confiscated from the monasteries and that managed to survive during the Cultural Revolution, was returned to Tibet in a small part (for details, see Chapter 9). In 1983, the upper part of the Buddha statue that was brought to Tibet in the 7th century by the Nepalese wife of Songtsen Gampo was brought to Lhasa from Beijing. It was brought by plane to Chendu by a group of Tibetan researchers, headed by Ribhur Tulku.¹⁶⁹ There, the statue was placed into a temple, and Tibetan and Chinese monks carried out the relevant rites. When the statue was delivered to Lhasa, contrary to expectations it was not greeted

166 Struggling for influence in Nepal...

167 Mao, 1966, c.72.

168 Butterfield, 1979.

168a Tibet in the Eye of Tibetans, 1995, p.14.

169 Ribhur Tulku, 1988.

by a solemn meeting: a meeting with all officials was appointed at that very time elsewhere. But thousands of ordinary people gathered at the Jokhang and rejoiced in the return of the relic.

China allocated 300,000 yuan, a lot of gold, silver and other materials for restoration and decoration of the Potala, Jokhang and some other sites.¹⁷⁰ In 1989, an overhaul of the Potala was started. Since 2001, a further 330,000 yuan have been allocated on its second set of repairs, as well as the repairs to the Norbulingka complex and the Sakya Monastery. In April 2008, the Tashilhunpo Monastery became the first Tibetan monument to be repaired under the restoration project that includes twenty-two monuments of Tibetan culture, with fifteen of them being under special state protection.¹⁷¹ 570 million yuan was allocated for the restoration project, and it was the largest in the history of the TAR. In addition to the buildings above, monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Ganden (among others) were restored and are now protected. It is noteworthy that in the homeland of the 14th Dalai Lama, in the village of Taktser, construction of a temple devoted to him was completed in 2009.¹⁷² This was initiated by Gonpo Tashi, his sixty-three-year-old nephew, a former teacher and member of the Qinghai CPPCC. Reconstructions that are funded by the Government of China are based on careful selection.

Generally, reconstruction and restoration of monasteries in Tibet can be done only with the permission of the Bureau of Religious Affairs. These are given after a bureaucratic rigmarole. During this process Tibetans have to file their requests several times and listen to entire lectures about the negative influence of religion on the “national interests”. For example, the Rules of Qinghai Province on management of religious activity places, issued on 1st of October 1992, describe the process, without which a religious object cannot be opened to the public or built.¹⁷³ One must first send a request to the local government; from there it is forwarded to the Office for National and Religious Affairs, then to the next level. Each of them has to grant permission. After its opening, an object is placed under the administrative supervision of local government and the Office of Religious Affairs. Democratic management also needs to be implemented. The responsibilities of the committees of democratic management include training of staff and clergy in the spirit of support for the CPC leadership, socialism, patriotism, national unity, etc. “Special feudal religious privileges, the system of oppression and exploitation, which has already been abolished, cannot be restored” (from Art. 10).

Rebuilding and restoration of monasteries (including those to which money has been allocated by the state) are possible thanks to voluntary work and the financial

170 The question of Tibet...

171 In Tibet in 2008...

172 Nikolsky, V. In the homeland of the 14th Dalai Lama...

173 A Sea of Bitterness, 1999, p.41–45.

contributions of ordinary Tibetans.¹⁷⁴ State financing typically comprises only a small part of the cost. Monasteries do not receive money from the government and they are entirely dependent on the parishioners. But the entrance fee imposed by the authorities in some monasteries is collected by the state. Chinese security officials sometimes confiscate pilgrims' offerings. While the monasteries must maintain a subsistence economy and provide for themselves, the committees of democratic management exercise control over their financial affairs.

According to Chinese data, by 2000, the TAR had 1,700 places of worship. According to the China Center for Tibetan Studies, the Tibetan administrative units outside of the TAR have 1,535 such places.¹⁷⁵ This indicates a very big recovery, given that after the Cultural Revolution there were only seven or thirteen of them (see Chapter 9). However, prior to the Chinese invasion of Greater Tibet, it had 6,259 monasteries and other religious centres. Therefore, only about a half have been recovered thus far. The number of monks and nuns significantly increased. By 2000, their number reached 120,000 people, including forty-six, that reside in the TAR.¹⁷⁶ According to Ts. Sakya, there are in fact 180,000 of them, including people that were not recorded officially.

Apart from Buddhism, Tibet also has eighty-eight Bon monasteries with about three thousand priests of this religion. There is a mosque in Lhasa and about two thousand Muslims, and a Catholic church and about seven hundred Catholics.¹⁷⁷ According to other sources, during the 1990's, the TAR had three thousand Tibetan and about twenty thousand Chinese Muslims.¹⁷⁸ It was reported that in 2006, the TAR had four mosques, four to five thousand Muslims and the Catholic Church with 560 parishioners.¹⁷⁹ In February of 1986, the Monlam Festival in Lhasa was allowed for the first time since 1967.

Since 1984, the authorities have largely regained their control over religion. In a statement on March 10, 1987, The Dalai Lama said:¹⁸⁰ "The so-called religious freedom in Tibet today amounts to permitting our people to worship and practice religion in a merely ritualistic and devotional way. There are both direct and indirect restrictions on the teaching and study of Buddhist philosophy. Buddhism is thus being reduced to a blind faith which is exactly how the Communist Chinese view and define religion". Several measures of legislation were established, the Tibetan Buddhism Guidance Committee for the TAR, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan was created. Its major objectives were to put government policies

174 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

175 China-Tibet...

176 Shakya, Ts. Tibetan questions...

177 Briefly on Tibet: religion and belief...; China: Tibet – facts and figures 2006...

178 Butt, 1994.

179 Fifth International Conference, 2008, p.195.

180 Dalai Lama. Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the Twenty-Eighth Anniversary...

into practice, “educate monks and nuns in the patriotic spirit” and monitor the monasteries’ management. On September 28, 1988, the 10th Panchen Lama called for an end to the Chinese administrative interference with religion and to enhance the activity of Tibetans themselves in its affairs.

In 1990, Jiang Zemin pointed out that in order for the withering away of religion to take place, one needs not the administrative measures, but raising the level of education, welfare, economic growth and propaganda.¹⁸¹ That is, the primacy of the material over the spiritual. In 1991, he called on religious leaders to support the Communist Party, to work with the CPC in policy making, and to mutually respect each in ideology. In 1993, Jiang called for the mutual relevance of religion and socialist society, marking a new approach to religion. This approach requires no renunciation of faith, but calls for support of the CPC and socialism; to reform religious institutions and dogmas that did not apply to socialism; using elements of religion to serve socialism. This does not negate the atheistic upbringing.

In April 1994, at the 3rd working forum on Tibet the strategic task of reforming Tibetan Buddhism and culture in order to make them conform to socialism was set.¹⁸² It was decided to put an end to the construction of monasteries and the increase in numbers of the clergy, to undermine the authority of the Dalai Lama, and to “manage” reincarnations of lamas.

Due to these decisions, since 1996, repression has intensified.^{181a} Campaigns for “Patriotic Education”, “Spiritual Civilization” and “Strike Hard” that were designed in China mainly for combating crime, have hit hardest on Tibetan “separatism”, and the “Dalai clique”. The “patriotic education” campaign was carried out by Chinese work teams, which settled in almost all of the monasteries at the expense of monks. The number of members of a work team depends on the size of a monastery. They conduct classes and meetings. Monks are usually divided into groups of twenty to thirty people. Occasional events require combining several of these groups, or even all of them. The most important objective is reducing the number of monks. As a result of this “education” some of the monks end up dying, some commit suicide. Those who resist being “educated” are expelled or arrested. As a result, during 1996–1997, 2,827 monks were expelled from monasteries, 165 were arrested, and nine perished; in 1998, the number of known cases of arrest and expulsion were 327 and 7,156 respectively; in 1999, the corresponding figures were forty-two and 1,432.¹⁸³ Expelled monks are threatened with arrest so as to prevent them from saying that they were expelled by the work team.¹⁸⁴ The number of monks is strictly limited.

181 Moskalev, 2004, p.274–283.

181a Tibet: the Truth, 1993; Tibet under Power of Communist China, 2001; China launches Education...’

182 Modern politics, 2000, p.12; Andreev, 2006a, p.398.

183 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

184 Religious persecution...

In some temples their numbers are very few, and some are empty altogether.¹⁸⁵ According to official figures, from 2000 to 2008, the number of places of worship that were operating in the TAR did not change and remained at “over 1,700” with the number of monks being “more than 46,000”¹⁸⁶.

Propagandists were trying to convince the monks to pervert their views on history and religion. Here are some excerpts from the Conspect for spread of patriotic education in monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism.¹⁸⁷ It was used in Qinghai monasteries in 1997 and 1998, and contains eight lessons on various topics as well as information about local laws. Some of its parts coincide with propaganda that Tibet was always a part of China, and the question of its independence emerged only in the 20th century because of interference from the imperialists. But it also contains some even more glaring examples. “After Tibet formally entered the domain of the Yuan Court, not only did the hearts of the Tibetan people turn towards the interior, but moreover from the outset (*yi kaishi*) they recognised their unity (*rentong*) with the motherland. <...> They recognised that Tibet (*xizang diafang*) was a part of China, Tibetans were a part of the Chinese people, Tibet and motherland were closely bound together and that the Han and Tibetan nationalities were one in heart and mind, united in one”. (p.31). “Religious activities and religious organizations must accept the leadership of and management by the Party and the government. The relationship between the Party and government and religious organisations and religious personnel is that of the leader and those led, the manager and those managed. <...> The Tibetan Buddhist community must... continuously restrict the negative elements of religion, overcome unsuitable phenomena and strive to promote an adaptation of religion to socialist society” (p.34-35). “The vast masses of Tibetan Buddhists should hold the banner of patriotism and eliminate the influence of the Dalai from their thinking” (p.40). And here are excerpts from the “Patriotic Education for Monasteries Propaganda Handbook No. 2: Handbook for Education in Anti-Splittism”, issued by the TAR Committee for Patriotic Education in Monasteries.¹⁸⁸ Section Two: “Tibet Independence” is a plot hatched by Imperialists old and new”. Section Three: “The real goal behind international anti-China forces’ support for the Dalai Clique” etc.

“Patriotic education” is conducted like the following.¹⁸⁹ Classes usually run from 9am–1pm with a break, and then from 3pm–6:30pm. Each session contains a five-minute break. The five basic principles are: confronting the “splittism”; unity of Tibet and China; the recognition of the Beijing-appointed 11th Panchen Lama;

185 Annual Report 2001.

186 Cf.: China’s Tibet, 2000 — in: Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005, p.301; White Book: in Tibet...

187 A Sea of Bitterness, 1999.

188 In: Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2008, p.95.

189 Religious persecution...

denial of Tibetan independence in the past and desire for it in the present; agreement with the statement that the Dalai Lama is destroying “unity of the motherland”. If a monk could not answer the questions set during daytime classes, individual sessions are then conducted. In this case, the work teams come to a monk’s cell and spend another one to two hours with him.

More stringent methods of “patriotic education” also exist.¹⁹⁰ On May 1, 2000, a work team of thirty officials from the religious department in Chamdo visited the Tenthok Monastery in the Dzogang County. The monks were ordered to remove all images of the Dalai Lama. This led to protests. Then three monks were beaten (breaking ribs of one of them). Images were confiscated. One monk was forcibly brought to his cell on the third floor in order to search for photos of the Dalai Lama. The monk fell from the third floor and died. The following day, posters with protests appeared. PSB officers arrived and arrested five monks. The others were threatened with long jail terms, to prevent accusations of officials assisting the monk’s “suicide”. For fear of escalation of the conflict, additional controls were imposed and about twenty laymen were arrested.

Police and army officers are housed inside the monasteries to help with the control of monks; informants are also planted, police stations were built in the main monasteries. Other security forces are involved in the control, such as the PSB. “Bureau 610” that was created by the Chinese security forces fighting the Falun Dafa followers and later attended to the Tibetans, Uighurs, dissidents and the Taiwanese.¹⁹¹ All of these opponents of the regime are called the “five poisons” by its officials.

Monastery life is regulated by many bureaucratic organizations: the United Front Work Department, the Religious Affairs Bureau, the Tibetan branch of the China Buddhist Association, the Committee of Democratic Management, Work Inspection’s Teams for political education and political studies, security services, etc. In violation of the Tibetan Buddhism canons any images and texts of the 14th Dalai Lama are prohibited. Here are, for example, “Lhasa Municipality’s Monastic (temples and hermitages) Disciplinary Rules for Monks and Nuns”, on 20 July 1997:¹⁹² “1. One must protect law and order, property of the people, unity of the nationalities, unity of the motherland and oppose the splittists. 2. One must respect the leaders of the party and the government, the socialist system, and the policy and rules laid down by the officials of the region. 3. No one is allowed to listen to or disseminate reactionary propaganda which threatens or harms the unity and security of the country, possess or distribute reactionary literature, audio and video tapes or participate in any sort of splittist activity. 4. One must accept the rules laid down by the Democratic Management Committee of the monastery (temples and

190 “Patriotic Re-education” ...

191 Trojan Horse from China...

192 Nationalities and Religious Bureau...

hermitages), work for the welfare of the society and monastery, actively participate in the production and labor works. 5. One must listen to the advice given by the teachers and officials of the monasteries and maintain solidarity between old and young. 6. One must show sincere faith in the Buddha, study all subjects of Buddhism and strive for its flourishing. 7. Monks and nuns must strictly abide by the monastic vows and religious discipline of the monastery. They must be humble and bear good characters, and should wear monastic robes unless it is an exceptional circumstance. 8. No one can oppose the government and legal officials in the name of religion or intrude in the re-education. 9. One must preserve cultural monuments and artifacts, monasteries and public property. 10. One must take an interest in environment and personal health. The monks and nuns must preserve the image of monastic community and work hard to become good monks and nuns who love religion and nation and abide by the law”.

The conditions for admission to the monastery were tightened. If earlier small children were enrolled there, now one could only enter from the age of sixteen, then eighteen years. An applicant must be a patriot, love the CPC, to understand the incompatibility of materialism and spiritualism, to have permission from his parents and various levels of local authorities, the Democratic Management Committee, the PSB, parents must be politically reliable; the entree must be resident of the area where the monastery is situated, etc.¹⁹³ In 1983, the Tibetan branch of the China Buddhist Association founded the Tibetan Buddhist College, and opened spiritual classes at the monasteries of various schools. In 2006, their number of students reached three thousand.¹⁹⁴ The higher Seminary of Tibetan Buddhism was open in Beijing. However, faculties which formerly used to be basic units of monastic universities can no longer be run.

According to an ancient custom, people build religious objects and settle around them. The Chinese authorities are destroying these objects, and force people to return.¹⁹⁵ This is similar to what it was under Mao, but on a smaller scale. In 1998, the work team closed the Jonang Kumbum Monastery.¹⁹⁶ This seven-floor stupa was built in the 14th century by Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen, an outstanding figure of the Buddhist Jonang sect. It had its insides smashed during the Cultural Revolution, but was restored later, and religious life was re-established. But then, “education” was conducted, some of the monks were arrested and some expelled. In the late 1990’s, some monasteries closed: Samdupling (in the Tsethang Prefecture), Sungrabling (in Lhoka), Drikung Shetra (in Gongkar); Shkongchen (in Shigatse) and Drag Yerpa (in Taktser) monasteries were destroyed.¹⁹⁷ In 2007, the Pangsa Monastery

193 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

194 China: Tibet – facts and figures 2006...

195 Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual report 2001.

196 Kumbum’s Song, 1998, p.1.

197 Modern politics, 2000.

was also closed.¹⁹⁸ In 2006, the Kardze Autonomous Prefecture web site announced strengthening of control over monasteries; collecting data on monks and nuns who were unlawfully entering and leaving the district; the destruction of 853 “illegal” houses; banishing 1,100 monks and nuns from the Yachen monastery; and those who illegally left and returned to the district should register with authorities.¹⁹⁹

In 2001, mass expulsion and destruction took place in Serthar religious institute.²⁰⁰ Let us examine this case in more detail. Serta was founded by Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok in the Kardze Prefecture in 1980. It was used to hold trainings in Buddhist philosophy, logic, metaphysics, monastic discipline, and Tantra (with the use of computers), Chinese, Tibetan and English languages. The Institute was training several thousand people, including one thousand Han, Tibetans, Mongols, etc. In the early 1990’s, Khenpo visited India and several other countries. He met with the Dalai Lama. In 1994, the Chinese authorities started to persecute him because of this. Officials from the United Front Work Department and the Bureau of Religious Affairs started interrogations, “education” and Red propaganda. Guard posts were set up at all entrances to the institute. In 1998 the authorities ordered Khenpo to reduce the number of people in the Institute from more than 8,000 to 150, but then they allowed 1,400.

In March and April 1999, circulars were published stating the need for supervision of the Institute, control of religious sermons, identifying “splittist activities”, conducting “patriotic education”, the prohibition of persons under sixteen years from studying there, and – which is especially noteworthy – this ban was extended to the Han. The students were told to go home. The order was said to come from Jiang Zemin himself. In 2001, members of different work teams came together. They imposed a deadline for students’ departure, and others were allowed to stay only after condemning the Dalai Lama. Then, 2,000 PSB and PLA officers, together with the work teams’ members, banished the students. It was achieved through beatings of the deportees, threats of reprisals against the abbot, students and their families. In April, about one thousand Tibetans were taken to places of their permanent residence; by November, another three thousand were kicked out. Many students once again became peasants, and some became beggars. After all, Serthar was the only source of livelihood for those incapable of work.

In June and July, many homes and outbuildings were destroyed – the official figure is 1,875, however Tibetans said that about two thousand were destroyed. Destruction was carried out by workers that were brought in forty or fifty trucks. A worker received 130–350 yuan for each destroyed building. Elderly and disabled people were dragged out by force, with roofs sometimes being removed for that

198 Chinese authorities close down Pangsa...

199 Fifth International Conference, 2008, p.195.

200 Destruction of Serthar Institute...

purpose. In some cases, the workers tried to steal others' property. The rubble from buildings was removed by trucks. Members of the Standing Committee of the Institute were told to distribute a document that this destruction was authorized by the Institute itself. They refused. The officials tried to cover up what was actually happening: photography was banned, roads were blocked, and police was brought in. Tibetans still managed to secretly take pictures, videos and spread them. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok was put into a military hospital, and then spent a year under house arrest in Chengdu. He returned to Serthar, and, on January 6, 2004, died in Chengdu hospital.²⁰¹ According to unconfirmed reports, nine Serthar nuns committed suicide, many ended up in hospitals. Several people were detained in late 2002 for trying to restore the buildings.

This example shows typical traits of the CPC policy in Tibet: religion has to be developed under the control of an atheistic Party; if propaganda and threats are not sufficient, repressions begin; the repressive structures are always “workers”, “peoples”, “public” etc.; repressions are disguised as legitimate and hidden by all means; any contact of Tibetans with the Dalai Lama is fraught with dangerous consequences; the location of the “masters of their autonomous region” is regulated; unregulated migration of Han is encouraged; at the same time, Han people themselves must be isolated from the ideas that are unwanted by the CPC. Of course, an amazing phenomenon is that one thousand Chinese have become monks of the Tibetan tradition, indicating growth of respect and interest in Tibetan Buddhism by the Han.

In 2007, tourists in Tibet learnt that two large statues of Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) were destroyed: in Samye and Darchen.²⁰² In the first case, the statue was erected using the generous donations of Chinese Buddhists from the Guangzhou City of Guangdong Province. Trying to stop the spread of information about the destruction, Chinese authorities closed pilgrims and tourists' access to the monastery, police cordoned off the area. When asked, the leadership of the monastery stated that the statue was dismantled because its construction had not obtained official permission.²⁰³ In the second case, Darchen, and thus the way to Mount Kailash, were closed to foreigners for three days: preparations for demolition were taking place, and Tibetan protests were expected.

There were also cases not only of destruction of places of worship, but also of Tibetan heritage being exported to China. In 1988, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme said that he was shocked at the massive exportation of Potala's relics into China, and, in particular, at the devastation of the ancient treasury of the Tibetan Government. In 2001, there were reports that the gilded bronze statue of Maitreya Buddha from

201 Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok...

202 On religious freedom in Tibet...

203 In Tibet, the statue of Guru Padmasambhava was destroyed...

the tomb of the 7th Dalai Lama in Potala (protected by UNESCO) was moved to Beijing.²⁰⁴ During the 2000s, religious objects from the Yumbulakhang Castle disappeared. When their disappearance was discovered, it turned out that the antiquities and rare statues were taken from Tibetan monasteries for exhibitions in China, and were replaced with copies. The responsibility lay with government officials.²⁰⁵

The situation with Tibetan books greatly improved after the Cultural Revolution. A number of important historical and religious monuments in writing were published.²⁰⁶ “Catalogue of the Sacred Texts of the Potala Palace” and “Storage of the Sacred Texts in the Land of Snow” were systematized and published. Since 1990, a number of important Tibetan texts were edited and published. In addition, several books that were meant for monastery use (describing the traditional etiquette of northern Buddhism, biographies of prominent figures and their works) were published as separate brochures. The Tibetan branch of the China Buddhist Association publishes a “Tibetan Buddhism” periodical. This department also incorporates the Spiritual Academy of Tibetan Buddhism and the Institute for the publication of Tibetan sacred sutras. The Tibetan People’s Publishing House, founded in 1970, publishes a large number of books, mostly in Tibetan. These include popular science materials, old books, Tibetan classics, sutras, works on Tibetan medicine and calendar, history, biography, folklore and folk art.²⁰⁷ A multi-volume edition of historical and cultural monuments is also published. Shops in Tibet sell many religious books in Tibetan and Chinese languages, religious objects and souvenirs on religious themes.

Tibetans are allowed to make pilgrimages to the temples, the holy mountains and lakes as well as to perform rituals. Common sights include the colorful flags and heaps of ritual “mani” stones with engraved words – quotations from Buddhist sutras; one can see the believers who make homage, pray and take part in pilgrimages.²⁰⁸ For this, Lhasa is visited each year by over a million Tibetans. Almost every Tibetan family has a prayer room or an altar.

But there are also religious bans. It was reported that in Nyemo, in early 1999, Chinese authorities banned altars in all Tibetan houses, and that all Tibetan farmers and nomads were forbidden to perform rituals: to circumambulate stupas, to light butter lamps on the altar, etc.²⁰⁹ Houses of government doctors, teachers and civil servants-pensioners had their altars removed by the authorities. An order was issued to remove the prayer flags or replace them with the flags of the PRC. Inspections of

204 Potala palace desecrated, p.6.

205 Mass transportation, 2003, p. 24.

206 National regional autonomy...

207 Fifty years in Tibet...

208 China: Tibet – facts and figures 2006...; “Tibetan question” is not a religious question...

209 Severe religious restrictions...

houses were organized and residents were told not to keep images of the Dalai Lama. People are forced to put PRC flags on their houses and other places, continuing the tradition of the Mao period.

Another major problem was the death of two senior lamas of Tibetan Buddhism, the 16th Karmapa and the 10th Panchen Lama. Karmapa is the title of the head of the Karma Kagyu sect, the most influential of one of the four main sects of Tibetan Buddhism. After the death of the 16th Karmapa (1924–1981) in exile, his reincarnation was found in Eastern Tibet. This is Ugyen Trinley Dorje, born on July 17, 1985. At first he was found to be simply a reincarnate of a high lama. Only later, Tai Situ Rinpoche, one of the regents of the lineage, used the previous Karmapa's letter to determine that this was the 17th Karmapa. His determination was confirmed by the Dalai Lama. In September 1992, the 17th Karmapa was enthroned in the Tsurphu Monastery.

Karmapa's freedom in Tibet was severely limited. He was constantly pressured to renounce the 14th Dalai Lama, and proclaim China to be the "bulwark of religious freedom".²¹⁰ Spiritual training opportunities were limited. At the end of December 1999, Karmapa fled from Tibet into India via Nepal. Before that, he advised the Chinese security guards that he was going into a long retreat. That decreased their vigilance. However, upon his arrival, the young Karmapa drew suspicion from Indian intelligence, who could not believe that his daring escape could take place without Chinese patronage. Only in 2008 was the Karmapa allowed by the Indian authorities to go on his first trip abroad. The 17th Karmapa Ugyen Trinley Dorjee is the only head of the sect of Tibetan Buddhism acknowledged by both the authorities of China and the Dalai Lama.²¹¹

The 10th Panchen Lama (1938–1989) remained in Tibet and China during the whole period after the "peaceful liberation". He has always been a supporter of a constructive dialogue with the authorities. The official Chinese position is that "the Panchen-Ertnei Choeki Gyaltzen proved himself to be an outstanding leader of the Tibetan religious community, a great patriot of China, a prominent statesman... consistently and strongly opposed any separatist activities, he has provided an immortal contribution to the protection of the unity of the Motherland and strengthening of the national unity. In his lifetime, he has repeatedly said that his real intent is to achieve unity of the Motherland and national unity, national prosperity, progress in the development of Tibet, prosperity of the Buddhist faith, establishing peace throughout the world".²¹² However, among the titles inherited by the 10th Panchen Lama from his predecessors, there is a title that he acquired

210 The 17th Karmapa escaped from Tibet, 2000, p. 50–57.

211 A part of followers of the Karma Kagyu considers another person, found by Shamar Rinpoche, as the Karmapa (see also Chapter 3).

212 The death of the 10th Panchen...



The 10th Panchen Lama

in this life – “The Savior in dark ages” (Tibetan: snyigs dus mgon po), where “time of troubles” is the period that began with the occupation of Tibet by China.

On 13th January 1989, the 10th Panchen Lama arrived in Shigatse from Lhasa, and participated in the ceremony of consecration of the memorial hall with stupa of the Panchen Lamas from the 5th to the 9th. On January 22, he headed the opening ceremony of the pavilion and delivered a sermon.²¹³ He then participated in a number of prayers. On January 24, while presiding at the interview with representatives of the clergy of TAR, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan, the Panchen Lama addressed

the issue of reincarnation of the highest Buddhist hierarchs:²¹⁴ “First of all, we must find the three boy-candidates, and then conduct an inspection of each of them. <...> I believe that the final choice should be done by drawing lots from the Golden Urn set in front of Shakyamuni”. The PRC authorities consider these words to be his testament. However, they do not mention that on that day, the greatest impression on the audience was made by the Panchen Lama’s strong criticism of the Chinese rule in Tibet. The Panchen Lama urged to allow the Dalai Lama to cooperate with him in the developing of Tibetan policies and added that development after the liberation did take place, but its price was greater than its benefits.

On 28th January 1989, the 10th Panchen Lama passed away. According to official data, his death was caused by a heart attack.²¹⁵ The Chinese authorities reported that upon receiving the news about the sudden illness of the Panchen Lama, the PRC Government immediately sent their commissioner and a doctor to Shigatse to help the Panchen Lama’s doctor, but their efforts were unsuccessful.

On the third day after his death, China’s State Council issued a decree on the conduct of the funeral and the issue of reincarnation of the 10th Panchen that was signed by Li Peng, the Premier of the PRC. “To meet the request of the Board of democratic management and the monastic community of the Tashi Lumpo Monastery, and taking historical customs into account, China’s State Council has decided:

213 Panchen Lama X. The Panchen Lama’s Last Speech...

214 The death of the 10th Panchen...

215 The death of the 10th Panchen...

1. To build a Holy Stupa in the Tashi Lumpo Monastery in Shigatse that would hold the ashes of the 10th Panchen-Ertnei Choeki Gyaltzen; construct a memorial hall to commemorate his acts in the name of the Motherland and faith. Work on the construction of the Sacred Stupa and the memorial hall is to be overseen by the People's Government of TAR and the Board of democratic management of the Tashi Lumpo Monastery. Funds for construction will be assigned by the state.
2. Instruct the Board of democratic management of the Tashilumpo Monastery to perform activities related to the funeral of the 10th Panchen, embalming of his body, etc., in accordance with the ritual of the Tibetan Buddhist church. Necessary funds will assigned by the state.
3. The task of finding and identifying the boy-reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Ertnei Choeki Gyaltzen, is to be carried out by the Board of democratic management of the Tashi Lumpo Monastery, which if necessary should seek the assistance of the Chinese Society of Tibetan Buddhists and its Tibetan branch. The candidates for the 10th Panchen's reincarnation must be submitted for approval to the State Council of China".

The PRC Government has issued a special decree to assign a large sum, 77,410,000 yuan, to be spent on the procedure for identifying the next Panchen Lama.²¹⁶ The body of the 10th Panchen Lama was embalmed according to the ritual and placed in a stupa in a specially built pavilion.

Officially Beijing emphasized its rigorous observance of rituals. But there were also significant alterations: the task of finding and identifying the reincarnation was given to the Board of the democratic management of the Tashilhunpo Monastery, candidates were to be approved by the State Council, a group of experts was organized and headed by Zhao Puchu, the chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association, and honorary chairman of the Tibetan branch of this organisation Phagpala Gelek Namgyal.²¹⁷ The search was conducted in accordance with the ritual: with prayers, sutra readings, divination while observing the lake, incognito visits to the families of very intelligent boys of suitable age, asking the boy candidates to recognize things that belonged to the 10th Panchen Lama, etc.

The Dalai Lama has an unbreakable spiritual link with the Panchen Lama. In their previous incarnations, the one who was older became a teacher, with the younger becoming the disciple. Therefore, 14th Dalai Lama offered his assistance in the search, but was refused by the authorities of the PRC. In India, the necessary rituals were performed, representatives of the Dalai Lama established contacts with the monks in Tibet, including those from the Tashilhunpo Monastery.

216 Six years of searches...

217 Six years of searches...

This was how the boy was identified: the 11th Panchen Lama from Lhari in Tibet.²¹⁸ This was Gedun Choekyi Nyima who was born on April 25, 1989. When he could still barely speak, he said: “I am Panchen, my monastery is Tashilhunpo, I’m sitting on a throne”. The head of the Committee tasked to search the Panchen Lama, Chadrel Rinpoche (who was also abbot of Tashilhunpo, head of the Bureau for democratic management of the monastery and a member of CPPC TAR) secretly sent for the approval of the candidacy by the Dalai Lama, before disclosing it to the Chinese. After having performed the meditations that were necessary for the approval, the Dalai Lama announced the identification on the 14th of May, 1995. The boy received the spiritual name Tenzin Gedun Yeshe Trinle Phuntsok Pelsangpo from the Dalai Lama. And on May 17 the boy, along with his parents, disappeared without a trace. Only two years later, on May 28, 1996, the authorities reported that he was taken under the protection of the Government of China at the request of his parents, because he was in danger of being kidnapped by the separatists. Since then, he and his parents have been unable to freely communicate with the outside world. There is no information about their condition, except for Ragdi’s statement on November 12, 2002, that the boy is not in custody, that he feels he is doing very well at school and that his parents are very happy as well.²¹⁹ To date, the only known photos of Gedun Choekyi Nyima are the ones that were taken in his childhood, and even they have been banned in Tibet. Most Tibetans have never seen them.

On 17th or 18th of May 1997, Chadrel Rinpoche was placed under house arrest on suspicion of being in contact with the Dalai Lama in regards to the search for the new Panchen Lama.²²⁰ On April 21, he was sentenced to six years in prison and three years’ of dispossession of political rights for “conspiring to split the motherland” and “divulging state secrets”. There are reports that he was placed into a special secret section of a prison in Eastern Sichuan. On May 17, the secretary of the Search Committee was also arrested (and given four years in prison for “divulging state secrets”) as well as one businessman (who was given two years).

Officially Beijing still claims that the Dalai Lama’s procedure for establishing the 11th Panchen Lama was illegal. This is backed up by a number of arguments,^{220a} the main one being that the list of candidates had to be submitted for approval by the Central Government, the Golden Urn ceremony had to be overseen by a governmental representative, the selected candidate had to be finally approved by the Government, this was to be followed by a ceremony of leading the successor to the throne, with the ceremony headed by a governmental representative.

218 Panchen Lama 11th, 1999.

219 Tibet 2002...

220 Panchen Lama 11th, 1999.

220a Candidate from the Dalai side...

However, not all of the Panchen Lamas were chosen by drawing lots from the Golden Urn. Furthermore: Beijing authorities used such a draw selectively. For example, at the beginning of the 19th century, the 14th Karmapa was identified by drawing lots from the Golden Urn, and in the 20th century the 17th Karmapa in the PRC was identified without such a draw.²²¹ Further, the deciding role of the Government of China is an illegitimate transfer of traditions of the Manchu Emperor. Emperors headed the Qing Empire, and not only China; they followed Buddhism, and not Marxism; they never “manage” this procedure.

Further, a group formed by the Communists cannot be more legitimate than a group formed by the Dalai Lama. Accordingly, the “unauthorized” observation of the lake by the representatives of the Dalai Lama, one of which was from Tashilhunpo, corresponds more, and not less, to the tradition and religion, than what was organized under the control of the Communists. Allegedly, an additional test ought to have been conducted before a “new” candidate was added to the voting list, but the Dalai Lama chose to “go bald-headed”. Maybe the Communists were able to conduct this test better than the Dalai Lama? And if they were planning for a fair draw, what prevented the inclusion of the new candidate on the list? It remains to be concluded that the Chinese authorities considered him unacceptable a priori, as he was declared by the Dalai Lama. Divining with flour balls, that was performed by a representative of the Dalai Lama, was declared illegal, because members of the Search Group did not participate in the procedure.

According to the official stance of Beijing, starting with the 9th Panchen Lama, disciple – teacher relationships between him and the Dalai Lama practically ceased because the Panchen Lama and his entourage “were harassed by the Dalai and his men”. The differences between the 13th Dalai Lama and the 9th Panchen Lama, which resulted in the Panchen Lama living in China for a long period (see above), were pointed out. But both of these hierarchs have long since passed away, and there is no reason to discuss their relationship. As for the 10th Panchen Lama and 14th Dalai Lama, their relations were normal. This can be seen from the fact that the 10th Panchen Lama was arrested by the Chinese for “crimes” that included support for 14th Dalai Lama (see above). In his conversation with the journalist V.V. Ovchinnikov in 1955, the Panchen Lama pointed out that internal divisions between him and the Dalai Lama had disappeared.²²² Later, when speaking at the 1985 Monlam Festival in Lhasa, the Panchen Lama said that he was bound to the Dalai Lama with ties of spiritual friendship, and that there was no break between them.^{222a} This was confirmed by the Dalai Lama himself, when he spoke of the letters he had received from the Panchen Lama.

221 Sperling, 2004.

222 Ovchinnikov, 2006, p.80.

222a Panchen Lama 11th, 1999.

Further, the Chinese argue that in fact, the boy was born before the death of the 10th Panchen Lama.²²³ According to the Tibetans, he was born three months after the death of his predecessor. This too seems contrary to common sense: reincarnation, according to Buddhism, occurs at the moment of conception, and, consequently, a reincarnate should have been born not less than nine months after the death of the Panchen Lama. However, apparently it was not by accident that: the 10th Panchen Lama said two or three days before his death that this is not always the case and cited the example of the 7th Dalai Lama, who was born a year before the death of the Sixth: an *enlightened* being is able to manifest themselves simultaneously in multiple guises.

China rejected the reincarnate that was recognized by the 14th Dalai Lama. The Chinese Embassy in New Delhi refused to forward a statement by the Dalai Lama regarding this matter to the PRC Government. On May 16, 1995, the PRC Foreign Ministry representative accused the Dalai Lama “of using a religious ceremony for political purposes”, and the next day the official representative of the Council for Religious Affairs of China said that the identification that was made by the Dalai Lama was illegitimate. The reason for discontent with the authorities of China is clear from the words of Li Ruihuan, Chairman of the CPPCC National Committee:²²⁴ “No one, be it an individual or a social community (including religious), is in any way permitted to transgress the state laws, causing damage to national interests and undermining national cohesion and unity of the state. These are the most fundamental criteria for any actions and deeds”. These criteria are not related to religion.

From 8 to 11 November of 1995, in Beijing, the third meeting of the Search Group was convened, and became decisive. During the meeting, Li Ruihuan stated that the job of finding a new reincarnation was conducted according to the “political directives of the CPC on religious work” and ritual, but the Dalai Lama was trying to undermine it. In his speech, Li highlighted the following selection criteria:²²⁵

1. The search group is formed mainly from the high reincarnates and most titled lamas of the Tashilhunpo Monastery.
2. Search work is done according to religious rituals.
3. The list of candidates for the participation in the Golden Urn draw is to be submitted for approval to the Government of the PRC.
4. The Golden Urn ceremony is to be headed by a special representative of the Government of the PRC.
5. The selected candidate needs finally be approved by the Government of the PRC.
6. The ceremony of enthronement of the boy successor to the 10th Panchen Lama is conducted under the chairmanship of the representative of the PRC Government.

The most important aspect is the drawing from the Golden Urn, which expresses the prerogative right of the Government’s approval of candidates and the will of

223 Candidate from the Dalai side...

224 The speech of Li Zhuihuang...

225 Six years of searches...

Buddha Shakyamuni. Therefore, it is needed “to speed up the work so that we complete the identification of reincarnation as soon as possible”.

Under this pressure, the convened lamas were forced to reject the candidate that was proposed by the Dalai Lama, and to nominate the other three boys to be drawn from the Golden Urn. In response, despite the imposition of curfews, there were spontaneous demonstrations in Lhasa, Shigatse and Chamdo against the new gross insult of the religious sentiment of the Tibetan people.

On 29th November 1995, in Jokhang, the procedure of choosing the 11th Panchen Lama by drawing lots from the Golden Urn was carried out and approved by Chinese authorities.²²⁶ The chosen candidate was Gyaltzen Norbu, a boy from a reliable Communist family.²²⁷ Li Tieying, member of the Political Bureau of the CPC CC and State Councilor, has read the text of the Golden Certificate confirming Gyaltzen Norbu as the 11th Panchen Lama. Li Tieying gave him a gold seal engraved in Chinese and Tibetan.²²⁸ Several high ranking lamas were forced to take part in the ceremony. One of them was Bomi Rinpoche, who was able to retain a portion of Tsongkhapa’s ashes during the Cultural Revolution. Tibetans say that he had no other choice, and that he had hoped to use this opportunity to preserve Buddhism in Tibet.²²⁹ He never blamed the Dalai Lama of “splittism” and the like.

Meanwhile, further repressions did take place, about which officially Beijing was silent. These were against members of the Search Committee, who refused to submit to the authorities. Four of the eight members of this Group were banished or arrested, and by 1999, over 80 people had been arrested in connection with the issue of the 11th Panchen Lama.²³⁰ So not only did the chairman of the Search Committee support the candidate who was approved by the Dalai Lama, but so did at least half of the group’s members. The 10th Panchen Lama’s personal servant, unable to bear the situation, died of heart failure. Agya Rinpoche, the head of Kumbum Monastery (where the 10th Panchen Lama spent his childhood) fled to the U.S. as he would not compromise his spiritual beliefs and practices. The jail term of Chadrel Rinpoche had now expired, but his whereabouts are still unknown.

Formal adherence to ceremonies while violating religious traditions is a profanation of religion. And even the ritual itself was only respected as much as was beneficial to the authorities. Consequently, the young man, whom they present as the 11th Panchen Lama, is not the actual reincarnate. At this time, he is being educated in Beijing; occasionally he visits Tibet and he always expresses support for the leadership of the PRC. Despite the fact that portraits of Gyaltzen Norbu

226 The draw of the Golden Urn...

227 Details see: “Buddhism of Russia”, nos. 24–25, 1995–1996.

228 Enthronement of the 11th Panchen...

229 Tibet 2002...

230 Panchen Lama 11th, 1999.

stand next to portraits of the 10th Panchen Lama in Shigatse and that the Chinese authorities claim Tibetans reverence for him, the reception he got there was so ambiguous that he mostly lives in Beijing. If one closely watches the worshippers in Shigatse, it becomes clear that they do not worship him.²³¹ The authorities force the monks to buy his portraits.²³² Moreover, in January 1996, nine monks were arrested for burning photographs of Gyaltzen Norbu, and in June, a primary schoolteacher in Gyantse was arrested for printing and distributing prayers for the long life of Gedun Choekyi Nyima.²³³

Thus, the real 11th Panchen Lama is Gedun Choekyi Nyima, who was recognized by the 14th Dalai Lama. He was also recognized by the high-ranking lamas of all four sects of Tibetan Buddhism at a conference in Dharamsala.²³⁴ However, he is isolated by Chinese authorities.

Recently, the Communists have legalized manipulation of the process of detection of reincarnated lamas. On September 1, 2007, Order no. 5 of the State Administration for Religious Affairs of China on the “Management Measures for the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism” came into effect.²³⁵ This Order violates not only the Buddhist canons, but also freedom of religion. For example, Article 2 states: “Reincarnating living Buddhas should respect and protect the principles of the unification of the state, protecting the unity of the minorities, protecting religious concord and social harmony... Reincarnating living Buddhas... may not re-establish feudal privileges which have already been abolished. Reincarnating living Buddhas shall not be interfered with or be under the dominion of any foreign organization or individual”. It then proceeds to outline the regulations regarding the approval of lamas by authorities. In particular, in Art. 4 it is stated: “Applicants to be reincarnating living Buddhas who have any of the following conditions may not be reincarnated... (2) Those in city-level people’s governments and above with delineated districts, which ordered no reincarnations to be permitted”. This is an interesting wording meant that reincarnation is no more than a formal appointment.

Article 5: “Reincarnation of living Buddha is conducted following an application, which had to receive prior approval”. The application needs to be forwarded to the “local religious affairs departments at the level of people’s government above county-level; once the people’s government above county-level has made suggestions, the people’s government religious affairs department reports upwards, and examination and approval shall be made by the provincial or autonomous regional people’s government religious affairs department. Living Buddha reincarnations who have

231 Zaezhij. Why the Tibetans rioted...

232 Re-education in Kan Lho, 1996, p.2.

233 1996: The year in Tibet...

234 Tibetan religious leaders, 1995, p.10.

235 Order no. 5...

a relatively large impact shall be reported to the provincial or autonomous regional people's government for approval; those with a great impact shall be reported to the State Administration for Religious Affairs for approval; those with a particularly great impact shall be reported to the State Council for approval".

The groups for guidance and search of a reincarnation may be established only after an approval was given by the state officials (Art. 7). Then, drawing lots from the Golden Urn takes place, or nomination is approved by the department of religious affairs of the relevant authority (Art. 8). Once the reincarnation has been recognized, this shall be reported to the relevant state department for approval; after approval, a report should be given to the State Administration of Religious Affairs to be put on record (Art. 9). Violation of these rules leads to administrative or criminal charges (Art. 11). When the reincarnation has been installed, the management organization shall formulate "a training plan, recommend a scripture teacher, and submit the plan to the local Buddhist Association, which shall report upward to the provincial or autonomous regional people's government religious affairs department for approval" (Art. 12). More detailed rules can be developed at a local level (Art. 13).

The purpose of these bureaucratic procedures that are grossly violating the canons of religion is the control of the Communist Party over the future search for reincarnation of the Dalai Lama after his death, as well as all other high lamas. The Dalai Lama himself has repeatedly stated that he will not be reborn in Tibet and other areas of the PRC, if there is no religious freedom there.

The heads of schools of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as the Department of Religion and Culture of the CTA, issued declaration on 2 September 2007, repudiating this regulation.²³⁶ The Special Meeting of the heads of the four religious schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the Bon religion held on 3 May 2008 passed a resolution, which not only rejected it but also declared that in future no reincarnated Lamas/ Trulkus shall be considered to be true unless they have the final approval of the heads of the respective religious traditions.

However, the suppression of religion in Tibet has led to unexpected results. Buddhism and Bon began to be spread around the world through the Tibetan refugees, among who were almost all of the higher lamas of Tibet. Tibetans, who were used to living in a closed society, have managed to adapt well to the new conditions. This is probably connected with the national mentality: the transition from a nomadic lama or nomadic herder to nomadic global lama (teacher), merchant, restaurateur or artist in the modern metropolis, turned out to be not so difficult for the Tibetan refugee.²³⁷

During the old days, mainly Orientalists knew about Buddhism in the West. After the 1960's, many lamas came to Europe, America and Asia. This coincided with

236 Joint Statement to Repudiate...; Statement of the department of Religion and Culture...

237 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

an increased interest in Buddhism. The result was not only the study of previously inaccessible concepts and sources, but also the appearance of numerous Tibetan centers, communities, and monasteries. Many Europeans, Americans and Russians become Buddhists, some become monks. Most Tibetan teachers are spreading the pure teachings in the West, in some cases, trying to adapt them to the European mentality, social and economic realities; but sometimes there is “connivance” to expectations and tastes of the public.²³⁸ At this point in time, there are more than a thousand Tibetan Buddhist communities outside of Tibet. Bon communities can also be found. For example, the total number of Buddhists in the United States is more than 4% of the total population, while in Europe this figure is about 1–2% (this includes migrants from Asian countries). In the former USSR, communities and centers of Tibetan Buddhism are present in the Baltic republics, Ukraine, “non-Buddhist” regions of Russia (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg and others), Georgia, Armenia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Particular credit for this goes to the 14th Dalai Lama. He has written over sixty books, many of which have been translated into foreign languages. From these books, readers can learn about the religion, traditions, and history of the Tibetans, and they can receive ethical instructions. The book “Ethics for the New Millennium” deserves a special mention as the Dalai Lama writes about a global ethical approach grounded on common, rather than religious principles.²³⁹ This approach is particularly important at this time, when the world gives more and more priority to material rather than spiritual values. Many books are related to the Dalai Lama and the world around him, for example, the widely known book by H. Harrer “Seven Years in Tibet” (on which a film was also based). There are other films (“Kundun”, “Tibet: Story of a Tragedy”, the Russian documentary film “Sunrise / Sunset”, 2007, etc.).

The 14th Dalai Lama has repeatedly met with leaders of all world religions, as well as Judaism. He met with Pope Paul the 6th in 1973, with John Paul 2nd in 1980, 1982, 1990, 1996 and 1999; with the Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie in 1981, as well as other leaders of the Anglican Church. The Dalai Lama spoke at the congress of world religions, where he took part in an interfaith service. He also gave the closing speech at the Parliament of World Religions in Melbourne in 2009, meeting many interfaith representatives. Contact was also established with the representatives of the Orthodox Church. The Dalai Lama met with the Russian Patriarch Pimen. In 2008, in India, the Dalai Lama met with the major figures of Islam and stated that equating this religion to terrorism was “absolutely wrong”.

In his opinion, all religions are beneficial, and each of them carries the truth and has its own unique ideas and methods. He advocates for the need for a variety

238 Ayusheeva, 1986.

239 Dalai Lama, 2001.

of religions, which coincide with various dispositions of people. The Dalai Lama opposes missionary work (including Buddhist) and believes that the best way is to follow one's traditional religion. He opposes the Protestant, Catholic and sectarian missionaries' expansion in Mongolia, which in the last decade are practically buying their new flock. According to the Dalai Lama, the change of faith is not desired, and needed only if a person is aware of its necessity.

He became one of the most "mobile" religious leaders of the world. To date he has visited almost fifty countries, met many of the world's leaders: B. Obama, G. Bush, W. Clinton, A. Merkel, F. Mitterrand, J. Nehru, J. Chirac and others. He visited Russia on seven occasions: in 1979, 1982, 1986, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1996 and 2004. In 1994, the Dalai Lama even gave a speech at the Russian Parliament. But each of his foreign visits is accompanied by Beijing's protests. The aim is to isolate him. However, the opposite effect is produced: the Chinese officials with their neurotic reactions draw additional attention of people around the world to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan issue.

At the time when the Dalai Lama began visiting Russia, Russian–Chinese relations changed again. The confrontation with China was replaced with its uncritical support. Having accepted some of Chinese territorial claims, Russia gave China some of their "lost" lands. Economic cooperation was improved. Chinese goods started to stream into Russia, who became a major supplier of arms to the Chinese Army, and energy cooperation projects started to develop, etc. Then the Russian and Chinese leaderships found common ground in opposing the U.S.-inspired "velvet revolutions".²⁴⁰ According to the 2001 Treaty between Russia and China, both states pledged to support each other in matters relating to national unity and territorial integrity.²⁴¹ In the subsequent joint declarations Russia reiterated that it recognizes Tibet as part of China.

Under such circumstances, the Dalai Lama was denied a Russian visa under far-fetched pretexts, despite the wishes of Russian followers of Buddhism, one of the traditional religions of the country. It is hard not to agree with the fact that "Beijing's claim of monopoly verdict on the status of the Dalai Lama is nothing but the Chinese State interference in life of the world Buddhist community, a violation of religious freedom".²⁴² Moreover, barring other countries from receiving the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan hierarchs is proliferation of Chinese law outside the borders of China.

However, this is consistent with the Constitution of the PRC (1982, Art. 36), which states: "The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state. Religious bodies and

240 Kachins, 2007, p.61–71.

241 The Treaty of Good-Neighbourliness...

242 Kuznetsov, 2006, p.303.

religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination”. Such wording is not accidental. It allows the Communist Party to interfere in any religion. On the other hand, the leaders of any religion that is practiced in China cannot reside abroad, and this includes the leaders of Tibetan Buddhism.

The PRC is one of the few countries where the growth of religiosity raises the concerns of the ruling party. Indeed, more and more Han people practice Buddhism, and many young people can be seen performing rituals in Buddhist monasteries in China. Millions of Chinese tourists have visited Tibet, which has created a demand for Tibetan products on the Chinese market. Books of the Chinese who have visited Tibet have become popular, and many Chinese intellectuals, businessmen and artists are becoming interested in Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism.²⁴³ An increasing number of Han people are attracted to Tibetan Buddhism. Underground circles that study the teachings of the Dalai Lama exist even in Central China.²⁴⁴ Han provide increasing support (this includes financial) to the religion, in particular, through the lamas who travel to Chinese cities.²⁴⁵ Some Chinese businessmen donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to repairs and construction of Tibetan religious structures.²⁴⁶ There are cases where Han people move to live in Tibet not for the sake of business and modernization, but to live among the Tibetan culture. The wave of interest has even reached to the upper echelons of the CPC.

At the same time, Mao Zedong’s unsuccessful “head on” attempt to destroy the religion led the Party leadership to act smarter. While religion had not “withered away”, it was decided that it would be used for internal political purposes, being run like a play – to keep the external rituals, but to arbitrarily change religious life, and even doctrinal positions. Hence the attempts to manage reincarnations of lamas, a ban on “foreign influence”, interference in monasteries’ affairs, “patriotic education”, limiting the number of monks and monasteries, etc. The PRC leadership makes extensive use of contacts controlled by Buddhist organizations to enhance its own international influence.²⁴⁷

The Chinese authorities do not allow the restoration of religion in Tibet, to the extent that was before Mao. This is done against the wishes of the people, but is consistent with the objectives of the Communists. In recent years, Chinese policy in Tibet has escalated to a point where Tibetans are calling it a “second Cultural Revolution”.²⁴⁸

In these circumstances, the proposal made by the Dalai Lama during a visit to Mongolia in 2006 is particularly important. He stressed that Mongolia, Buddhist

243 We went to Buryatia...

244 Odeli, 2005, p.264–265.

245 Fang, 2009.

246 We went to Buryatia...

247 See for details: Kuznetsov, 2006.

248 Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2008, p.84.

republics of Russia and the Buddhist community of the Himalayan regions of India must take responsibility for the further maintenance and development of Buddhism. At present, these regions have many more opportunities to maintain the traditions than the indigenous people of Tibet.²⁴⁹

Autonomy and Demography

“Any nationality that enjoys the right of national regional autonomy (NRA), establishes appropriate management bodies and is the master of its territory, independently addressing issues of regional administration and its national affairs. <...> With the establishment of the NRA in Tibet in 1965, the Tibetans, under the leadership of the Central Government of China, use their rights as the owners of the region and are actively involved in the affairs of administration of state and local affairs, using the rights to self-govern according to the Constitution and other laws of China. <...> Tibetan implementation of the NRA is the inevitable result of the Tibetans choosing to build socialism with Chinese characteristics under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. <...> The theocratic feudal local power headed by the Dalai was long replaced by proper democratic power that was created by the Tibetan people. <...> The Tibetan people... lawfully enjoy their right to manage the affairs of their district and their nation, and are given special support and the protection of the state. We can say that the NRA system in Tibet did not only comprehensively embody the principles of equality, non-discrimination and special protection of smaller ethnic groups, as outlined in the Manifesto of the UN and other international documents concerning the rights of small contingents in the area of their nation and race, their religion and language, but also took full advantage of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Reality has shown that the status of the Tibetan people as masters of their destiny can only be realized and guaranteed by following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and complying with the NRA system, all under the CPC leadership”...²⁵⁰

Indeed, since the 1970s, Tibetans have numerically dominated the TAR Government. During the years of TAR, the position of Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee was occupied only by Tibetans. But life in the Soviet Union has taught us that the Soviet governmental bodies played a decorative role only, and all decisions are made in the bodies of the Communist Party. This was also the case in China. The key post of first secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Regional Committee of the CPC was always occupied by Han. The highest Tibetan officials cannot make decisions without the consent of the “subordinate” Chinese.²⁵¹ During the 2000s, representatives of the Tibetans and other “minority nationalities”

249 Zhironkina, Yu. *The Dalai Lama...*

250 *National regional autonomy...*

251 *Tibet: the Truth*, 1993.

among the chairmen and vice-chairman of SC NCP constitute 87.5%; among the members of the SC NCP 69.2%; among the members of the Standing Committees and members of the CPPCC 90.4% and 89.4%; 78% in staffing contingent of three levels: region, prefecture (city) and county; 70% and 82.3% among staff of the People's Courts and people's offices of public prosecutor of these levels respectively.²⁵² Among the deputies of the NPC, nineteen are from Tibet, including twelve Tibetans. The post of Deputy Chairman of the NPC was held by the 14th Dalai Lama, the 10th Panchen Lama, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, Phapala Geleg Namgyal and Ragdi. Currently, there are Tibetan representatives in the National Committee of the CPPCC. However, the activities of middle managers, as well as those of higher officials, are controlled by the Chinese party officials. Residents of the Tibetan autonomies outside of TAR do not participate in the election of governing bodies in Lhasa.

From 1965 to the end of 1990, the NPC TAR and its Standing Committee have developed a total of 220 sets of laws and regulations that concern politics, economy, culture, education and other aspects of life in Tibet, such as: "Regulations on the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the TAR", "Regulations on Environmental Protection in the TAR", "Regulations on Measures to Manage Foreign climbers on the Mountain Peaks of the TAR", "Regulations on Working with Letters and Complaints of the Population of the TAR", "Decree on Study, Use and Development of the Tibetan Language and Script", "Decree on Maintaining the Unity of the Motherland, Strengthening National Unity and Action Against the Splittist Activities", "Decree on the Strict Suppression of Illegal and Criminal actions, Consisting of Cash Compensation for Human Life", etc.²⁵³

Formally, if the TAR administration considers directives of higher authorities to be contrary to the "real situation", it can inform them about their view and, after an approval is received from above, the implementation of these directives can be amended or even suspended. Local administrations have repeatedly used this right. As a result of this, contemporary Tibetan law does differ from Chinese law, but only in particulars, which do not contradict the general line of the CPC. For example, Beijing rejected the proposal of the 14th Dalai Lama to conduct a referendum in Tibet on its future, despite the plebiscite being implied for the "masters of their region", who use "self-governance" and "chose" socialism themselves.

In the 1990's, the General Secretary of the CPC Jiang Zemin paid special attention to the nationality issue and even dedicated his book to the problem.²⁵⁴ It was directed at not just the special role of ethnic and religious relations, but also to the contributions of all nationalities, regardless of their age, size, and level of socio-economic development to the Chinese state. Perhaps it was a reaction

252 Autonomy in political aspect...

253 Autonomy in political aspect...

254 See Moskalev, 2004.

to the growth of Chinese nationalism in the 1990's. Federalism was once again categorically rejected, autonomy was declared as the best option, its key posts were to be occupied by dedicated Marxists. Jiang Zemin rejected the Dalai Lama's idea of genuine autonomy for the whole of Tibet. "The State provides the areas of national autonomy with their right to self-government, and national autonomous areas shall fully implement the course and policies of the Party and the State".²⁵⁵ That is why the national cadres, who were well represented in all levels of the Government, never managed (and many did not want) to prevent the destruction of traditional culture, the influx of the Han, people's uprisings, and sinicization.

This agrees with the policy of encouraging Han migration. Even Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping have said that the economic development of Tibet needs an influx of skilled workers and managers. Jiang Zemin said the following about the policy:²⁵⁶ "For over forty years, thousands and tens of thousands of cadres, workers, intellectuals, soldiers and commanders of the PLA who were all of the Han nationality, heeded to the call of the Party and went to work and live in areas inhabited by minority nationalities, became one whole with all minorities, turned into infinitely close friends. They devoted their youth and their efforts to development of fraternal nationalities, prosperity and progress of national regions, bringing an enormous contribution into this work". Recently they were joined by businessmen.

Since 1983, the number of immigrants from China to Central Tibet has been growing rapidly. On May 14, 1984, Beijing Radio reported: "A total of about sixty thousand avant-garde construction workers began to arrive in the TAR". During the summer of 1985, another sixty thousand Chinese arrived from Sichuan in the TAR.²⁵⁷ In 1987, Deng Xiaoping reiterated:²⁵⁸ "Tibet cannot develop independently. <...> We have to send a large number of Han people into Tibet so that they can convey scientific and technical know-how, to share their knowledge of scientific management and help Tibet to prepare scientific, technical and managerial cadres that are needed to accelerate its economic development". In 1991, it was announced that experts from all over China came to work on the construction of different objects, and more than three hundred thousand workers were ready to join them. A secret meeting was reported in May of 1993, which authorized the policy of encouraging migration.²⁵⁹

In 2000, a census produced the following figures that describe the population of Tibetans in China.²⁶⁰ A total 5,416,021 people; of them, 2,427,168 in the TAR, 1,269,120 in Sichuan, 1,086,592 in Qinghai, 443,228 in Gansu, 128,432 in

255 In: Moskalev, 2004, p.278.

256 Jian Zemin, 2004, c.212.

257 China's Population, 1988.

258 In: Tibet under the Rule of Communist China, 2001, c. 27.

259 Strangers, 1997.

260 Tibet 2002.

Yunnan, 61,481 in other places. In Sichuan (Kham), 1.5% were Tibetans and 95% were Han; in Qinghai (Kokonor, Amdo) 22.5% and 54% respectively; in Gansu (Amdo) 1.8 and 91.2%; in Yunnan (Kham) 0.3 and 66.6%; in the TAR 92.8 and 6.1%. The highest concentration of Han was on Tibetan lands that were annexed to the provinces of Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan. Migration to Qinghai has also been encouraged. According to the census of 2003, since 1951 the population of the TAR has increased from 1.1409 million to 2.7017 million, the number of Tibetans have increased from 1.2087 million in 1964 to 2.5072 million in 2003, and Tibetans constitute over 92% of the population.²⁶¹ Birth and population growth rates in Tibet were higher than the average for China for many years. The authorities argue that this growth is mainly due to the Tibetans.

However, a significant proportion of the Han are seasonal workers, tourists and the military, which the Chinese statistics do not take into account.²⁶² There is no precise information on the immigration of businessmen. Every day, two full trains and several airplanes arrive in Lhasa. The Gonkar airport near Lhasa delivers more than four hundred thousand people per year. According to Chinese data, the number of passengers arriving in Tibet is growing by 20% every year.²⁶³ With the opening of the railway to Lhasa in 2006, the inflow of Han has increased dramatically. From 1981 to 1987, the number of tourists in Tibet increased from fifteen hundred to forty-three thousand per year;²⁶⁴ from 1998 to 2000 from 95,600 to five hundred thousand,²⁶⁵ and in 2007 this figure had risen to 4.03 million with Han being the majority.^{265a}

On September 2, 2008, the TAR Deputy Party Secretary Zhang Yijiong “acknowledged that there had been many ‘problems’ with management of the ‘floating population’ of Chinese migrant workers in Tibet, particularly since the opening of the Qinghai–Tibet railway”.²⁶⁶ There are no accurate estimates of the inflow of Chinese that arrive by train. According to the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), of approximately 1.5 million people that arrived by the new railroad during the first year, about nine hundred thousand were not Tibetan, but businessmen, workers and merchants that wanted to stay in Tibet for some time.²⁶⁷ Chinese statistics show other numbers: from 1st of July 2006 to May 31, 2007, 659,000 people arrived by railroad, 642,000 also left.²⁶⁸ Therefore, during the ten months of operation, this contributed to only seventeen thousand

261 National regional autonomy...

262 Strangers, 1997.

263 Tibet 2002.

264 Dalai Lama, 1992.

265 Tibet under the Rule of Communist China, 2001.

265a More than 4 million tourists...

266 Chinese migrants...

267 China's Train, 2009, p.60–61.

268 Passenger turnover...

in population increase, which is much smaller than the annual increase of the Tibetan population. However, the number of passengers keeps growing steadily. During the first two years of operation of the railroad, passenger traffic through the Lhasa train station exceeded 2.8 million journeys, which equals the total population of the TAR.²⁶⁹

The Chinese who arrive in Tibet benefit from a housing policy, supplies, education, wages and social security. They get big bonuses to compensate for severe conditions at work. According to Chinese data, about 10% of migrants suffer from chronic mountain sickness. While stimulating the migration of the Chinese, the authorities tightly control the internal migration of Tibetans. Cities need to ensure the development of industry, while the rural areas have to provide migrants with grain. Therefore, in the early 1960's, the system of residence registration (Chinese: hukou) was introduced, aimed at tying Tibetan peasants to the countryside.

According to Tibetan exiles,²⁷⁰ this system involves national discrimination. Chinese workers in Tibet immediately receive a temporary or a permanent hukou that allows them to make use of urban housing, employment and pensions, whereas for Tibetans to get even a temporary hukou, they need to have already found a job in the city. And finding it is difficult, because most incomers are illiterate and do not have the necessary modern skills. According to the state circular on development measures of the western areas in 2001, the free migration of "talented people" is encouraged there, and they are given a number of benefits. For example, if they return back, they continue to have their previous hukou. According to the same source, in 1991–1992, Tibetans owned less than 20% of businesses in the TAR and 75% of shops in Lhasa belonged to the Chinese. The Government announced the creation of education programs and jobs for the Tibetans; in particular, in 2003, ten thousand jobs were created in the cities. However, a significant portion of these places went to Chinese workers.

According to Tibetan exiles, the number of Han tour guides continue to increase, while Tibetans are subjected to government pressure. For example, licenses of sixty guides who studied in Tibetan schools in India were revoked.²⁷¹ In 2003, the TAR committed itself to annually recruit one hundred Chinese guides.²⁷² During the 1980's, very few of the TAR residents could speak English, but now it is not uncommon. Tibetan tour guides are fluent in English. One can find Han guides that speak other languages. However, their knowledge of Tibetan history and culture is far less extensive. The Chinese are not only guides. In some parts of Tibet there are working "folk" troupes that perform Tibetan songs and dances, while not consisting of any Tibetans. The same is known about the Mongols, from Inner

269 During 2 years...

270 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

271 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

272 Interpreting Tibet...

Mongolia. Chinese merchants often dress up as Tibetans in the cities and even sell Tibetan souvenirs, many of which are made in China.

In Tibet, there was no tradition of concentrating people in permanent settlements. Rather, large monasteries functioned as towns. Now the Chinese are creating new cities. In Qinghai (Amdo), the concentration of population was less than three people per square kilometer. They were surrounded by fertile lands, lush pastures and an abundance of minerals.²⁷³ “Hard-working people need to come here, to light fires of new life, full and joyful. Young men and women from Hunan and Zhejiang, Guangdong and Jiangsu, are all coming here. At this moment there are only thousands of them, but there will be millions. They are the ones that have to turn Qinghai from an undeveloped desert into a region that is thriving, sparkling with the lights of electricity, smoking from chimneys of factories, with breezy sea of yellowing corn”.²⁷⁴ This communist dream is now a reality: at this moment, the number of Tibetans in Amdo is half that of the Han. The desert of Karmu (Golmud) in Eastern Amdo, with its few nomadic tribes, was turned into a city with a population of two hundred thousand, of which less than 2% are Tibetans. Many settlements will be built along the railway to Lhasa.²⁷⁵ During the period from 1996 to 2000, the number of towns in Tibet increased from 112 to 140. In 2000, one hundred small towns were built along the highway that connects Lhasa with Amdo, Kham and Nepal. It’s expected that the population of these towns will increase from 440,000 to 780,000 by 2010.

According to Chinese data for 1988, of the seventy-two thousand Han TAR residents, 52.5% lived in Lhasa and its suburbs.²⁷⁶ Many Chinese also reside in Shigatse, Tsethang, Chamdo and other major cities. Tibetan lands of Gyeltang and Tsethang, according to a witness, are being developed by the Chinese, indigenous culture is being destroyed, with corruption and racism thriving.²⁷⁷ In Lhasa, the Tibetan population is outnumbered by that of the migrants at a ratio of 1:2.²⁷⁸ Today, the capital of Tibet seemingly consists of two cities: one Chinese and one Tibetan, with Han gradually moving into the Tibetan part.²⁷⁹ When Lhasa was the sacred center of Tibet, its area was three square kilometers, with a population of thirty thousand people. By 2000, the city expanded to fifty-three square kilometers, by 2005 up to seventy square km with population of 257,400 people, by 2015, the authorities plan to extend it to 272 square km, with a population exceeding three hundred thousand.²⁸⁰ Investments are being poured into the city, and its infrastructure is developing rapidly.

273 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

274 Domogatskikh, 1962, p.11.

275 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

276 Ma Rong, 1993, p.268–277.

277 Jarrah, 2002, p.13–17.

278 Tibetan blasts...

279 Zaezhij. Why the Tibetans rioted...

280 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

The Han live separate from the Tibetans.²⁸¹ This applies to both permanent and temporary residents. They settle largely in the newly built areas. The city is growing rapidly, and its landscape is becoming increasingly more Chinese. Traditions of Tibetan architecture are ignored during the construction of new homes. From 1993 to 1998, an average of thirty-five old buildings were demolished per year in Lhasa.²⁸² As part of implementation of the directives of the 3rd Forum (see above), by the end of 1996, 350 of the six hundred ancient monuments were destroyed in the old part of the capital.²⁸³ Old Tibetan architecture was replaced by concrete blocks of flats with Han inhabitants. In 1998, a moratorium was declared with regard to demolition of old buildings in the center of Lhasa, seventy-six of them were to be renovated instead. But in 2002, the old Tibetan Muslim mosque was demolished, and in its place a new concrete one was built.²⁸⁴ It was fashioned so as to blend Tibetan, Chinese and Central Asian styles.

The strange vertical monument, which can be seen in the square in front of the Potala, symbolizes the “peaceful liberation” of Tibet. Its location, opposite the former Dalai Lama’s residence, was politically motivated and not accidental.²⁸⁵ In the center of Lhasa and just behind the Jokhang, there is a thirteen-storey building overlooking the city. It was built in 2002, and houses the headquarters of the PSB.²⁸⁶ The statue of “Golden yaks” in Lhasa is supposed to be an emblem of the “new Tibet”. But the Tibetans interpret it differently: one yak looks at the Potala and the other at Norbulingka, i.e. the winter and summer residences of the Dalai Lama.

Recently, there was some encouraging news: during 2009–2020, the traditional image of the historic center of Lhasa (an area of 6.47 square km) will be restored.²⁸⁷ The height of new buildings here will not exceed 15 m, and the buildings which clash with the traditional architecture will be torn down.

As is widely known, the PRC conducts family planning. This is justified, given the very high number and density of the population, the vast majority of which are Han. However, the planned childbearing was applied to “minority nationalities” as well. A pair of Han spouses can give birth and raise only one child, while the TAR cadres, residents of cities and towns since 1984, are encouraged to have two children, with a certain interval.²⁸⁸ Principles of voluntariness, with forced abortions being prohibited are declared during family planning. Herdsmen and farmers (about 80% of the population) are being educated about scientific

281 Ma Rong, 1993, p.268–277.

282 Blondeau and Buffetrille, 2008, p.222.

283 Modern politics, 2000, p.16.

284 Tibet 2002.

285 Interpreting Tibet...

286 Tibet 2002.

287 Administration of Lhasa...

288 Briefly on Tibet: population and peoples...



In the new part of Lhasa, 2008 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



Northern, central and eastern streets of Lhasa, 2008 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)

methods of population control, and are being instilled with ideas about optimal childbirth. This propaganda is non-existent in the border areas. “The herdsmen and farmers of Tibetan nationality, who want to undertake planned childbearing, will be provided with safe and reliable services by the Office of Public Health of the TAR Government”. According to Chinese data, in the rural TAR, an average family has four to five children, with seven to eight also being common. Local rules are different for Sichuan and Qinghai, and the policy of birth control is more stringent.²⁸⁹

Here is what Tibetans themselves had to say on the matter. In the 1980’s, thousands of Tibetan women were sterilized, and hundreds of abortions were made, with mobile birth control teams traveling through rural areas.²⁹⁰ The degree of coercion differed, much depended on the location, time and zeal of officials. Kham and Amdo were subject to stringent measures. For example, in the Pari County in 1983, 2,415 women were sterilized, 82% of them were Tibetan. In 1987, in the Kardze District, 764 women were sterilized, of whom 660 were Tibetan. In 1996, in Qinghai, there were mass insertions of contraceptives. Loops were inserted into 2,958 Tibetan women, and the birth rate dropped immediately from 86.13 to 85.73%²⁹¹. According to Tibetan sources,²⁹² in 1996, during a period of twenty-two days, in a single district of Lhasa, 308 Tibetan women were forcibly sterilized (they already had three children). One of them died in hospital three days after the operation. In 1997, 883 cases of forced abortion and sterilization of Tibetan women were recorded in the TAR. In 1984, the Chinese administration announced that only 12% of the TAR population (urban residents) were subject to family planning. In reality, giving birth to a third child resulted in penalties of fifteen hundred to three thousand yuan.²⁹³ The “extra” children were not issued with ration cards, and the family had to work for only 50% of the usual salary, otherwise, their salary was not paid at all for three to six months.

Information about sterilization of Tibetan women came later as well.²⁹⁴ In some places 90% of married women were sterilized.²⁹⁵ Some families hid their “illegal children” in order to avoid fines and other sanctions. Such a child may never go to school, and are completely deprived of social state guarantees. Fines sometimes exceed the annual income of families and go up to five thousand yuan (588 dollars). In October 2001, refugees reported that in Nagchu County women were forced to have abortions at the 7th – 8th month of pregnancy.²⁹⁶ In Drayab County (Chamdo

289 Yan Hao, 2000.

290 Tibet under the Rule of Communist China, 2001.

291 Birth control, 1996, p.2.

292 Strangers, 1997.

293 Tibet under the Rule of Communist China, 2001.

294 Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2001; Chinese Birth Control, 2001, p.5.

295 The status of Tibetan women...

296 Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2001.

Prefecture), fifty to sixty women were sterilized per day, with the target being seven hundred. Those who refused were fined sixteen hundred yuan (188 dollars). Similar information came from Qinghai. For example, one county of the Golok Prefecture required annual sterilization of five women, for which a lottery was conducted among those who had not yet given birth (being over twenty years of age). In some cases, women were forced to pay for their own sterilization and relevant medical care.²⁹⁷

The question of exaggeration can be raised here again. However, the information was received over a long period of time, from different areas and from different people. This points, at least, to mass sterilizations of women for birth control. Obviously, this has had an effect. There is evidence that birth rate and population growth in Tibet over the decade have declined by about half (see table).²⁹⁸ This was accompanied by a rapid increase in the numbers of Hans.

Thus, although there are no exact statistics on arrivals and departures of non-Tibetan people in Tibetan areas, there is no doubt, that authorities' actions contribute to the increase in the number of Chinese in Tibet. This migration is also dangerous because it leads to the marginalization of Tibetans, while rapidly developing sectors of the economy are occupied by the Chinese.

Year	Number of births	Birth rate, %	Natural population growth	Rate of natural growth
1991	51,700	2.35	35,400	1.61
1993	48,800	2.13	32,000	1.4
1995	48,200	2.06	30,500	1.3
1997	44,300	1.84	26,200	1.09
1999	36,000	1.45	19,900	0.8
2001	36,000	1.42	19,300	0.76

Language, Education, and Culture

“Everyone knows that over the past few decades after the peaceful liberation of Tibet and democratic reform... China has provided huge human, financial and material assistance to protect, rescue and spread Tibetan culture, tradition and national identity using legal, economic and administrative methods”.²⁹⁹ Let’s remind ourselves that the Cultural Revolution aimed at elimination of the Tibetan language and culture. Its teaching was forbidden. In the “Collection of Documents on Tibetan Nationalities 1965–1985” that was intended for official use in the TAR, the following conclusion was made: “Numbers of teachers of Tibetan language and persons who are capable

297 Chinese Birth Control, 2001.

298 Tibet Statistical Yearbook 2002 — in: Tibet: the gap...

299 Commentary: Statement of the Dalai Lama...



In a Tibetan school, around 1980

of translating into Tibetan became very small. As a result, it became very difficult to teach this language, and to write official documents in two languages. A large number of Tibetan officials cannot properly read and write in their own language. They cannot put the policies of the Party out into the masses for this reason”.³⁰⁰

After Mao’s death, the Tibetan language was not even used for announcements and advertisements in Lhasa. A Chinese official, who had been there since 1960, could not tell a foreigner what is the Tibetan for “please” and “thank you”, but knew “get out”, “move” and “faster”.³⁰¹

Speaking at the first meeting of the China Institute of Tibetan Studies in 1988, the 10th Panchen Lama said:³⁰² “The country which starting from the 17th century determined its own destiny for thirteen hundred years, after liberation has lost its tongue. We were backward or made mistakes, but we determined our own lives on the highest plateau in the world, using our native language. Our language has retained all of what we have achieved in our culture: Buddhist teachings, arts and crafts, astronomy, astrology, poems, logic, legal and political works. <...> I would like to know whether the Tibetan language will survive or will it be eradicated”. The situation with the Tibetan language outside of the TAR was even worse. For example, of 6,044 Tibetan CPC members and governmental officials in the Kardze Prefecture, only 991 could read and write in Tibetan.³⁰³

People attempted to improve the situation. In 1987 and 1988, in the TAR, “Certain Directives on the Study, Use and Development of Tibetan Language and Script” and detailed “Rules of Using the Certain Directives on the Study, Use

300 In: Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

301 Iliin, 1978.

302 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

303 Modern politics, 2000, p.20.

and Development of Tibetan Language and Script” were promulgated.³⁰⁴ These documents played a crucial role in their conservation. The main initiator of the adoption of the “Rules” at the plenum of the NPC TAR was the 10th Panchen Lama. “Rules” provide for equal use of Tibetan and Chinese languages in the TAR, with Tibetan being proclaimed the main language. All orders and regulations of people’s congresses at all levels of the TAR, as well as official documents sent by the TAR local governments and their departments into grassroots organizations, along with all kinds of public statements, are now published in both Tibetan and Chinese. Tibetan language is used for all litigations and Tibetan procedural documentation. Tibetan and Chinese are used together in inscriptions on the state seals, questionnaires, certificates, envelopes and correspondence, paper for the office records, street and road signs, enterprises, educational facilities, stations and terminals, airports, shops, hotels, restaurants, theater facilities, tourist attractions, sports facilities and libraries. A number of newspapers and books are published in the Tibetan language.

According to Xinhua,³⁰⁵ there appear more and more mobile phones and computers with Tibetan graphics, office software and browsers that are in Tibetan, and an online Tibetan–Chinese–English dictionary was created. Work on software in Tibetan is backed by the Ministry of Information of China; to date, these projects have already been completed.

However, after arriving in Tibet, one can also see a different picture. Army units and many businesses have signs purely in Chinese, a number of agencies also do not duplicate their messages in Tibetan; most television and radio are broadcasted only in Chinese.³⁰⁶ Tibetan TV shows are apparently, subject to more censure than the new Chinese channels.³⁰⁷ The same applies to newspapers and magazines.

A modern brewery in Lhasa has all signs, advertisements and instructions only in Chinese, despite its workforce being mostly Tibetan; Tibetan language, according to the brewery’s authorities, is not needed.³⁰⁸ Internet cafes’ software is always in Chinese and English. There are reports that Tibetans have to submit their most important documents only in Chinese. Neologisms are mostly borrowed from the Chinese, too, which contributes to linguistic assimilation.³⁰⁹ One scientist from Oxford University has studied switching between Chinese and Tibetan words, depending on the context.³¹⁰ It was found that 30–40% of vocabulary that is used by Lhasa’s inhabitants is borrowed from Chinese. The

304 China: Tibet – facts and figures 2006...

305 Development of Tibetan language...

306 Zaezhij. Why the Tibetans rioted...

307 Shakya, Ts. Tibetan questions...

308 Merinov, 2003.

309 Lomanov, A. Buddha from the Golden Urn...

310 See Shakya, Ts. Tibetan questions...

standard of language is decreasing, because the language is only being learnt at a high level by only a few Tibetans.

The teaching of Tibetan and Chinese languages is mandatory in school. Beginning in 1985, Tibetan classes and schools were established in twenty-one provinces and the city; this was funded by the Government of China. Approximately ten thousand Tibetans with high school diplomas and college degrees were prepared.³¹¹ By the end of 2003, in the TAR, there were 1,011 schools of various levels of training and 2,020 education facilities. The schools were attended by 453,400 people, 91.8% of children attended school, and the illiteracy rate dropped to 30%. Nevertheless, according to the UN, in 2005, 55% of Tibetans were illiterate, whereas in each of the thirty-one provinces of China illiterate people there were less than 20%.³¹²

As of 2008, in Tibet, there were 15,523 teachers conducting classes in two languages; 10,927 teachers specifically teach the Tibetan language. As many as 181 textbooks, 122 manuals and sixteen training programs in sixteen disciplines that span from primary to secondary school, were compiled and translated into the Tibetan language.³¹³ However, this begs the question: if the education in Tibet is so good, then why is there an unrelenting flow of children whose parents prefer to illegally send them to Tibetan schools in India? In order to understand the problem, it is useful to look, so to speak, at the reverse side of the official figures.

Chinese flags on the high flagpoles are conspicuously present in every schoolyard in Tibet. According to observations of Russian journalists, all subjects in schools are taught in Chinese, even if Chinese students are in a minority.³¹⁴ Students have to pay for their chairs, desks, textbooks, as well as all things that they accidentally break at school. They are taught that Buddhist practice is a “backward behaviour”, and Tibetan history is a minor component of Chinese history. In December 2008, the introduction of the “ethnic integrity” school subject was announced.³¹⁵ The students will now be able “to recognize the advantages of Chinese Government and the ethnic policies of the Communist Party” and oppose “splittism” while standing on “the Marxist view on the ethnic issue”. It is worth mentioning, that in the early 20th century, the famous Russian traveler V.K. Arseniev noted that the Chinese migrants were at their most dangerous in the Maritime Region of the Russian Far East, when they built their schools, taught aboriginal people hieroglyphs, Chinese ethics, history, etc., which means sinicization.³¹⁶

Refugee children from Tibet reported on punishments that were imposed on them by the Chinese authorities: they were forced to clean the irrigation canals,

311 National regional autonomy...

312 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

313 The White Book: in the Tibetan education system...

314 Lomanov, A. Buddha from the Golden Urn...

315 Chinese children are taught...

316 Arseniev, 2004.

wash teachers' clothes and clean the industrial areas.³¹⁷ Students in junior classes (6–12 years) were subjected to beatings with rubber batons, whips, belts, electrical cables, chairs' legs, bamboo sticks, etc. Many people do not like these excesses and sinicization that takes place in schools.

However, sinicization of education is not necessarily a policy of the state. Many parents themselves prefer to give their children a Chinese education, because it opens up more opportunities in the future.³¹⁸ For example, about three thousand high school graduates enter universities in China. So-called “inner schools” have appeared, which recruit children in Tibet and send them to China, for example, to Liaoning and Fujian. Meanwhile, in 2008, twenty-five hundred people entered Lhasa University and fifteen hundred thousand graduated from it.³¹⁹ Foreigners also come to study in Tibet, learn the Tibetan language and culture, some of them even write dissertations. Thus, the Tibetan language has not disappeared yet.

The authorities are taking measures to preserve folk art, epos, theater, etc. In 2000, a Tibetan library was opened; there are more than 160 amateur and theater troupes, art centers, etc. Particular attention is paid to the epic of King Gesar, the most important heroic epic in Tibet. In 1979, the TAR Government established a special body that oversees the preservation and study of this work.³²⁰ Series of



Classics of Marxism-Leninism at a store in Shigatse, 2008 (Photo: S.L. Kuzmin)

317 Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2001.

318 Shakya, Ts. Tibetan questions...

319 2.5 thousand students...

320 National regional autonomy...



Modern shops in Lhasa, 2008 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)

encyclopedic collections of folklore were published. Since the 1980's, more than forty religious festivals have been restored³²¹. Other holidays that are celebrated in China and around the world were added to the traditional ones (Losar, Saga Dawa, etc.).

Sport, both traditional and modern, is being developed. There are many exhibitions and museums, for example, in Lhasa and Shigatse. Their exhibits describe the history of Tibet, and tell about the "cruel feudal serf-owning" system. The newly built Dzong in Gyantse has a museum dedicated to the fight against the British aggressors and, of course, the feudal system. An eyewitness who visited the museum in 1999, laughed at its numerous historical inaccuracies and fraud.³²²

At the same time, mass media has a strong impact on the Tibetans. It promotes a Chinese version of Western mass culture. Advertising, billboards, glossy magazines, movies, television and radio broadcasts, video and audio recordings, shows, discos, bars and other attributes of modernization have literally flooded the cities and penetrate into the countryside. People are paying increasingly more attention to Chinese shows. The destruction of traditional culture is clearly seen in cities. Alcoholism, crime, divorce rates, domestic violence and prostitution are all on the increase there. According to official statistics, in 2000, in Lhasa, the divorce

321 The White Book: China legally...

322 Powers, 2004, p.93.

rate was 20%, which was higher than anywhere else in China.³²³ The main reasons are husbands' alcoholism and adultery. Prostitution is thriving in Tibet, mainly in karaoke bars, discotheques and similar establishments, which proliferated during the economic reform. In 1990, on the 18 main streets of Lhasa, there were 658 brothels; in Tsethang sixty; in the mid 1990's, Chamdo had fifteen such establishments, and Dromo had four.³²⁴ The trend is driven by an influx of male Han workers and an abundance of soldiers – a lot of prostitutes migrate from China to serve them. They are mainly concentrated in the areas of government institutions, hospitals, schools and shopping areas, where most of the shops are owned by the Chinese. Some Chinese prostitutes are even found in holy places, for example, on Bharkhor Street in Lhasa.³²⁵ Prostitution is also on the increase among Tibetan women, and in the rural areas. Many of them choose this way of life to save their family from poverty. The authorities' struggle with prostitution is largely confined to closure of a few brothels.

“In China, the Tibetan national specificities and traditional culture are treated with great respect, and measures are taken for their protection, promotion and development. As the modernization gathers pace, they are injected with new, richer content that is infused with the spirit of the era”.³²⁶ But what is this spirit of the era like? Does it simply turn the traditional lifestyle into a way of attracting tourists and improving the image of the state? After all, material values are always given priority, and progress in their sphere requires cadres, including local ones. Is this the reason why education was improving in recent years in Tibet? This area still has insoluble contradiction: the national unity, stability and security require assimilation and a single language, but the recognition of the fact that the country is multinational requires a formal recognition of non-Han cultures.³²⁷

Condition of the Natural Environment

The Government of the TAR has declared a strategy for harmonious sustainable development and has planned measures for the protection of the environment.³²⁸ A framework for environmental protection and pollution control has been established, and great attention is being paid to eco-friendly construction. The TAR has eighteen natural preserves at national and prefecture levels. The fragile ecological balance of highlands, natural environment around cities and villages are mostly preserved. In Tibet, the degree of preservation of ecosystems is the highest in China and, undoubtedly,

323 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

324 Political veteran, 1998, p.2.

325 Prostitution, 1995, p.19, 21.

326 National regional autonomy...

327 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

328 National regional autonomy...

is also one of the highest in the world. In recent years, at the regional level, a series of laws and regulations were issued regarding the protection of forests, wild animals, plants, sustainable agriculture, protection of especially important historical and tourist sites, geological sites and landscapes, and appropriate supervisory bodies were established.³²⁹ The TAR Government decided to create seven nature reserves, and, in 1993 another six with a total area of 325,000 square km.

The TAR still has large numbers of animals that have become rare elsewhere. However, one can no longer encounter huge herds of wild yaks, kyangs and other



Chinese trucks loaded with timber from Tibet.

large mammals. They are protected in the natural reserves. Tibetans selflessly help the Government to protect their nature. For example, local residents have created their own patrols in the TAR nature reserves, inhabited by the chiru antelope, so as to implement Chinese laws against poachers, even at a cost of their own lives.³³⁰ Some Tibetans were killed by outside poachers during their patrol. A monument was devoted to one of these brave rangers.

Nevertheless, during the years of Chinese rule, Tibet suffered significant environmental damage. In 1949, Tibet's ancient forests covered 221,800 square km, while, in 1985, only 134,000 square km remained.³³¹ Timber was taken from the mountains by truck or by simple skidding, and then floated down the

³²⁹ Ecological construction...

³³⁰ Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

³³¹ Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

rivers to China. This led to large-scale deforestation because new trees were not planted.³³² Deforestation, soil erosion and siltation of rivers took place. In 1987, the 10th Panchen Lama witnessed this in Kham:³³³ “During my visit to Kham last year I noticed a great deal of devastation caused by large-scale and indiscriminate deforestation”. The consequence of deforestation has been a big flood in Sichuan in 1981. After that disaster, the authorities seemed to have become concerned about conservation. Wood logging became strictly regulated, forest rehabilitation works were launched. Now, seeds of trees are sown annually on 140 hectares of mountain slopes, the rate of forestation exceeds tree-felling.³³⁴ This undoubtedly useful activity has a negative side: farmers and nomads have to plant fast-growing species of trees, regardless of the long-term impact on their lives.³³⁵

Cutting quota is limited to 150,000 cubic meters per year.³³⁶ The State encourages the substitution of firewood by other energy sources such as solar heaters. Cheap heaters of this type are now widely used by the population of the TAR. Considerable funds are allocated to combat erosion and desertification. Enterprises are introducing measures to reduce water pollution.

The Holy Mountain Kailash is now a popular tourist attraction. At its foot, hotels, restaurants and roads have been built.³³⁷ In the past, pilgrims removed all the rubbish from the mountain, but now it is becoming increasingly clogged with trash. In 2008, the authorities decided to limit the number of tourists wishing to climb Everest from the Tibetan side, as in 2007 such climbers left 120 tons of rubbish behind.³³⁸ One of the main benefits of tourism is that it economically justifies preservation of areas that might not have been otherwise protected.

A significant part (68.1%) of Tibet is occupied by grassland ecosystems, which can be used for grazing or ploughing. In order to feed the growing Chinese population in Tibet, the authorities turned the pastures into cultivated fields.³³⁹ Consequently, their soil dried up and became unusable for both pasture and cultivation, vast grasslands in Amdo were turned into desert. Desertification is expanding at a rate of sixty-seven thousand hectares per year.³⁴⁰ According to S. Zou of the Beijing University, by 1996 20.47 million hectares in Tibet were subject to desertification, another 1.36 million hectares were under its threat. In addition to anthropogenic factors, climate change (particularly global warming) also contributes to degradation of ecosystems.

332 International Commission of Jurists Report on Tibet 1997.

333 His Holiness the Panchen Lama...

334 Who has sovereignty over Tibet...

335 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

336 Ecological improvement...

337 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

338 Radio of Russia, 23.06.2008.

339 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

340 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

The authorities are introducing land-reclamation, protection of water sources, rotation and creation of artificial pastures, and pest control, improving the welfare of herdsmen, making them abandon their nomadic ways of life.³⁴¹ However, rotation is a commonly used method in livestock breeding, and land-reclamation, pest management and forcing nomads into a settled way of life bring only temporary improvements. Following the disappearance of traditional culture and the intensification of farming, the destruction of ecosystems is accelerating. In recent years, a program for restoring meadows was implemented: some lands were removed from circulation, farmers and nomads were being resettled, and compensation was paid for the losses. However, as far as ecology is concerned, it would be more reasonable to preserve the traditional way of life and resource usage, than to organize an “ecological migration”.

Industrial development and militarization inflict particularly severe harm to the environment. In Qinghai, the environment is strongly affected by the mining, oil and gas industries, as well as intensive agriculture.³⁴² The Kokonor Lake (Chinese: Qinghai) has shrunk due to over-irrigation, and approximately 85% of the rivers flowing into it have dried up.³⁴³ Borax and salt are being extracted through open-pit mines on the surface of dried up lakes, and poorly organized gold-mining is also being run.

According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), of the ten rivers in the world that are in the worst condition, four are in Tibet: Drichu, Gyalmo Ngulchu, Tsachu and Senge Khabab.³⁴⁴ The main threats are the construction of dams, pollution, over-fishing and climate change. Stream flow, rainfall and water supplies in China are decreasing. An important contribution to this crisis was made by the Chinese, who destroyed forests in Tibet. And now, China is solving their problems with water at the expense of Tibet.

Providing rural residents with clean water suitable for drinking is important. Further downstream, the rivers of Tibet become the greatest rivers in Asia: the Indus, Brahmaputra, Mekong, Yangtze, the Yellow River, etc. They should benefit the peoples of different countries, not just the Chinese. The construction of hydropower stations in the TAR and Qinghai has led to the flooding of large areas, and to the shallowing of rivers further downstream. At the same time, the “Great Western waterway” is being planned to move water to the north-east.³⁴⁵ If it is implemented, there will be major negative consequences for the environment, mass migration of Tibetans, and flooding of a number of sacred sites. This project has aroused opposition both in China and abroad.

341 Ecological improvement...

342 International Commission...

343 Tibet 2002.

344 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

345 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

In Tibet, many nuclear warheads have been stationed, and the plateau contaminated by an unknown quantity of radioactive waste.³⁴⁶ A large repository for such wastes is situated in Neibei near Kokonor. Uranium is mined in some places. Major mines are located in Thevo (Kanlho Prefecture). As a consequence of their contamination, many Tibetans and their animals have died from an unknown illness, and many children have been born with deformities. Uranium mines are also situated in the Tsaidam basin, on the Yamdrok Tso Lake and in Damshung. Information is scarce, because these places are guarded by the military. A number of deposits of rare-earth elements were found, but the local Tibetan population is excluded from discussions about excavation and development plans.

Refugees disclose the facts of the destruction of nature, and the PRC authorities accuse them of “camouflaging themselves with pretensions of concern about environmental protection in Tibet, when they really want nothing more than to hamper the social progress and modernization of Tibet, and to prepare public opinion for their political aim of restoring the backward feudal serfdom in Tibet and splitting the Chinese nation”.³⁴⁷ However, the cause of the relative prosperity of Tibetan nature is rooted in the traditional system of its use, which allowed the Tibetans to live in harmony with nature for many centuries. These traditions have been an integral part of the feudal-theocratic order. Undoubtedly, as far as nature conservation goes, this system was better than socialism or capitalism.

The nature of Tibet requires extensive use of land, low population and minimum load on the ecosystem. Government measures, aimed to protect its nature, correspond to Western methodology that was developed for intensive economics and environmental crisis. In Tibet there is no such crisis, and economic methods are not intensive. Whether it will be within or separate from China, but the only way to sustain development in Tibet is to give its people an opportunity to implement the model of development, which is in better agreement with their traditions and needs. In particular, it is more rational to allow the nomads their habitual way of life and nature usage, than to force them into a sedentary way of life and organized “ecological migration”. Tibet should revert to the traditional use of land, where the population is scattered along the plateau, land use is also dispersed, mobile, and harmonized within the natural limits.³⁴⁸ The Dalai Lama’s proposal to declare the region to be the territory of Ahimsa seems to be optimal.

Economy

About 80% of Tibetans live in rural areas. Agriculture plays a crucial role in their economy. The Cultural Revolution has left a bitter legacy there. In 1977, the

346 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

347 Ecological improvement...

348 Tibet: a human Development, 2007.

ration of a Tibetan consisted of 90–120 kg of barley. Tibet had to import about thirty thousand tons of grain annually.³⁴⁹ As was noted by the Chinese press, uncompensated diversion of labor and livestock continued to take place. In some counties, there were bans against crafts, private farming was strictly regulated, etc. The Central Government issued regulations and conducted inspections in order to improve the situation. But these measures resulted in a partial effect at best. The scarcity of grain was solved by deciding to plough mass pastures. The measures taken in Tibet were part of national initiatives, and were conducted by directives from the central authorities. More than half of the TAR workforce was allocated the task of digging wells and canals, and creating irrigation installations. This was done according to the principle: “Irrigate wherever there is little water, plough virgin soil wherever there is lack of cultivated fields”.³⁵⁰

In 1979, the Government abandoned the policy of “Take for the main production of grain”, and widespread assistance to impoverished communes was launched. In March 1979, the Committee of the CPC TAR held a plenary meeting, which was convened for executing the directives issued by the 3rd plenum of the CPC Central Committee (December 1978). The main slogan was “The implementation of the four modernizations must be based on the reality of Tibet”.³⁵¹ An emphasis was made on diversified agriculture, as well as not ignoring livestock breeding. Food taxation was banned. In 1980, the deputy chairman of the TAR Government admitted that 30% of communes had people who were worse off than in the mid 1960’s, while another 30% continued to have the same level of income; 150,000 people in the TAR continued to live in poverty. According to another Chinese estimate, 300,000 – 350,000 people lived in poverty during those years. That is, twenty years after the abolishment of the feudal system, over a third of Tibetans were living in poverty. This category included only those who could not live without governmental assistance. So, in reality the poor were more numerous still.

The policy on agriculture often changed: with “land cultivation being priority number one” until 1979; to engage in land cultivation and/or stock raising, depending on conditions (1979–1987); to combine both, but give priority to stock raising (1984). On May 1, 1984 the Government of the TAR announced several measures that were meant to liberalize agriculture: to extend the exemption of peasants from farming and livestock taxes until 1990; to guarantee their right to economic independence; to extend the period of land contracts (30–50 years); to stop forcing farmers into particular agricultural activities and meeting targets that were imposed by central authorities.³⁵² Farming was still not fully privatized, with

349 Bogoslovsky, 1996.

350 Renmin Ribao, 25.01.1977 — in Bogoslovsky, 1996, p.8.

351 Bogoslovsky, 1996.

352 Bogoslovsky, 1996.

only the means of production becoming private, while land and pastures continued to belong to “society”, i.e. the state.

The distribution of small allotments of grassland among families severely reduced the mobility of livestock, thus creating the potential for violations of pasture laws.³⁵³ This forced nomads to start living in settlements, which limited their flexibility and mobility, and led to the concentration of herds in limited areas and subsequent quick overgrazing.

In August 1984, Secretary of the CPC Central Committee and deputy chairman of the State Council stated that the main emphasis should be placed on the development of private farms and the market economy. During its move towards the latter, animal husbandry in Tibet became increasingly commercialized.³⁵⁴ Some nomads were given pastures with access to water, others had no access. The division of pastures and fencing during the privatization process create conflicts. In 1997–1999, at least twenty-seven Tibetans were killed in Gansu and Qinghai. Most communities of Tibetan shepherds used pastures in one of the following ways: as communes with the legal rights that were given to “administrative villages”; in the form of governmental units that were smaller “natural villages”; as groups that did not have official contracts. Such groups maintain their autonomy and live by their own rules that include collective grazing and patrolling the borders of pastures. Recently, an opportunity for different strategies was being developed for both individual and collective use of land.

In recent years, some of the meadows have been withdrawn from use to enable them to recover. In such cases, farmers and nomads are given compensation in the form of money and/or grain for several years in advance, during which they have to find another job (although this is not always possible).³⁵⁵ Many families have been resettled to other areas. Small settlements are being created in the suburbs, where subsidized nomads live for several years. After the restoration of pastures, they are allowed to return.³⁵⁶ “Ecological migration” has become common in Qinghai and Sichuan.

Another challenge is that the practice of revenge and civil strife remains in some places, although the feudal system has long been replaced by the Communist one. Nomads continue to seek the help of higher-ranking lamas as mediators during disagreements.³⁵⁷ For example, the lands of Golok nomads have very few Han (9,000, with 126,000 Tibetans).³⁵⁸ The basis of their socio-political structure is still that of *rukor* (a nomad camp of thirty-five families). If one family does not have

353 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

354 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

355 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

356 Nikolsky, V. Tibetaqn Plateau...

357 Pirie, F. Segmentation...

358 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

enough manpower to watch over its livestock, and the opposite is the case in another family, the two families unite. The strength as well as weakness of the Goloks is their loyalty to their own clan and contempt for others. But now their social structure is under threat. During 1970–1980, greater production was encouraged in the arid Golok Prefecture. The livestock population increased. Naturally, this resulted in a major problem with the destruction of pastures from overgrazing.³⁵⁹ Then, the reduction of livestock grazing and increased fencing was encouraged. Now, in the prefectures Golok (in Amdo) and Ngaba (in Sichuan), local people lead an idle life in their numerous identical houses, after having been deprived of their pastures for the sake of nature conservation.³⁶⁰ In the Golok and Yushu prefectures, nomads are not allowed to use 40% of the meadows, and herd size was ordered to be reduced by a factor of two on the remaining 38% of pastures. A centuries-old system of grasslands management was replaced by an ineffective modern counterpart. New laws of the PRC impoverish Goloks because the authorities deny them their own decision-making on animal husbandry.

In the 1990's, the development of the central part of the Tsangpo and Nagchu River Basin began. This is where the bulk of the population of the TAR resides, and it is also the main agricultural area.³⁶¹ The irrigation program has spanned 593,000 hectares. Grain gathering in Tibet has increased from 182.9 tons in 1959 to 938.6 tons in 2007; harvesting grain from one *mu* (15 mu = 1 hectare) has increased by 355 kg on average.³⁶² Thus, for the most part, the TAR has achieved self-sufficiency in terms of food production.

Despite all the difficulties, the transition from collective to private farming has had positive results. In Tibet, there is no more hunger; the living standards are gradually improving. In 2006, the private sector share of agriculture tax revenues surpassed that of the TAR public and collective ownership for the first time.³⁶³ Livestock became the household's property. However, more and more Tibetan farmers rent their land to Chinese immigrants, who grow vegetables for the growing Chinese urban population. Many farmers have been resettled by the authorities to transfer their ancestral lands to Han businesses.

Recently, the annual PRC subsidies in Tibet exceeded 1.2 billion yuan.³⁶⁴ In the mid-2000's, there were more than 260 state enterprises that employed fifty-one thousand workers.³⁶⁵ Private enterprises (mostly Han) are more numerous still. The mineral resource industry, woodworking, light industry, the food and

359 Horlemann, B. Modernization efforts...

360 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

361 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

362 Changes in the welfare...

363 The GDP growth...

364 Tibetan issue...

365 For information about Tibet...

construction industries are all being developed. New mines are being built. According to the Office of Statistics of the TAR, in 2007, the gross domestic product reached 34.22 billion yuan, while in 1959, it was only 174 million.³⁶⁶ There are plans to complete the modernization of the TAR, turn it into a major tourist area and nature reserve, a place of manufacture of Tibetan medicines, and to make it the largest base of the production and processing of rare and precious metals in the south-west China.

Energy, communications and transportation infra-structures are developing rapidly. By 2008, more than five hundred power plants were built and the “electrified” population reached a total of 1.85 million people, or 66% of the TAR.³⁶⁷ Power stations are being built without consulting people. For example, the Chinese have stated that construction of a hydroelectric station on the Yamdrok Tso lake will bring great benefits to Tibetans. The Tibetans and their leaders, the 10th Panchen Lama and Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, have resisted and delayed construction for several years, as the project has negatively affected the environment and the religious feelings of the people. But the project did still go ahead. In the 1990’s, fifteen hundred PLA soldiers were guarding the construction site and did not allow any civilians near it. Many Tibetans were resettled. In 2007, there were reports of Tibetan protestors being punished, who were protesting against the industrial use of sacred mountains in the Kardze Prefecture.³⁶⁸

From August 1995 to November 1996, the Gonkar Airport was built near Lhasa; in September 1994, the Pomda Airport appeared in Chamdo; in July 2006, the Nyingtri Airport was built on the Indian and Burmese border.³⁶⁹ Construction of several more airports are planned. Ten domestic flights between Tibet and China and one international (connecting Kathmandu) are operating.

Since the “liberation” of Tibet, highways are being continuously built. Paid work has transformed into “voluntary”. In the mid 1980’s, according to the Tibetan refugees from Ü-Tsang and Kham, their entire families were occupied with building roads. They were not paid any money, even their food had to be brought from home. A refusal to do “liberated” work warranted an arrest. Since 1997, the Drayab County authorities have used the slogan of “Raise the poor and backward Tibetans to prosperity” as pretext for forced labor.³⁷⁰ All local Tibetans aged from eighteen to sixty years took part. Children of twelve to sixteen years had to help their parents. The work was supervised by PSB officers. The work was very demanding: building roads, houses, felling trees, with working hours spanning from eight to eighteen hours (and more), with a fifteen-minute break for lunch. During the first six

366 Tibet: in the years since the implementation...

367 Changes in the welfare...

368 Fifth International Conference, 2008, p.184.

369 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

370 Compulsory unpaid labour...

months, workers were given a meager salary, and then even that was stopped. The peasants were diverted from farms for periods of approximately six months. There was no fixed schedule: they could have been picked up at any time, regardless of the season. Those who could not work had to pay a fine of three hundred yuan per month. This was too much for the locals. As a result, they had to work, or to sell their belongings that ranged from decorations to food. Some went to Lhasa to beg, but the PSB brought them back. Tibetans stressed that all this construction was needed by the Chinese only.

By 2000, the length of roads in Tibet exceeded 22,000 km, and by 2008, 48,600 km. Asphalt cover now is of very high quality. Roads run through most of the villages in the region, but the public transport system is poor. Instead, people use horses, mules, yaks, donkeys and sheep. Trucks and mini-tractors have become common too.

One of the first projects of the Government of China was the railway that connected the central regions with Lhasa. In July 2006, it finally reached the Tibetan capital. This railroad, built in the area of glaciers and permafrost, is a great achievement of Chinese engineering. This is the highest railway in the world: 960 km of it is at more than 4,000 m above sea level, the highest point is at 5,072 m, more than 550 km of tracks were laid in the permafrost zone. However, its use would have been impossible without the diesel locomotives of the American firm General Electric.³⁷¹ Passenger cars are equipped with oxygen masks, double-glazing protects against ultraviolet radiation. Now, one can get to Lhasa by a direct train from Beijing. Eight passenger and nine freight trains operate on a daily basis between Xining and Lhasa. On September 28, 2007, construction of the transport terminal began in the vicinity of Nagchu, which will become an important transit point.³⁷²

In 2002, according to Xinhua, 81.7% of the TAR population was able to listen to the radio and 80.1% could watch television. To date, this should be closer to 100%. In 2002, the PRC decided to create the "Digital Tibet" online network so as to break the Western monopoly on the dissemination of information about Tibet.³⁷³ The number of Chinese Internet sites is increasing. Fiber optic cables from Lhasa to Shigatse, Nyingchi, Chamdo and other places have already been laid. In 2002, TV and radio broadcasting from China to Tibet was expanded, and broadcasting in Tibetan increased from nine to seventeen hours per day.

Thus, the remoteness and isolation of Tibet has ceased to be an obstacle to its development by China. In recent years, the private sector has begun to thrive in Tibet's economy, and investments have continued to grow. Mostly it concerns

371 China's Train, 2009, p.12.

372 Construction of the logistics centre...

373 Tibet 2002.

Chinese businessmen, who control most of the economy, as they are more experienced and have access to the market in China itself. The economic policy of the last two decades was aimed at the integration of Tibet into China.

Militarization

Large contingents of the PLA entered Tibet immediately after the “peaceful liberation”. In some areas the local population was fully replaced by Chinese military units.³⁷⁴ Until 1986, China had eleven military districts, Tibet was under the control of three of them.³⁷⁵ In 1986, the number of districts was reduced to seven, and Tibet became controlled by two: the South-east, with headquarters in Chengdu; and the Lanzhou, with headquarters in Lanzhou. The first district included the



A new ad hoc military base in Kardze (2009 TibetInfoNet / permission of the photographer)

TAR, Kardze, Ngaba, Dechen and Mili. The second included Qinghai, Kanlho and Pari. The Tibetan Government in exile has estimated that in 1990, about five hundred thousand Chinese soldiers and officers were present in the Greater Tibet (a more conservative estimate is 250,000). Chinese officials state that the TAR had 40,394 PLA military staff. In the 1990's, the TAR had six military sub-districts. They had two independent infantry divisions, six border defence regiments, five independent border defence battalions, three artillery regiments, three construction regiments, one main signal station and two signal regiments,

374 Rakhimov, 1968.

375 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

three transport regiments and three independent transport battalions, four air force bases, two radar regiments, two divisions and a regiment of paramilitary forces, one independent division and six independent regiments of People's Armed Police. There were also twelve units known as the "second artillery (or missile) division". Many air bases were built.

The largest military bases in Amdo are located in Xining, Chabcha and Karmu (Chinese: Golmud). All three of these places have their own air base.³⁷⁶ The Chinese military build-up in Kham and Ngaba areas is concentrated on Lithang, Kardze, Tawu, Dartsedo, etc, in Kham, and Barkham in Ngaba. However, there are radar stations and dormant airstrips at various strategic locations in Kham.

China is believed to have nuclear manufacturing centres at Dhashu (Chinese: Haiyan) which is in the Haibei Prefecture and Tongkhor (Chinese: Huangyuan) in Amdo. The first Chinese enterprise of developing and building nuclear weapons in Dhashu was established in early 1960s.³⁷⁷ According to the "Nuclear Tibet" report that was prepared by the International Campaign for Tibet (Washington) this facility is located near the Kokonor Lake. It is known as the Northwest Nuclear Weapons Research and Design Academy, or the "9th Academy". It was responsible for designing all of China's nuclear bombs through the mid-1970s. Missile bases are located to the south of Kokonor and north-west of Nagchuka. According to the report above, the first nuclear weapons were delivered to the Tibetan plateau in 1971 and installed in the Tsaidam basin. Today, some of Chinese nuclear warheads are located in Tibet.

In 2007, it was announced that the base in Tsochang would be opening to tourists, where the first Chinese atomic bombs were produced.³⁷⁸ "The base will become one of the key tourist attractions, will become a platform for education and support of the patriotic spirit of the people of China", said Zuo Xumin, the representative of the county government.

In 1986, it became clear that the Chinese had built a helicopter landing strip in the north-eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, because they considered it to be a part of China. India reacted quickly by sending troops. After a week of tension, both troops were brought to within their recognized borders. It was agreed that the disputed territory would have no soldiers. In January 2006, the PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed his displeasure with the fact that the Prime Minister of India visited that state.³⁷⁹ Actually, the Chinese troops have entered into parts of this state before, using an "argument" that wherever there were no Indians, the territory belonged to China and not to India.³⁸⁰ It is worth noting that, in 1956, the

376 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

377 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

378 China opens a base...

379 India rejects all Chinese claims...

380 Krishnatry, 2005, p.155.

local residents who learned about Chinese claims to their land, stated their desire to live under the rule of India and not China. Provocations were not limited to Arunachal Pradesh. Small Chinese detachments occasionally violate the northern border of India in all of its sectors: western (Ladakh), middle (Uttarkand and Himachal) and eastern (Sikkim).³⁸¹ This way, Beijing is not only trying to “recover” the foreign territory, but is also putting pressure on New Delhi, to prevent India from changing its policy on Tibet.

Thus, the Beijing leadership has transformed the formerly peaceful state between China, Nepal, Bhutan and India into a militarized zone and a military range. This was one of the goals of “peaceful liberation”. Those who have visited the TAR note that such an accumulation of troops and weapons has not been seen anywhere else. This is understandable, as Tibet occupies an important strategic position on the border of Central and South Asia, where China has its “lost” territories.

Living Standards and Health Care

Compared with Mao’s period, the average life of Tibetans has risen. The Government of China provides material support to the lone elderly, the poor and the unemployed, providing grain, clothing, tents and tools. More than twenty-three hundred people have received monetary compensation for being convicted on false charges.³⁸² The issue with food and clothing has been largely resolved as well. In 1978, in the cities and villages, the per capita income amounted to 565 yuan; in 1986 it exceeded one thousand yuan; and in 2007 it reached 1,131 yuan. Over the past five years, the average annual growth per capita of income of TAR farmers and herdsmen has been kept at 19.25%.³⁸³ The population’s savings are growing in volume, with savings deposits having reached 16.01 billion yuan.

These figures are difficult to discuss without taking into account other factors such as prices, inflation, structure of revenues, expenditures, etc. For example, according to the Tibet Bureau of Statistics, the cost of living in rural areas of the TAR increased by 97% during the period from 1992 to 2001, while the income of the population has risen by only 69%.³⁸⁴ Thus, actual purchasing power has declined. The Government of China has made statements about improving standards of living even at a time of famine. Grants that were allocated to the TAR in the 1980s were largely used for the maintenance of Chinese personnel and served as “emergency funds” for the Chinese people that were living mainly in urban areas.³⁸⁵ From the late 1970’s to early 1980’s, the average subsidy for urban

381 Another Chinese “incursion”...

382 Shakya, 1999.

383 Changes in the welfare...

384 Tibet 2002.

385 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

residents was \$128, while rural residents received only \$4.50. Subsidies were mainly concerned products that were consumed by the Chinese. In 2007, a subsistence level was introduced to the TAR. It was announced that it covered all the peasants and herdsmen with an annual income below eight hundred yuan, 230,000 people receive assistance, and all residents of urban and rural areas of Tibet are covered by health insurance.³⁸⁶ But poverty has still not disappeared. Tibetan cities have many beggars, including children. Of course, some of them can work, but they prefer to live off others, as is the case under any state system. But others, particularly the elderly and the disabled, see this as the only way to survive.

Starting from 2006, the “Affordable Housing” program was launched in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Since then, more than 570,000 farmers and herdsmen have moved into new homes. Under this project, by the end of 2010, 80% of TAR farmers and herdsmen will be resettled.³⁸⁷ Its implementation will result in the transfer of almost all Tibetan nomads to settlers. Resettlement is also under way in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan and Qinghai. The “Human Rights Watch” organization has said in its 2007 report that the shepherds had to sell off their herds in order to move to brick houses, and finding a new job was often necessary for repayment of long-term loans.³⁸⁸ The Government proposes shepherds learn commercial vegetable production, which is difficult in the face of competition from more experienced Chinese immigrants. Retraining for another job is difficult as well. Back in 1987, the 10th Panchen Lama noted that the Chinese have one advantage over most Tibetans (as far as getting a new job was concerned) – they know the Chinese language better.³⁸⁹ Forcing nomads into a sedentary lifestyle leads to a loss of national identity, and perhaps leads to an increase in poverty. Nomads’ attempts to challenge or oppose the orders of the Government result in arrests, imprisonment, beatings and fines.³⁹⁰

Tibetan traditional medicine was severely damaged in the course of the Cultural Revolution, but then started to rise again. In 2006, the gross production of the TAR pharmaceutical companies that were producing Tibetan medicines amounted to 623 million yuan, making this pharmaceutical industry one of the strongest in the region.³⁹¹ In 2008, the TAR had ten county-level hospitals and eighteen enterprises that were producing Tibetan medicine products, with a staff of 1,400 people.³⁹² 360 types of drugs are being manufactured in total. But the basis of health care is still founded on European medicine. At this moment, there are thirteen hundred medical institutions

386 Chinese Tibetologist...

387 Tibet to provide housing...

388 26-Jan-08 The Chinese leadership has announced...

389 His Holiness the Panchen Lama...

390 Frenchman’s travels in Tibet...

391 “Jingji Ribao”: the rapid development...

392 The rapid development of Tibetan medicine...

in the TAR, the total number of hospital beds exceeds sixty-seven hundred, and the number of professional health workers exceeds ten thousand.³⁹³

The life expectancy was 35.5 years in Old Tibet, and by 2000 it reached sixty-seven years.³⁹⁴ Mortality of newborns and infants decreased from 43% before 1959 to 3.1%.³⁹⁵ However, the reliability of these statistics for pre-revolutionary Tibet is doubtful. It is also assumed that the increase in life expectancy in Tibet could have happened without the Chinese invasion.³⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the trend is present. This is an indisputable achievement of the communists in comparison with the feudal system!

At the same time, the TAR medical system has its shortcomings.³⁹⁷ According to the Tibetan Government in exile, it is mainly staffed by doctors who failed to pass or poorly passed the qualification examinations, and therefore had no prospects of finding a job in China. A program to upgrade their qualifications was later launched. Even now, there are reports of low quality medical care and denial of it altogether, especially from arrested anti-Chinese demonstrators.³⁹⁸

The treatment is not free, and hospital medical care will not be provided unless paid in advance.³⁹⁹ On the other hand, with some Tibetan medicine hospitals, especially in the monasteries, the payments are made on a voluntary basis, and the patient can choose not to pay. All across Tibet, lamas use their charisma to gather money for building schools, clinics and other services that are important to the welfare of people.⁴⁰⁰ This type of philanthropy has deep historical roots.

Despite medical advances, Tibet still has instances of tuberculosis, Kashin-Beck disease, leprosy and hepatitis. In some places, the incidence of tuberculosis is possibly as high as 20%. Cases of plague have also been reported.⁴⁰¹ By 2006, the number of HIV-infected people in the TAR amounted to 40, including five patients with AIDS, and two of them have now died.⁴⁰²

However, it is important to mention an overall improvement in the quality of health care in Tibet in recent times.

393 The question of Tibet...

394 The watershed between the old...

395 National regional autonomy...

396 Blondeau and Buffetrille, 2008, p.106.

397 Tibet: the Truth, 1993.

398 E.g. Display of Tibetan flag...

399 Human Rights Situation in Tibet: Annual Report 2001.

400 Tibet: a Human Development, 2007.

401 In Tibet, cases of bubonic plague...

402 In Tibet, the control over the spread...

Officially, Beijing has the following to say about the results of the TAR development thus far:⁴⁰³ “In its forty years of national regional autonomy, Tibet has been transformed from a feudal-serf society that lagged far behind the requirements of the era, into a socialist society of the people’s democracy, having gone through large-scale economic development and comprehensive social progress. <...> The transition from the medieval feudal totalitarian regime to a modern democracy is a regularity in social development, the evolving from backwardness and ignorance to culture and progress”. By this logic, colonialism is beneficial, and after all, the British colony of Hong Kong (Xiangang) has become the most advanced area of China.

If Tibetans are happy, then why are there so many protests? In reality, Tibet’s progress over the past forty years was accompanied by genocide, the Cultural Revolution, and the destruction of religion and culture. In the past quarter-century the situation has improved, and material well-being is growing, although some of Mao’s methods of repression and propaganda are still used.

Nevertheless, Marxism-Leninism, Maoism, sinicization and modernization are not the choice of Tibetans. They believe that freedom is more valuable still. It is associated with spiritual values: religion and national traditions. Most Tibetans understand freedom as independence. Even youths who are fond of modern Tibetan publications with a critical attitude toward Buddhism, are opposed to Chinese rule.⁴⁰⁴

“Backward and ignorant” at first, Tibet was initially used by China as a colony, and instead of being used for investment, or fair trade, it was turned into a military beachhead, a source of raw materials and labor. The regime of the people’s democracy has taught “culture and progress” through slave labor and repression. The situation over the last two decades no longer suggests that Tibet is a Chinese colony. Investments are forwarded to the region, measures are taken for its development, not all national culture is now declared to be backward. As was rightly pointed out by Chinese observers, the metropolitan state exploits its colonies, investing very little in them, whereas China was making very large investments in Tibet in recent years. But these come in a “package” that includes an influx of Chinese migrants and cultural, as well as ethnic assimilation of the indigenous people. This looks like the ancient Chinese stratagem “Toss out a brick to attract jade”.⁴⁰⁵ Now Tibet should be regarded as the territory that is developed by its metropolitan state, not only as a source of resources, but also as its living space.

403 National regional autonomy...

404 The Dalai Lama: “Comrade – it was hypocrisy”...

405 Thirty-six Strategies...

CHAPTER 11

Tibet, an Inseparable Part of China?



This question can be answered only in terms of historical facts and the law. We shall first consider the general concepts of international law (although such reading may seem boring), and then the situation with Tibet.

Statehood in International Law and in the Chinese Tradition

Detailed analysis of statehood in international law and its relation to the question of Tibet was conducted by M.C. van Walt van Praag, one of the leading experts in international law. Here are the main provisions (I omit references to numerous sources for brevity, but they can still be found in the original).¹

International law takes statehood to imply an international entity; with the State being considered not only as an organized community, but as such one that has some attributes that are considered to be essential for the maintenance of international relations. The presence or absence of political statehood is central, ranging from complete independence to the total absence of international personality. Under international law, for there to be a state, it must have a defined territory and population; a government exercising effective authority over that territory and that is independent from other international entities, and is capable of establishing relations with other entities of international law. Because the size of the territory does not affect the existence of the State, there is no need for a precise delimitation (establishing the line by convention) of its borders. The most important condition is the existence of an effective government. Its functions, in a typical case, include exercise of jurisdiction over its population and territory, the collection of taxes, promulgation of laws, maintenance of order, dispensation of justice, and conduct of social affairs.

State sovereignty is understood as the inherent supremacy of the State within its territory and independence in international relations. Under international law, it is important for State sovereignty that the sovereign power was located within the State and not outside it. But no one State is completely independent: the

¹ Van Walt, 1987, p.93–110.

international law imposes this restriction. For example, independence is limited to participation in international organizations, alliances, economic communities, accepting the jurisdiction of international tribunals, and by concluding bilateral and multilateral agreements. Independence may be limited so completely that the entity concerned cannot be properly considered as a State. On the other hand, the State may be regarded as independent, even if it is under considerable control of another State. In some cases it may delegate its defence or international relations to another state without losing its independence.

Treaty obligations do not derogate formal independence. For example, the broad territorial privileges granted by the Qing Empire and the Republic of China to colonial powers in the “capitulation treaties”, did not lead to the loss of “territorial integrity and political independence”. Unlike formal independence, actual independence is a situation where an effective government is independent of an outside power.

When a political entity comes into existence by revolutionary means or by violation of certain basic rules of international law, a considerable amount of actual independence is a necessary precondition to the acquisition of statehood. The legal independence of a State is not affected if it is occupied by foreign forces. If a final settlement of the conflict is pending, belligerent occupation does not affect the continuity of the State, even if the latter’s government became completely ineffective in the whole of its territory, or has emigrated or was silenced. If a state was formed by war or secession or as a result of an abandonment of control by the prior sovereign and seizure of power by the inhabitants, effective exercise of government authority is central for the acquisition of statehood. The position of Finland in 1917–1918 serves an example. On the other hand, the occupation of Iran by the Allies during 1941–1946 serves an illustration of how statehood is combined with very weak power of an independent government.

On the one hand, the State may have a very brief existence, on the other, the continuance of an independently functioning entity over a period of time may be an important piece of evidence in support of statehood and practice which led to effective recognition of its independence. In this case, the extension of recognition by other States is an important factor.

The act of recognition of a State may be express or tacit. Express recognition consists of a formal act with formal notification, clearly announcing the intention of recognition. Tacit or implied recognition results from any act that implies the intention of recognizing of a State. Among the most important of such acts are bilateral treaties. They are the highest manifestation of external sovereignty. First steps towards recognition may involve trade missions or consular service. The distinction between *de facto* and *de jure* statehood or independence is admissible in international law: these terms serve in the process of recognition when conflicting

claims to sovereignty remain unresolved and the recognizing State is anxious not to commit itself in favour of either claimant.

Apart from recognition, there are other forms of States' conduct which may have evidential value. For example, direct and separate relations with the government of a putative State, especially if they cover a wide range of affairs. The same applies to official bilateral relations, especially the sending and receiving of official governmental envoys, entering agreements, mediation, extension of military aid and other governmental assistance, or the conduct of trade. Conviction and will of the people are also taken into consideration.

On the other hand, recognition of the loss of independence needs serious evidence: if it is lacking, the independence should continue to be recognized. If a State claims sovereign rights over another State, the reason needs to include a consensual transaction or the undisputed and effective exercise of authority for a prolonged period of time.

Statehood is not lost when one state establishes control over another in contravention of general principles of international law. Consequently, acts of illegal intervention, including military aggression and occupation, cannot by themselves cause disappearance of a State. If, before the beginning of the 20th century, it was believed that the temporary military suppression of a State under belligerent occupation and illegal intervention could be resolved either by the liberation or by the annexation of territory, then the modern law does not provide for this.

According to the classical concept that was adopted in Europe, which existed before the 19th century, the sovereign states were not necessarily equal in all respects. "Unequal alliances" assumed the dependence of the weak on the strong. In Asia, there was a similar system: if the states came into contact, their relations were seldom equal. The concept of equality of states was adopted in Europe only in the second half of the 18th century, in Asia more than a century later.

With regard to the status of Tibet, it makes sense to analyze the old terms "protectorate", "suzerainty" and "tributary". These cannot be clearly defined, especially because their meaning was changed for political reasons. Let's start with the term "protectorate". In fact, there are as many differences between the protectorates as there were instruments used in their creation. Common features of the relations of the protectorate, to which the International Court refers, were the following: a consensual relationship between two subjects of international law, whereby one or more States are legally bound to protect another State from external threat, and whereby the same State is made responsible for the external relations of the protected State. Since the protectorate agreement is an act of sovereignty itself, the sovereign status of the parties entering the agreement is usually emphasized. Government agencies on both sides remain separate. The protected State's government delegates some functions, but does not yield the power of government. The protectorate

relationship becomes extinct under two conditions: incorporation of the protected country into the protector State (when the former loses its independence), or restoration of full exercise of sovereignty by the protected State. In addition, these relationships become extinct when the protected and protecting states are at a war with each other. Relationships of this type existed not only in Europe but also in Central Asia.

“Suzerainty” was originally a concept of feudal law, which defined the relationship between the lord and his vassal or liege-man. Although the term was first applied to Tibet after it was invaded by Great Britain, relationships like this have long existed in Tibet, Mongolia, Manchu and other Asian monarchies. The notion of “suzerainty” was applied to the states when rulers, and not their people, were endowed with legal and political sovereignty and were capable of receiving and giving allegiance to one another. For example, the Peace of Westphalia (1648) established the suzerainty of the Holy Roman Empire over its sovereign component States.

The ruler could simultaneously be a suzerain and a vassal. In Europe, suzerainty relations had much in common with the protectorate relationship, from which it in time was hard to distinguish. Interstate relations preserved the main features of personal feudal relationships. The ruler of the vassal State was invested with an autonomous power by a solemn act of investiture by the suzerain ruler, to whom he was bound by an oath of allegiance. The suzerain was obliged to protect the vassal, and the latter was bound to provide military assistance to his suzerain in case of war. In addition, vassals paid an annual tribute, and had to pay personal homage for the solemn investiture, to reaffirm periodically this type of relationship. However, in some cases, these relationships were purely formal, being expressed by mere recognition of the suzerain and symbolic showing of homage towards him. This was very typical, in particular, for the empires that included China’s territory.

Suzerainty was not necessarily based on an agreement, and the suzerain’s power did not necessarily imply the delegation of governmental authority by his vassal. In cases of nominal suzerainty, the vassal State could be considered an international personality, although the vassal in formal and effective suzerainty did not possess full independence. During the 19th century, this term was used to describe the residue of authority of the Sultan of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire with its autonomous components and similar situations. There is less commonality among different forms of suzerainty than even that of a protectorate. While in Europe, suzerainty meant the sovereignty of a vassal, which at the international level, was represented by the suzerain. In practice, since that time, the term has been used to denote purely symbolic or nominal relationships, as well as, in reality, protectorate and colonial relationships.

Thus, the term “suzerainty” did not by itself imply the existence or lack of international personality. The absence of the latter was assumed under the true

suzerainty (in a formal and actual sense), while the nominal suzerainty need not affect the vassal's international status.

The concept of “sphere of influence” was used in the past specifically to characterize the control by imperialist powers of parts of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Central America. The extent of this control was different. The influence was established by treaties, unilateral declarations or effective penetration. A typical instrument of this was denying a third party from alienating parts of a subordinate country, as well as the supervisory role in international relations of the latter. But there was no formal loss of independence or sovereignty of the influenced States.

Let's now turn to China and the states that are associated with her. International relations of the Ming and Qing empires must be understood in the context of the ancient Chinese tributary system. In the Confucian world order, such a system formally continued to exist until the end of the 19th century. In practice, it was gradually replaced by treaties with Western powers after the 1842 Anglo-Qing war.

The tributary system arose during the Zhou period (1122– 249 BC) as an “internal” system of interaction between minor principalities and the *wang* of Zhou, who was said to have been the Son of Heaven.² The system served as a confirmation of his moral strength and virtue. The Son of Heaven represented the whole of mankind: not only the Chinese, but also “barbarians”. All non-Chinese were considered to be “barbarians”. The “superiority” of Chinese over them was more cultural than having either ethnic or political basis. It was based not so much on power, as on the Chinese way of life, Confucian principles and the Chinese written language. A sign of “barbarism” was not so much an issue of ethnicity, as negation of the Chinese lifestyle. From this it follows that the “barbarians” who wanted to “come and change” so as to benefit from the Chinese civilization, had to acknowledge the supremacy of the Emperor of China, i.e. the Middle State (Chinese: Zhongguo).

China was conceived as the Empire under Heaven, directly connected through the Emperor with the heavenly forces. The “barbarians” lacked such a connection. According to the orthodox ideology of imperial China, its ruler, the Son of Heaven, is the only mediator between Heaven and human beings.³ Through him, the earthly realm receives virtue or the beneficial transformative power called *de*. The Emperor's *de* is the symbol and tool of supreme power. This force manifested itself not just in politics. Under its influence, people were “internally transformed” and submitted to the Chinese Emperor, the rivers run in their beds, etc. Hence the old Chinese custom of the laying of the first furrow by the Emperor, etc. Since his “formidable and beneficial forces are extended everywhere”, “barbarians” could not evade the Emperor's civilizing transformation of the universe, but had to obey in accordance with “the universal law”, i.e., to obey him.⁴

2 Spiritual Culture of China, 2009, p.163. Wang means king or prince.

3 Goncharov, 2006, p.100–110.

4 Spiritual Culture of China, 2009, p.162.

A brief analysis of this system is conducted in the book by E.L. Besprozvannykh (links to primary sources omitted).⁵ “Key points of the conception of the world-arranging Chinese monarchy are: 1) the power of the Chinese Emperor is singular; 2) this power is universal; and 3) there is no “internal” vs. “external” in the world as far as the Emperor was concerned. The beneficial effects of the imperial “*de*” were spread like concentric rings in water (due to a sinocentric world view): firstly, it affected the “near”, i.e. the Chinese, then followed the “distant”, i.e. “barbarians”. The dissemination of the beneficial effects led to a deep inner transformation of “barbarians”. The essence of transformation involved evolving to a new state: they became “converted” or “indulged with sincerity” (*gui cheng, tou cheng*). <...> China’s rulers interpreted the coming of “barbarians” to the court as containing an important sacral meaning: it signified the completion of a process of establishing order in the world. <...> From the perspective of politics, this also demonstrated the effective control of China over the surrounding nations. <...> The purpose of sacralization and ritualization of foreign envoys’ arrival to the court was the desire to “interpret the world’s political process as being directed exclusively by the Emperor’s Court”. From a practical point of view, the arrival of “barbarians” to the court had a very great significance, since the “sincerity condition led to a state of subordination”. This explains the necessity of arrival of the “converted barbarians”: failure to appear implied disobedience of “barbarians”, or an incompatibility of the current ruler with the will of Heaven. If, for some reason, the mystic power *de* did not have adequate influence on the “barbarians”, other measures had to be taken: “diplomatic missions” with “summons to the court” (*chao*), or even the use of “threats” (*wei*) and weapons (*bing*)”.

It should be added that the “barbarians” disobedience to China and even a no-show with “tribute”, were considered not only as insolence, but also as violation of cosmic balance, resistance to the will of Heaven.⁶

There are two models of relations between “China” and its neighbours: sinocentric and treaty-based. The former was applied to the weaker neighbours, the latter to more powerful peoples and atypical cases.⁷ This second model allowed for variations depending on the situation. It is known to have existed at least from the Han Era (206 BC – 220 AD) onwards. Countries and tribes that could not be effectively controlled, but which posed an external threat, were treated according to the principle of “keeping in a loosened noose without interrupting relations” (*qimi bu ze*).⁸ Its essence was to greet their arriving ambassadors, not to try to establish dominance or control, but to interpret their visits to China as “the bringing of tribute”. Strong and threatening opponents were treated in

5 Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.38–40.

6 Spiritual Culture of China, 2009, p.163.

7 Namsaraeva, 2003.

8 Goncharov, 2006, p.120–121.

accordance with the principle of “using barbarians to pacify the barbarians” (*yi yi zhi yi*).

If the imperial troops were defeated, the “barbarians” were included into dynastic marriages. The ruler of the “barbarians” became the son-in-law of the Emperor, his children became grandchildren of the latter. It was expected that they would be more placid, according to lower positions in the family hierarchy. But this rarely worked. Their own daughters were still valued and loved, so the emperors tried to send fake princesses instead. Generally speaking, such marriages were not desirable, because they had a form of equitable relations. But often, the Chinese rulers could not avoid it, and this practice was quite popular in certain periods.

The basis of China’s foreign policy doctrine was the sinocentric model. Some authors suggest that this model was the only one before the 19th century:⁹ “It was not only fear of possible reprisals by the Chinese Empire that made the ‘tributaries’ obey the rules and institutions of the ‘Chinese world order’. Having accepted the rules of the ‘master – servant’ or ‘teacher – disciple’ relationship, they received something quite precious: ‘peace in exchange for obedience’, i.e. practically, they succeeded in securing their throne from internal and external attacks at the price of servile verbalisations and humiliating ceremonies. There were no other principles of establishing external contacts, no other system of international relations with the states that were in the “magnetic field” of China, until the 19th century”.

Therefore, anyone who had established contacts with the Chinese authorities could only do so as a “tributary”. For example, in 166 AD, some inventive merchants came from afar to the Han Empire, posing as the embassy of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. This cheating was a success: the “History of the Late Han” has a record that this ruler had sent an embassy, which brought a tribute.¹⁰ Thus, the Roman Empire became a “tributary” of the Han Empire, and Marcus Aurelius became a “subject” of the Chinese Emperor.

The foreign policy doctrine of the old China involved a contradistinction of two categories: the Central State (*Zhongguo*) and periphery (*waifan*).¹¹ *Zhongguo* is in the centre of the universe and has connections with heaven, and periphery included all the rest. The term *Zhongguo* underwent semantic changes and was applied to different territories during its 2,500 years of history. It was used more or less frequently, but never lost its ethnic context in regard to China, the traditional centre of the ethnic Chinese rule.

Ever since the Qin and Han empires, the notion of the great unity (Chinese: *da tong*) was the foundation of prevailing centripetal development of the country.¹² Periphery included the following: the inhabitants of vassal areas, people who were

9 “The Chinese world order”...

10 Hennig, 1961, v. 1, p.434–435.

11 Namsaraeva, 2003.

12 Spiritual Culture of China, 2009, p.119.

nominally subordinate to the Emperor, and residents of independent foreign states that communicated with China (i.e. foreigners). Somewhat later, the periphery started to include Mongolia, Tibet, Amdo (Kokonor), East Turkestan, etc.

Confucius said:¹³ “If remoter people are not submissive, all the influences of civil culture and virtue are to be cultivated to attract them to be so; and when they have been so attracted, they must be made contented and tranquil”. In his time, the issue of sinicization of “barbarians” did not arise yet. Perceptions of the Chinese ethnos were uncertain. In fact, every Chinese kingdom considered itself to be the most “correct” of the Chinese, and others were often assumed as barbarous. The attraction of the “barbarians” to the Chinese culture was meant to make them docile, to include them in the Chinese sphere of influence. Perhaps it was thought that the descendants of the “barbarians” will never be able to compete with the “indigenous” Chinese, but the latter were already quite actively assimilating the non-Chinese tribes. Most likely, an actual policy of assimilation of non-Chinese peoples was very rare during those times, which, of course, did not stop these people from assimilating.

As was noted by Van Walt, adopting the Chinese way of life automatically implied acceptance of the imperial “Mandate of Heaven” on rule over all humanity. “The sky cannot have two suns, and the state cannot have two emperors” (from the book “Li ji” – “Records of the Ritual”). If there are several rulers (or dynasties), only one will have the legitimate authority in Zhongguo.

The Empire was thought to have no specific territorial boundaries, within which domestic relations were applicable with foreign affairs being conducted outside.¹⁴ Ritual recognition of the Emperor’s rule was achieved through rituals of worship, etc. The “tributaries” came for different reasons: to seek protection, reaffirm their subordination, present gifts, to establish trade relations, etc. But all incoming envoys were interpreted as tributaries. Local produce was sometimes brought as “tribute”, with a binding treaty being signed afterwards. Van Walt notes that this is comparable with European relations between suzerain and vassal in medieval Europe. The point of view of A.S. Martynov is also plausible: the system of tribute payment solved different problems (with borders, foreign policy, administration), this system was flexible and did not lead to territorial expansion.

Thus, the tributary system was a mechanism through which the “barbarians” were allocated their space in the Chinese globalist political and ethical scheme. The Emperor usually covered the costs of “tributaries” missions and gave them gifts in return. The latter usually were of higher value than the “tribute”. At the same time, a tribute payment in principle did not imply any protection of the “tributary’s” country by the emperor, or any other interference in its internal affairs. Some

¹³ Confucius. Conversations and opinions (16, 1) — in: Lukyanov, 2005.

¹⁴ For detailed analysis of this system in Russian language see: Martynov, 1978.

“tributaries” established “suzerain – vassal” relationships with each other. Only in the 19th century, the Qing Empire, while taking part in a peace conference in The Hague in 1899 and 1907, signed a number of multilateral conventions and became involved in the development of international law.

E.L. Besprozvannykh wrote:¹⁵ “The nominal vassalage almost did not affect internal and external policies of the vassal state, since neither the imperial messages, nor the bestowed title of ‘wang’ were perceived by local rulers as attributes of subordination to China. The ‘tributes’, which were brought by foreign ambassadors to China, were seen as a sort of barter, because Emperor’s gifts of equivalent value were brought back in return. Thus, the nominal vassalage was no more than a propaganda trick that was designed primarily for their own Chinese population. Actual vassalage, that includes all of the above features of the nominal vassalage, was associated with the Chinese authorities’ permanent control over foreign policy of vassal state, as well as with certain limitations imposed on domestic politics. In this case, the strength and stability of the local administration directly depended on the loyalty of the imperial dynasty of China. V.P. Vasilyev writes: ‘The Chinese word for ‘vassal’ actually means ‘fence’, i.e. vassal serves as barrier from aggressive foreigners. If these foreigners are strong, let them first make their way through the fence; hence, the greater the space occupied by vassal lands, the less anxiety in China itself.’ V.S. Myasnikov and N.V. Shepeleva call these ‘external domains’ as ‘vice regencies-protectorates’, which quite adequately reflects the degree of their dependence on Beijing”.

We can partly agree with this: in such cases, vassalage relations implied protectorate, though not necessarily, as “external domains” (which Besprozvannykh called “buffer territories”) remained entities of international relations. They were not part of another state, but were dependent with limited sovereignty. In principle, all this can be compared with the Ottoman Empire and Byzantium (in the sense of the concept of the world’s only empire, with all other rulers being only vassals, obedient or not).

During the proclamation of the Republic of China on January 1, 1912, Sun Yatsen stated that the purpose of the republic was “to obtain (for China) the rights of the civilized state” and “to place China in a respectable place in international society”. “The vital precondition for achieving this goal was recognition by international law. The frequent references to the international law in the Republic statutes, as well as in the opinions of the country courts, judicial organs and publicists leave little doubt as to the Republic of China’s adherence to the application of customary as well as conventional international law”.¹⁶ In 1945, China became one of the founding members of the UN. The PRC supports the right of independence

15 Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.41.

16 In: Van Walt, 1987, p.113.

for colonies, and participates in international organizations etc. In 1971, the PRC formally adhered to the Charter of the UN, and in 1984 a PRC lawyer was elected to the International Court of Justice. Although Chinese communist politicians and jurists have criticized some specific legal theories and norms as “bourgeois”, they have never rejected international law as a whole.

The PRC considers sovereignty, self-determination, true equality and peaceful coexistence as among the main principles in modern international law. Chinese communist legal doctrine holds that the emergence of a State and its becoming a subject of international law should be decided by the will of its people. This cannot be decided by other countries. Recognition by other states merely confirms the fact of existence of a new State. This corresponds, for example, to the Montevideo Inter-American Convention of 1933, according to which, political existence of the State is independent of recognition by another State. This recognition is simply a sign that one State recognizes the other with all of the implied rights and responsibilities.

As was noted by Van Walt, a State’s right to govern its territory is a concrete expression of sovereignty. Accordingly, equality of states and rejection of unequal treaties is implied. Chinese understanding of equality of states goes beyond the generally accepted concept of lawful equality: that the inter-state relations can be maintained not only based on equality before the law, but also on “true equality”. That is, the sovereign rights of weaker states are protected from attempts of dictate by the stronger states. According to Marxism-Leninism, there are equal and unequal treaties. The latter constitute a violation of international law. Accordingly, the status of China from 1840’s through the 1940s was “unequal” in relation to the Western powers. The unequal treaties were even mentioned by the KMT leaders. But they considered it necessary to revise these agreements, while the PRC said that they were completely contrary to international law. The modern Chinese doctrine has no place for such relations as a protectorate or sphere of influence. But Chinese lawyers agree that suzerainty refers to the period of feudalism, and in more modern times such a relationship is just an instrument of imperialist expansion, thus, for the current period, the term “suzerainty” cannot be used.

Chinese lawyers wrote that “countries which ceded their territories were all under compulsion and they were either weak, small or defeated countries. Countries which acquired ceded territories were all imperialistic countries engaged in territorial expansion. <...> Therefore, it can be said that cessation of territory is a method of plundering the territories of weak, small or defeated countries used by imperialist countries through the use of war and threat of force”.¹⁷ Any surrender of sovereignty over to a stronger State necessarily results from the use of force, pressure and other forms of coercion. Consequently, annexation of territory by conquest or prolonged occupation cannot give the annexing State a legal title

17 In: Van Walt, 1987, p.117.

to the territory. In addition, it eliminates the delegation of the sovereignty from one State to another.

“A State’s formal independence is therefore not lost unless and until the source of validity of its government has indisputably been transferred from that State to the government of another State. Similarly, actual independence is not lost unless the effective governmental authority of the independent State has been totally extinguished and replaced by that of the controlling State”.¹⁸

There are two different approaches to the legality of acquiring a foreign territory by a State by conquest. But the international law’s condemnation of aggression or threat of force¹⁹ makes such annexing unacceptable, at least since the Second World War. Under the old law, annexation of conquered territory leads to loss of control and sovereignty of the defeated state and legitimatizes the rule of the conqueror. However, after 1945, international law no longer accepts such conquest on either moral or legal grounds.

However, in some cases, the legality of such annexation is acknowledged “by fact” with respect to long-standing relations of particular States. Therefore, illegal annexation here is recognised after all, if benefits of the current situation exceed those accompanying restoration of the status quo. Such an approach is widespread in international practice. At the same time, the recognition of the status quo by a third party (i.e. a foreign state) is not an act of legalization, but rather a political act. Recognition alone can neither create a new State, nor eliminate an old one. Similarly, non-recognition of (legal or illegal annexation of a territory) is nothing more than disapproval of some particular states. In recent history, for example, some States have not recognized the “annexation” of the three Baltic republics by the Soviet Union, or Jerusalem by Israel.

Thus, “claims to territory based solely on the effective but illegal use or threat of force are rejected by the overwhelming majority of States as contrary to modern international law. Furthermore, the time which has elapsed since the adoption of the United Nations Charter has proved insufficient to establish any title to invaded territory by prescription”.²⁰ China has successfully demonstrated just that in relation to Macau.

While this does not recognize the conquest, annexation or prescription as legitimate means of acquisition of territory, the leadership of the PRC has never claimed that Tibet was acquired in these ways. Rather, it claims centuries-long continuous Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. That is why China attaches so much importance to history excurses, examples of which were given in previous chapters.

18 Van Walt, 1987, p.177.

19 This implies a threat to the State and/or the persons signing the documents on their behalf.

20 Van Walt, 1987, p.183.

On China and the “Chinese Dynasties”

It would seem that there is nothing to discuss. It seems pretty clear what “China” stands for. But, the Chinese themselves do not use this word. They call their country *Zhongguo* – the Middle State, or the *Tian-xia* – Under Heaven. The Russian word for “China” – *Kitai* – is not a Chinese word. It is derived from *Khitan* (or *Kidan*), the name of the people belonging, probably, to the Mongolian group, who lived in Northern Mongolia and Manchuria since ancient times. Many consider them to be Mongols because of their language. In the 10th century, *Khitan* established the *Liao Empire*, which stretched from the Pacific Ocean to Eastern Turkestan, from Mongolia and Manchuria to Central China. After it was destroyed by the *Jurchen* (people of the *Manchu-Tungus* group), some of the *Khitan* (*Karakidan* or *Karakitai*) went to Central Asia, to the region of the *Talas* and *Chu* rivers. There, they established the *State of Western Liao*. At some time, China was associated with the *Khitan*, not only among the Mongols, but also among Muslims, who also considered it to be part of *Turkestan* (in this case, obviously, by association with the *Karakitai*). The rulers of the *Western Turkic Khaganate* bore the title of “*Tabgach Khan*” – the Chinese *Han*. *Turkic* peoples called the Chinese *Tabgach*. Perhaps, this custom originated at the time of the *North Chinese Northern Wei Dynasty* (386 – 564), which belonged to the *Toba* tribe. The *Qarakhanid* rulers bore the title of *Malik al-Mashriq (al-Sharq) va’l-Sin* (Lord of the East and China).²¹ In Russia, the word “*Kitai*” was acquired from Mongolia (*Mongolian*: *Khyatad*), while in Western Europe, it was brought by *Marco Polo*, who called the north region of *Kublai Khan’s* lands as “*Cathay*” (the south of that region was termed “*Manzi*”).

Marco Polo also wrote that the Japanese called the east of “*Manzi*” “*Chin*”.²² This was an Indian, Japanese and Malay term for China, originating from the *Chinese Empire of Qin* (221–206 BC), founded by the famous Emperor *Yingzheng* (*Qin Shi-huang*). However, there are other variants of etymology: for example, the *Sanskrit* word for “east”, the name of a military district of the *Han Dynasty* (modern *Vietnam*), from *Lolo* (*Yi*) autonym for the people and polity known in Chinese as *Yelang* (territory of the current *Guizhou Province*).²³ It is believed that the *Latin* word *Sina* and its derivatives originate from the *State of Qin*. Indeed, the long-standing relations between China and Europe are well known.²⁴ Usually, however, ancient authors (*Strabo*, *Pliny the Elder*, *Claudius Ptolemy*, and others) believed “*China*” to be *Serica*, with its residents being called *Seres* (from the Greek “*silk*”, “from the country, where silk is from”). But according to these authors, *Serica* was not in China, but somewhat to the west.

21 *Pikov*, 2007, p.111–123.

22 *Marco Polo*, 1955, p.173.

23 See overviews: *Pelliot*, 1912; *Wade*, 1999.

24 For example, *Hennig*, 1961–1963.

When discussing the word “Sina”, it is impossible not to mention the Arabic word “Sin” that stood for China. Its etymology is uncertain, but it was probably derived from the words “Qin” or “Sina”. The words of Chin and Machin were used by some Muslim peoples (Iranians, Turks and others) in the Middle Ages, for denoting areas stretching from Manchuria to Northern China, and Southern China to Indochina. These are similar to the pronunciation of “Khin” and “Khinove” of the ancient Russian language. These terms were used in pre-Mongol Russia to describe eastern nomads. According to some researchers, these words came from the name of the Hunnu, the people who lived in the territory of Mongolia and gave rise to the Hunni. Alternatively, it originated from the name of the Jin Empire.²⁵ This empire, which was created by the Jurchen, included part of China. It was eliminated by the Mongols.

Finally, the modern European term “China” in its different variants, may have derived from the word “Qin” through “Chin and Machin,” or “Qing” – i.e. from Manchuria, just like “Cathay”. But the people of Indochina, the Lolo, Khitan, Jurchens, Manchus and Mongols were all barbarians for the people of Zhongguo, the Han (i.e. Chinese).

Thus, the words “Kitai”, “China”, etc. had different meanings at different times. Not just Asian but also European and Russian 19th century travellers distinguished China from other countries that were dependent on the Emperor.²⁶ They understood “China” to be a state that had Beijing as its capital, extending this concept to other countries that were ruled from Beijing or were dependent on it. Such understanding was close to the Confucian one, for the Middle State has always been independent; it was simply ruled by various dynasties. However, the term “Zhongguo”, as according to the old imperial documents, was never applied to Tibet and other non-Han lands.²⁷ As was noted by the Chinese historian Ge Jianxiong from Shanghai, “if we want to understand the extent of ancient China’s territory, we can only speak of how large the actual territory controlled by a particular dynasty was at a particular moment”.²⁸

What are these dynasties? Once again, this seems to be a rhetorical question. Take, for example, the Webster’s 1913 Dictionary: “A race or succession of kings, of the same line or family; the continued lordship of a race of rulers”. This is derived from the Greek “dynasteia” (power, or domination). For example, these are the Romanovs in Russia, the Habsburgs in Austria-Hungary, the Valois and the Bourbons in France, etc. Thus, the word dynasty implies a ruling family or line, and nothing else. The Europeans have applied this principle in Central Asia and the Far East. If the Romanovs ruled in Russia, then in China the rulers were the

25 Guzev, V.G. and Tvorogov, O.V., Hin(ova)...

26 For example, Stonton, 1805; Timkovsky, 1824.

27 A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

28 In: Vembu, 2007.

Qings, Songs, etc. On the other hand, they write “Qing State”, “Yuan Empire”. In that case, why was the term “Romanov Empire” not used?

This question is given little consideration. The discussion between linguists and historians on the “Eastern Portal” of the Internet is very interesting.²⁹ From it, one can draw the following conclusions. In contrast to the non-ambiguous European concept of “Dynasty”, the Chinese *chao* hieroglyph (that is used as “dynasty” equivalent) has a number of quite different meanings. Chinese monolingual dictionaries list the following: “The whole period of governance of one ruler who established the name of the state (in one or several generations)”, “the name of the period of ruling by one ruler”, “the name of an era, or period”, “the name of the era in monarchical state and also the name of the first year of the twelve year cycle (of monarch’s reign)”, “Dynasty (or period of rule) denotes a whole dynasty of rulers, as well as the period of reign of any emperor”. Thus, there are two main meanings: the time (period, era) of reign of one or a number of monarchs, and hereditary continuity of these monarchs. Therefore, one can talk, for example, not just about “Ming chao”, i.e. “the period of reign of the founder of the Ming Dynasty and his successors”, but also about “Kang-xi chao”, i.e. of “the period of reign by an emperor with an era name Kang-xi”.

The name of the dynasty here does not simply correspond to the monarch’s name or surname. Rather, it is a symbolic name, which was given by a clan (race) representative who had received monarchical power. In the emperor’s case this corresponds to the era’s name of his choosing, but not necessarily the name the founder gave to the dynasty. For example, the names of Yuan and Qing were not given by Genghis Khan and Nurhaci respectively. Instead, these names appeared after their death, with both monarchs being (retrospectively) declared to have been the founders of these dynasties. On the other hand, the name of the dynasty did not always remain the same: one of the subsequent rulers sometimes changed it (e.g., Hou Jin was changed to Qing).

The Chinese word “chao” that denotes period or dynasty, lacks any “state” (Chinese: “guo”) meaning. According to the Confucian concept, the state is always the one and only, Middle State (Zhongguo, i.e. China). It cannot be part of another state. Thus, if it was in fact captured by foreigners (i.e. was attached to another country as a result of a foreigner’s conquest), according to the Chinese system, this fact is interpreted the other way around: that the Zhongguo rulers are now in control over some foreign lands as well. During the times that China was fragmented, or in the cases of neighbouring countries, one of the dynasties may rule in Zhongguo, and other dynasties in other countries. The latter can be considered to be parts of Zhongguo, based on the Confucian concept of governance. In European terms, this would rather imply a civilizational unity, rather than inclusion of one state

29 Chronology of China 3...

into another. The Chinese concept of statehood is merged with that of civilization, unlike the European concepts.

All these states, or domains, are referred to as dynasties – in the sense of self-proclaimed emperors' era names, or the periods of monarchs rule. For example, the official name of the Manchu Empire was Daqing Digu (Da Qingguo), and not Zhongguo. Although the latter name was used in international documents, not all Han people, especially their scholars, acknowledged this.³⁰ In this sense the situation is similar to the Ottoman Empire or, more correctly, the Sublime Osman's State. This State never called itself "Turkey" (in general, any ethnic connotations were tabooed) as it was a multinational empire, subordinate to the sultans of the Imperial House of Osman.

Thus, the "dynasties of China" are different to the dynasties of Europe that were uniquely defined by the names of the ruling families. "The Chinese (Han) incorporate the name of the state into their "dynasty" term, and thus tie other sovereign states of other nations to their dynastic history. This is also coached into history researchers of Zhongguo (China) which do not think before accepting China's interpretation of 'dynasty'".³¹ While in Europe the notion of dynasty is separate from the concept and the designation of the State, in China it is connected, although, when an individual ruler is discussed, it can be separate too.

Sometimes it is argued that the use of Chinese names, terminology, systems of periodization of states and monarchs, management, and Confucian ideology by non-Chinese peoples signifies that their countries are part of China. This is wrong, as such features have no relation to statehood. For example, the reforms of Emperor Peter 1st have westernized Russia. He officially adopted the Western European Calendar (the AD/BC chronology instead of a chronology that had the creation of the world as its starting point), management system, titles, clothing, and customs; German and French began to be used widely, the administration contained a lot of foreigners from the West, the lands of the Baltic Germans represented a part of Russia, etc. Nevertheless, this did not turn Russians into Western Europeans, and Russia did not become a part of Germany or even of Western Europe in general. Peter 1st was a member of the Romanov Dynasty. The word "Romanov" has a Latin origin and not Russian (Latin: Romanus – Roman). However, this was the Russian Dynasty, and not Italian, and Russia is not a part of Italy.

There is no need to analyze all of the "Chinese dynasties". Let's only consider those that are important in connection with the Tibetan question. The Tang Empire (which was ruled by emperors with the Li surname) dates to 618–907. As was pointed out by historian Dan Yihung, as far as the Chinese were concerned, the Tang Emperor was "the only legitimate ruler, of not only China but the world".³²

30 Gang Zhao, 2006 — in: Esherick, 2006, p.232, 254.

31 Levkin, G.G. Typical mistakes...

32 Laird, 2006, p.45.

Really, at that time, Tibet was independent, with the king of Thailand being its vassal. Thailand is not now included in the PRC. Between the Tang and Yuan, Tibet had a very weak relationship with China (see Chapter 2).

Let us dwell a little on “the Yuan Dynasty of China”. The website of the PRC Foreign Ministry stated: “In 1271, the Mongol rulers created a state and called it Yuan. In 1279 it was used to bring the entire China together under a single central authority. <...> The Central governments of the Chinese dynasties had Tibet under their administration. In the middle of the 13th century, Tibet formally became a territorial possession of the Yuan Dynasty”.³³ In fact, everything was different. China was conquered by the Mongols, and not vice versa. It had become a part of another country, and was managed by a foreign (not Chinese) dynasty. That country was the Great Mongol State (Mongolian: *Ikh Mongol Uls*) that stretched from the Pacific to Central Europe. It included principalities which were ruled by the descendants of Genghis Khan. Genghis was not a name, but a title, which came from the word “sea” (Mongolian: “*Tengis*”). In later documents the title of the Great Khan was written as the Dalai Khan (in Mongolian, “*dalai*” means “ocean”, “sea”, “great”). The word “*dalai*” is also in the title of the Dalai Lama. Temuchin was the personal name of Genghis Khan. He came from the Borjigin clan, which the Mongols called the Golden clan. In their later (Buddhist) historiography, the Mongols claimed that the Golden clan originated from India, from the mythical Mahasamadhi Khagan, his descendants in India, and then in Tibet (from the first seven kings of Tibet, in Mongolian: *Sandalitu Khagans*), but not from China.³⁴

The Mongol khans of all principalities were relatives. The Great Khan (Khagan) was acknowledged by them to have been their “suzerain”, and once again he was one of their relatives. The principalities of the Mongol khans (Chagatai Khanate, the Golden Horde, etc.) were comprised from the countries of Central Asia, Russia, Iran, Iraq, the entire Caucasus, most of Siberia, etc. The power of the Great Khan over most principalities quickly became nominal, they were managed almost independently. But the lords of principalities recognized the primacy of the Great Khans and sent them tribute at every possibility. Such a tribute receiver was also Togon Temur Khan, who lost his capital.³⁵

One of the Mongol principalities was the State of Yuan. The Chinese called it Da Yuan, the Mongols – *Ikh Yuan Uls* (the Great Original State).³⁶ This was the name of the principality of the great Kublai Khan and his descendants. None of them were

33 Briefly on Tibet: a historical sketch...

34 Lubsan Danzan, 1973, p.49–53.

35 Mogultai...

36 The word “Yuan” has a Chinese origin, but this does not mean that Mongolia has become China. For example, the name of the capital of the Russian Empire was “St. Petersburg”; this word is also not Russian. The Mongolian word “*uls*” means “state”. But in relation to the empires, which included China, it later became translated also as “dynasty”.

Chinese. The Yuan State incorporated Mongolia, the annexed China, Korea, part of Burma and Cambodia, the Tangut State and other non-Chinese areas. Hence, it was China that was part of Mongolia, and not vice versa. Initially, the great khans were based on the territory of Mongolia proper, in the city of Kharkhorum (from Turkic “Karakorum” – “Black Rocks”),³⁷ and from 1264 in Khanbalyk (Dadu, Beijing). Thanks to Kublai, this city became the capital not only of his principality, but of the whole of the Great Mongolian Empire. Following that, the Yuan State and the independent China (Southern Song) co-existed simultaneously, until the latter was not completely conquered by the Mongols.

Kublai’s authority was not established overnight. In 1236, he received Xinzhou (present-day Hubei Province) as his principality and in 1251, Munke Khan had sent him to Northern China. In 1258, he summoned him for help in a military campaign against Southern China. But even before his arrival, Kublai Khan learned about the death of Munke Khan (1259). Then great *khuraldai* took place in Kharkhorum, which proclaimed Ariq Böke as the Great Khan, in accordance to Mongol minorate custom. Then, his elder brother Kublai gathered another great *khuraldai* at his headquarters in the city of Kaiping (Shangdu, current Inner Mongolia) and, in 1260, he himself was proclaimed the Great Khan. According to Chinese history, Kublai Khan gained the emperor title (Chinese: *huangdi*), despite the fact that the Chinese Empire still existed independently of him. Ariq Böke was a supporter of traditional Mongolian values and wanted to strictly follow the rules that were established by Genghis Khan. Kublai Khan, however, was inclined to reformism and tried to organize an empire according to the system that was in use in Chinese states.

From the perspective of the Mongolian tradition of throne inheritance, the congress that was convened by Kublai was illegal, as the empire already had Ariq Böke as a legitimate monarch, who was in the capital.³⁸ In addition, Kublai extensively bribed princes. Ariq Böke sent an ambassador to his brother: “By the state’s law, Khan is proclaimed by the great *khuraldai*, but you have ignored the supreme doctrine; sitting in China and, following Chinese laws, you are acting autocratically”.³⁹ Kublai Khan declared Ariq Böke to be a usurper, and, following the Chinese custom, proclaimed the era’s name to be “Zhong-tong”. In 1261–1264, he fought against his brother. Ariq Böke was defeated and surrendered to Kublai. Mongolia was left with one Great Khan. The rulers of all the lands of the empire were to obey him.

In 1264, Kublai transferred his headquarters to be near the former Jurchen capital, Zhongdu (“Central Capital”). It was called Khanbalyk (“Khan’s City”) or

37 For etymology see: Dmitriev, 2009.

38 Dalai, Ch. 1977, p.325.

39 Ganbold et al., 2006.

Dadu (“Main Capital”). Khanbalyk became the capital of the whole of the Great Mongol Empire. In 1271, Kublai Khan decided to change the era name from Zhong-tong to Zhi-yuan. In his decree, he explained this by bad omens (comets, rain at the wrong time, etc.): they all indicated that the policy of the government was against the Law. There is evidence that he used the Chinese Book of Changes (Yi Jing) to select the hieroglyphs of “Qian Yuan”: “qian” – meaning the “sky” and “yuan” implying the “original”.⁴⁰ Apparently, he was guided by the following excerpt from the Book of Changes: “The antiquity of the hexagram Qian is great” (Chinese: da zai qian yuan), with “qian” being the symbol of the sky, and the emperor. Therefore, for the first time, the name of the dynasty contained the “*da*” sign. As is widely known, Mongols worshiped the eternal Heaven. That is, “Yuan is the beginning of an infinite number of beings, the foundation of peace and happiness, state power, the dream of many peoples, besides it there is nothing great or precious”. The text of the decree did not stipulate that it is valid only for the Kublai’s principality. Thus it could be considered mandatory for all subjects of the Great Khan, and the whole of the Great Mongol Empire could be considered as the Yuan State.

All of these Kublai’s actions were induced by his Chinese advisers. He had several Chinese teachers attached to him since his early years. Not only did they teach him about the history of their state, but they also permanently gave him advice on governance.⁴¹ Kublai was served by many well-known Chinese scholars and dignitaries. One of them, Hao Jing, offered him a way to capture the throne and the power of the Great Khan. Kublai Khan, when he was young, trusted in his approximates, learned to speak Chinese, but refused to learn Chinese writing. Not surprisingly, the elite of the Yuan Empire adopted the Chinese concept of statehood, the governance system and history. During the rule of Kublai Khan, the Chinese named Genghis Khan as Taizu (Great Ancestor, the standard temple name of founder of the dynasty), Fa-tian qi-yun, Sheng-wu huangdi (Conforming with the Heaven and opening destiny, Sacred-Warlike Emperor).⁴² His personal Mongolian name of Temuchin became the forbidden vital name. Other great khans, who ruled before Kublai Khan, also received posthumous Chinese temple names. Nevertheless, all the Yuan emperors also had Mongolian names. In 1279, Kublai Khan completed his conquest of China. Now the whole of China was included as an integral part of the Mongol Empire. Witnesses (for example, Marco Polo) noted that parts, of which it consisted, were unequal, and the extent of their subordination to the centre was different. Thus, they called some of them (Korea, Gansu, and others) countries or kingdoms. Some of these countries, now independent, were managed by the Mongols directly (e.g. Korea). The whole system of the administrative bodies of

40 Ganbold et al., 2006, p.20–21.

41 Dalai, Ch. 1977, p.324.

42 Khrapachevsky, 2004.

the Yuan State did not have an institution that would oversee the whole state.⁴³ The government administration style was hybrid between Mongolian and Chinese administration, while the monarchy remained Mongolian. In general, it followed the Great Yasa – the Code of Genghis Khan. The Chinese were utilised only when such need arose in the state apparatus.⁴⁴ Mongols have always kept their distance from the Chinese, both administratively, and socially.⁴⁵ They firmly adhered to their own language. Even their writing was first developed by Uighurs, then by Tibetans, but not by Chinese. After the Li Tan uprising, the Chinese were removed from posts in the military. Almost all the posts were given to “people with coloured eyes”: Muslims, Christians, Turkis, Khitan, Tangut. Collection of taxes and other financial matters were usually administered by the Muslims.⁴⁶

Only at the end of the Yuan’s existence, when it became necessary to use the Chinese upper class for its consolidation, Mongols became involved in Chinese culture. In 1343–1345, on their instructions, extensive histories of Liao, Jin and Song were drawn up.⁴⁷ In Chinese history, they are described in the same manner, as “Chinese dynasties”. Nevertheless, in reality, these were completely different states: Song was Chinese, Liao was Khitan and Jin was Jurchen. Their histories began to be compiled during Kublai. Although this was done in the Mongol Empire, the histories were written in accordance with established Confucian rules. Therefore, even countries as diverse as Liao and Song, were described in a similar manner, i.e. as Chinese empires. During this work, a contradiction arose that was related to the legitimacy of the inclusion of the Mongol khans in the official “dynastic history of China”. It only came close to being resolved in its last stage of work, during the reign of Togon Temur. The main problem was the subordination of which of the three countries made the Mongols legitimate heirs “of the Chinese dynastic order”. Eventually it was decided that each of them had their own history, and that the Mongols became masters of them all. But the issue became purely academic, as the Mongols were expelled from Beijing. Until the fall of their empire, the Mongols considered China to be its part, and their Great Khan as the “pacifier” of nations, one of which were the Chinese.⁴⁸ So why did Kublai Khan borrow the Chinese system, and declared the Yuan era?

He wanted to perpetuate himself in the memory of the descendants and to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the Han people – the most numerous nation of the empire – of Mongolian monarchy in a succession of “Chinese dynasties”. In addition, the Mongolian Khans claimed authority over the whole world. Having conquered China, they gained access to a well-designed and usable concept of such power.

43 Farquhar, 1981.

44 Langlois, 1981, p.137–185.

45 Vernadsky, 2000.

46 *Spiritual Culture of China*, 2009, p.684–685.

47 Chan, 1981, p.56–106.

48 Lubsan Danzan, 1973, p.243–246.

After all, their state was the main state of the world, which implied that it was the Middle State, the others had to obey. Unlike the Chinese, the Mongols did not attach an ethnic (Han) context to this concept. Their underestimating of the ethnic dimension resulted in far-reaching consequences. When the Chinese dynasty seized power, it became legitimate in this great Middle State according to the Confucian point of view, and the Mongolian lands became a “barbarian periphery”. Mongols believed otherwise, but to Han, it did not matter.

In 1368, China broke away from the Yuan Empire. To the Mongols it was a disaster, as previously the “all-Mongolian people” from the principality of the Great Khan, numbered more than fifty *tumens*, of which forty (i.e. 400,000 soldiers, not counting their families, etc.) were located in China, to the south of the Great Wall.⁴⁹ Only six *tumen* returned to Mongolia with Togon Temur. Others were detained in various places in China and, for the most part, wiped out. But the long-abandoned Mongolia itself could barely support the retreated hundreds of thousands of people. Meanwhile, in China, the Ming authorities did everything possible to destroy the Mongolian influence, including through Mongols’ assimilation. The legislation of the Ming Empire had a remarkable directive: the remaining Mongols were allowed to marry only with the Chinese.⁵⁰ Violation of this led to punishments of bastinado and slavery.

According to an ancient tradition, the recognition of the dynasty as “valid” strongly depended on the official Confucian historiography, whose final act involved compilation of the official history. This was usually prepared by a special committee that was appointed by the emperor’s dynasty-successor; it also had to approve the final version of the prepared text.⁵¹ Accordingly, official “Yuan shi” chronicles were compiled from the 1368–1370 Chinese chronicles. This was done by Chinese historians in full accordance with Confucian standards. They were poorly informed about many figures and events in the history of the Mongols. Not surprisingly, the Yuan State in their interpretation acquired specific Chinese features.

However, it continued to exist after this – that is, simultaneously with the Chinese Ming Empire. The Chinese call it Bei Yuan (Northern Yuan). The era name was Xuan-guang in the years 1370–1377, and Tian-yuan in 1378–1387.⁵² However, the emperors, as before, had personal Mongolian names. In 1388, the Great Khan Togus Temur was crushed by the Chinese and killed by his relatives. He was the last Yuan emperor, as his son and successor, Enkh Zorigt (1388–1392) did not dare claim the imperial title and did not accept the Chinese throne name because of his fear of the Ming emperors.⁵³

49 Mogultai...

50 The Laws of the Great Ming Dynasty, 2002, Art. 122.

51 Lankov, A. “Mandate of Heaven”...

52 Levkin, G.G. Typical mistakes...

53 Mogultai...

However, some of the Mongolian aristocrats believed a legend about Zhu Di (era name: Yong-le, 1403–1424), the third Ming Emperor, being the son of Togon Temur Khan.⁵⁴ They believed that Zhu Di was born from Togon Temur's concubine, who was pregnant when taken to the harem of Zhu Yuanzhang, the first Ming Emperor, after the latter conquered Dadu City. According to this legend, the Yuan Dynasty was preserved not only in Mongolia but also in China. According to "Bolor Erikhe" ("Crystal Beads"), one of the most important Mongolian chronicles, the all-Mongolian khans formed a single dynasty from Genghis Khan to Ligden Khan (1592–1634), but the khans from Genghis to Togon Temur ruled the Southern Yuan state (Mongolian: Urd Yuan Uls, which can be translated also as "the Preceding Yuan Dynasty"), and the emperors that succeeded his son Ayushiridara (Biliktu Khan) to Ligden ruled the Northern Yuan State (Mongolian: Khoit Yuan Uls, or "the Subsequent Yuan Dynasty"). Therefore, the Mongols continued to claim ownership of China, even when it separated from their empire.

Thus, the Great Mongol State broke up, and the principalities were also disbanded, including the Mongolian Yuan Empire. Therefore, the PRC has no reason to claim inheritance from it. If Chinese logic is true, Russia should also be considered part of China.⁵⁵ But why should we not consider all the land from Hungary to the Pacific Ocean (including the PRC of course), as parts of the modern State of Mongolia?

After breaking away from the Yuan Empire, China became a State once again. In 1421, Chinese Emperor moved the capital from the south to Beijing. He feared the Mongols and wanted to be closer to the northern line of defence. Now there was the Chinese Zhu Dynasty, which ruled the Ming Empire. Its boundaries roughly coincided with the boundaries of the Chinese Northern Song Empire, which existed before the Mongol conquest.⁵⁶ The Song ideology was not hard enough in implementation of the sinocentric model. Therefore, the Ming ideologists, who stressed the importance of avenging the shame inflicted on China by the Mongols, tried to undertake a comprehensive restoration of Chinese traditional values.⁵⁷

The Han believed the Mongols to be foreigners who seized power illegally. The following year after his enthronement, Zhu Yuanzhang (era name: Hong-wu), the first Ming Emperor, sent an embassy with a manifesto to Tibet. Inter alia, it stated: "In the recent past, the Barbarians *hu* (Mongols) stealthily seized *Huaxia* (China) and ruled over it for more than one hundred years. Of those who are sane, who can contain anger when a hat and shoes are swapped? <...> I have established the main state Under Heaven and named it Da Ming (Great Light)".⁵⁸

54 Puchkovsky, 1963.

55 Terentyev, A. "Allow to retort"...

56 Kolmas, 1967.

57 Goncharov, 2006, p.136–137.

58 Martynov, 1978, p.48.

According to the Mongol perspective, the Ming claims were meaningless in fact as well as formally. As far as Mongols were concerned, the suzerain status of their dynasty was determined by the lineage of the Mongolian great khans that remained in Mongolia, rather than the power over China by Ming emperors.⁵⁹ The latter attempted to establish their authority in Tibet, but this did not work (see Chapter 2). Both the Tibetans and Mongols understood that Ming was a foreign state, which had no right to claim the Mongol “heritage”. All this shows a lack of continuity between the Yuan and the Ming empires.

In addition to the Tibetan tribes and monasteries, the State of Ming claimed to have included 121 tributaries, including those who do not even share borders with it, for instance: Borneo, Ceylon, Philippines, Aden, Herat, Samarkand, Medina, and Isfahan.⁶⁰ Obviously, all cities and countries were considered as tributaries which had ambassadors, merchants, etc. coming to China. In 1408, the Ming Emperor issued a decree in connection with the raids of Japanese pirates on the Chinese coast. He commanded the “King of Japan to fulfil our orders with reverence, promptly and efficiently. This case is hereby assigned to you by your Emperor”.⁶¹ All this was consistent with Chinese tradition of “nominal vassalage”. At the same time, the Ming emperors were realists and did not try to gain actual control over the whole world. Inflation of the idea of China’s exclusivity was necessary for internal use, to keep its people in check.⁶² The basic formulation of Chinese foreign policy was: “There is nothing external for the Ruler”.

The Qing “Manchu Dynasty of China” was next in line. This is what kind of dynasty it was. Lands of various Tungus peoples (descendants of the Jurchen) who had long lived in the Amur region were located to the north of the Ming State. They were not included in the Chinese empire. Their leaders received from the Chinese aid, titles, economic and political advantages, which were very useful during times of constant strife.⁶³ Like Tibet, they exchanged gifts with China, which were obviously interpreted as tribute there. China successfully used these leaders to “curb some of the barbarians by using the others”.

Tong, one of the clans of the descendants of the Jurchen, moved from the Mount Pektusan (on the border of Manchuria and Korea) into the southern part of Manchuria. This clan claimed land, based on which Manchu possession was formed. Nurhaci (1559–1626), who was the head of this clan, subordinated the neighbouring tribes and took many captives, thus initiating a strong state. In 1589, Nurkhaci declared himself *wang* (prince or king), and in 1596 he declared himself

59 Mogultai...

60 List of tributaries...

61 In: Sladkovsky, 1979, p.166.

62 Goncharov, 2006, p.136–137.

63 Tikhvinsky, 1979, p.206.

wang of the Jianzhou State.⁶⁴ His army used a “banner” system that was based on combining civilian and military foundations that originated from the Khitan, the Tungus tribes, the Mongols and the Chinese. Initially, there were four corps, or “banners”, which included only the pure Manchus and related tribes. “Banners” containing other nations (Mongols and Chinese) were created later.

The Chinese initially considered the Manchu State as dependent, and Nurhaci received titles from the Ming Emperor.⁶⁵ Having united different tribes, Nurhaci started a war against the Chinese. In 1616, he bestowed upon himself the title of Great Khan (Emperor), which was later augmented by the era name Tien-ming (Chinese for “Mandate of Heaven”). Nurhaci claimed kinship with emperors of the former Jurchen Jin State (Manchurian: Aisin Gurun – Golden Empire). So he announced his clan to be the Golden Clan (Manchurian: Aisin Gioro). Thus, the reconstructed state was labelled Hou Jin (Later Jin) by the Chinese historians. At the same time, and seemingly with more effort, the Manchu emperors emphasized their continuity with the Yuan and claimed that they had the seal of this dynasty. This was especially the case after the Mongolian Ligden Khan was defeated. In fact, by 1644, the continuity with Jin was almost forgotten.

In 1618, Nurhaci suggested seven reasons to hate Zhongguo (China). The basis of all grievances was that the Ming State “went against truth and justice”, and violated the established borders.⁶⁶ By 1622, the Manchus won several victories over the Chinese and captured Liaodong. Nurhaci proclaimed that Heavens turned towards him and away from the Ming Dynasty.

In a message to the Chinese Emperor, probably written in 1623, Nurhaci listed nineteen episodes from the history of China and neighbouring countries, to illustrate heavenly support or punishment. He finished his message with the following words: “Chinaman, you were condemned by Heaven and were shown various omens. At a time when your troops are destroyed and your lands are conquered, (you) continue to speak brave words: “(I) do not know of my errors, the army of my state is enormous,” – by (that), you, Chinaman, are competing with Heaven”.⁶⁷ As we see, the Manchu argument was purely Confucian.

In 1625, the Manchus transferred their capital from the Sungari River to Mukden. Nurhaci died in 1626. His son, Abahai, or Hongtaiji, was still listed as the dependent in China.⁶⁸ For the first time, in his message to the Ming Emperor, he himself admitted that Manchu was a dependent state. But he continued to pursue the policy of conquest. The main objective was not the expansion of the empire, but the

64 Nepomnin, 2005, p.32.

65 Martynov, 1978.

66 Levkin, G.G. Historical fabrications...

67 Pan, 2007, p.20.

68 Martynov, 1978.

conquest of neighbouring tribes for replenishing the manpower of his forces.⁶⁹ On May 5, 1636, the Manchu Khan adopted the name Qing (Pure) for his dynasty and the state, this was meant as opposition to the neighbouring Chinese Ming (Light).

In 1643, there was a revolt in China. The rebels seized Beijing, the Ming Emperor Zhu Youjian (era name: Chong-zhen) hung himself. The head of the rebels Li Zicheng declared the establishment of the new Chinese Shun State. The Qing Emperor Abahai died the same year. Fulin became the next emperor (era name: Shun-zhi). Ming generals did not have enough strength to crush the rebellion and resorted to inviting the Manchus. In 1644, Manchu troops (under the command of Dorgon, uncle and regent of the infant emperor) entered Beijing. The Chinese throne was simply abolished.⁷⁰ Fulin did not ascend to the Chinese throne, but turned China into integral part of the Qing Empire, of which he already was the emperor.

Following that, Chinese states continued to exist simultaneously with the Manchu Qing Empire (Da Qingguo, the Great Pure State): before 1662, these were the remnants of the Ming Empire (before the death of its dynasty); in 1678–1683, there was a state established by Wu Sangui with its capital in Hangzhou (see Chapter 3); Taiwan was an independent Chinese territory, where the power of the Manchus was established only in 1683.

The Han called the Manchus *guan-wai de ren* (“people from beyond the outposts”) which implied that they were from outside China, i.e. foreigners.⁷¹ The ancestral lands of the Manchus were indeed located there and, in 1668, they banned the Chinese from settling there. Annexing the Chinese states to the Qing Empire after a devastating peasant war, led to a strong decrease in the population of China. Between 1623 and 1660, more than 10 million people were killed, many millions died from epidemics, hunger and deprivation,⁷² and many become slaves. The Han did not stop their attempts to secede from the Qing Empire. Just during the first 18 years after the conquest, there were more than 100 anti-Manchu uprisings.⁷³

In 1850, an uprising in Eastern China was a success, and an independent state formed with its capital being Yongan, and later Nanjing. The rebels named their state Taiping Tianguo (Heavenly State of Great Prosperity, or Equality). Taiping rulers were following the footsteps of the founders of the Ming Empire, who also chose Nanjing as a base for initiation of separation from the Yuan State. Taiping promulgated their commitment to Christianity, destroyed Buddhist and Taoist books, subjected Confucian books to censorship and published them with editorial revisions.⁷⁴ They created a system of governance, army, etc. Their ruler was given

69 Nepomnin, 2005, p.35.

70 Levkin, G.G.China or Manchuria...

71 Levkin, G.G.China or Manchuria...

72 Nepomnin, 2005, p.77–78.

73 Patrusheva, 1981.

74 Levkin, G.G. China or Manchuria...

the title of Tian Wang, the “Heavenly Prince” (or King). At the same time, they tried to introduce universal egalitarianism in the sphere of production. Over time, Taiping was evolving into a Han empire of the old type. Its leaders wrote in 1852:⁷⁵ “China is the head, the Manchus are the feet. China is a holy country, the Manchus are dirty scum. But, alas, the feet are raised above the head”. At that time, Taiping was the only Chinese State and it bordered with the Qing Empire. In 1864, the latter procured support of the West and seized Taiping.

The Manchus did not consider themselves to be Han (Chinese). The Emperors and their closest relatives, the first six levels of aristocrats, were only the Manchus or Mongols.⁷⁶ Manchu aristocrats often married Mongol princesses. Their main language was Manchu (originated from Tungus-Manchu group of Altaic languages, it is very different to Chinese). In terms of significance in the Empire, it was followed by Mongolian and Chinese languages. Manchu script was developed before the conquest of China in 1599, by the two Mongolian translators who had served Nurhaci – Erdene Bagsh and Gagai Zarguch. The Mongol alphabet, which was based on the Uighur, was the base of the script. In order to consolidate their power, the Manchu emperors followed the Chinese tradition, and subjected unwanted historical treatises to censorship and destruction. This is why many of the Qing history sources, especially with regard to Qing and Ming, are extremely unreliable.⁷⁷

The “banner” people were given vast territories in China. They took other people’s houses along with all their property and simply banished the former owners. Because of this, as well as the previous military action, the population of Northern and Central Manchuria was greatly reduced. In their attempt to survive among the numerous Han people, the Manchus adopted a number of discriminatory measures. Here are some of them.⁷⁸ From 1662 to 1792, the Secretariat of the Qing Empire preserved the constant 5:2:1 ratio between the Manchus, the Chinese and the Mongols. Initially, all the important state and military affairs were decided by the emperor and the board of the highest-ranking aristocracy, which were all Manchus. In 1720s, a few Chinese were allowed there, but the decisive voice remained with the Manchus.

Until the 1911 Xinhai Revolution, the Manchus had firmly held all key positions in the Empire.⁷⁹ Restrictions were imposed to ensure that the Chinese could concentrate the little power they had in their hands. Chinese officials were forbidden to serve in the province, in which they were born. The Manchus were immune from Chinese courts, but the Chinese could undergo trial in Manchu courts. Similar crimes were less punishable for the Manchu when compared to the Chinese.

75 In: Tikhvinsky, 1966, p.29.

76 Nepomnin, 2005.

77 Tikhvinsky, 1966, p.5–75.

78 Tikhvinsky, 1966.

79 Nepomnin, 2005, p.58–59, 102–104.

Marriages between the Manchus and the Chinese were forbidden. It was believed that the Manchus constituted a unique class of warriors. Commercial and industrial activities were forbidden to them. In the mid-19th century, the Minning Emperor (era name: Dao-guang) stated his opposition to Manchus receiving any education beyond learning the Manchu language, horseback riding and archery. However, in practice, this was rarely the case, especially as far as the officials were concerned. Traditional Chinese schooling was initially encouraged only among the Chinese. An indication of the subordination of the Chinese to the Manchu Emperor was their duty to shave heads and wear a plait. Initially, many Chinese resisted this, as long hair, tied in a bun on top and fastened with a big pin, was a symbol of Han superiority over the “barbarians”. But people were executed for this kind of resistance. Lastly, Manchu and Mongol women did not have to make their feet smaller by taping, unlike the Chinese women. The Manchu government repealed discriminatory measures just before its fall, in a desperate attempt to retain power.

Of the Chinese concepts that were embraced by the Manchus, the concepts of the Middle State and basing authority of the Emperor on the “Mandate of Heaven” were especially important. This was a way to justify their territorial claims, including those over China itself. To some extent the story with the Yuan Dynasty was repeated here. They did not have another model of ruling the world.

Together with the concept of the imperial power, the Manchu adopted a tributary system. According to the Qing court, the main reason for committing to the tributary system was national security, and someone who wanted to enter into a relationship with their empire had to do so as an imperial “tributary”. The absurdity of this system is clear from the list of tributaries, given in the “Da Qing li-chao shi-lu” (“Authentic Successive Records of the Great Qing Dynasty”). In addition to the neighbours of China: Tibet, Turfan, Korea, Annam, Siam, Burma and Mongolian countries, the “tributaries” included Laos, Portugal, the “Papacy”, Russia, Java, England and Holland.⁸⁰ In the 17th century, Korea acknowledged vassalage of Beijing; in the 18th century Burma, Vietnam and Nepal. Later, Beijing announced Bhutan to be its vassal as well. Between 1662 and 1875, the list of Qing “tributaries” includes 18 countries.⁸¹ In addition to the above, it features Ryukyu, Sula, Kirgiz, Kokand, and others. Did they really all belong to China?

The inclusion of Holland is particularly noteworthy. It is stated that in 1653, Holland asked for the privilege of sending tribute to the Emperor. The decree of Emperor Xuanye (era name: Kang-xi) stated:⁸² “Presently, the Ambassador of the Ho-lan State, who arrived with a tribute, said that their state is adjacent to Russia”. Holland’s “loyalty” was acknowledged. Moreover, it was stated that “Ho-

80 Van Walt, 1987.

81 List of tributaries of Imperial China...

82 Some Manchu Documents, 1912.

lan” country helped the imperial troops to repel rebels and pirates from the coast of Taiwan. In fact, the Dutch simply defended their trading outpost against pirates.

Similar false interpretations were used with regard to Russia and Great Britain. Correspondence with the Russians (as opposed to Western Europeans) was conducted by the 4th Expedition of Lifanyuan (The Office of External Relations), which was also involved in managing the affairs of princes and officials of Tibetan and Mongolian principalities. Just the Manchus and the Mongols worked there, and no Chinese were allowed.⁸³ Relationships with other countries were managed by the Office of Foreign Guests Affairs, which was a branch of the Ministry of Ceremonies. Perhaps the assignment of Lifanyuan to oversee the relations with Russia was not accidental. The Qing emperors claimed possession of the Yuan emperors’ seal, and Russia had earlier belonged to the Great Mongol Empire. While claiming the Mongol “legacy”, the Qing rulers could have included Russians there as well, who did not even know that they were “tributaries of China”.

Documents from the negotiations of the Russian embassies with the Manchu officials were preserved. The latter tried to interpret them as “barbarians bringing tribute”. Emperor Xuanye wrote:⁸⁴ “I, as the single ruler of the Under Heaven, this includes both inside or outside of China, take care of all people living in all countries, as if they were the youngest children, and wish that everyone prospers in their own place living in peace”. Xuanye also stated in his message to the Dalai Lama and the Mongolian princes that “he governs the world”.⁸⁵ Translations of Russian Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich’s letters to the Qing Emperor were made, obviously, by the officials of the latter. After listing the titles of the Russian Tsar, the recipient of the letter was referred to as “Lord of all States, the Greatest King of the Middle State”.⁸⁶

The ships of the British embassy, which arrived at the port of the Qing Emperor in 1793, were forced to display flags with the inscription “carrier of tribute from the British side”. The Emperor Hongli (era name: Qian-long) handed an edict to this embassy before its return, addressed to King George 3rd:⁸⁷

“You, O King, live beyond the confines of many seas, nevertheless, impelled by your humble desire to partake of the benefits of our civilisation, you have dispatched a mission respectfully bearing your memorial. <...> I have perused your memorial: the earnest terms in which it is couched reveal a respectful humility on your part, which is highly praiseworthy. In consideration of the fact that your Ambassador and his deputy have come a long way with your memorial and tribute, I have shown them high favour and have allowed them to be introduced into my presence. <...> As to

83 Esherick, 2006, p.232.

84 Some Manchu Documents, 1912.

85 See, for example, Martynov, 1978, p.146.

86 Ivanovsky, 1888.

87 In: History of China, 1974, p.188–189; English text taken from Blackhouse and Bland, 1914 – in: <http://www.wellesley.edu/Polisci/wj/China/208/READINGS/qianlong.html>.

your entreaty to send one of your nationals to be accredited to my Celestial Court and to be in control of your country's trade with China, this request is contrary to all usage of my dynasty and cannot possibly be entertained. <...> If I have commanded that the tribute offerings sent by you, O King, are to be accepted, this was solely in consideration for the spirit which prompted you to dispatch them from afar. Our dynasty's majestic virtue has penetrated unto every country under Heaven, and Kings of all nations have offered their costly tribute by land and sea. As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures. <...> It behoves you, O King, to respect my sentiments and to display even greater devotion and loyalty in future, so that, by perpetual submission to our Throne, you may secure peace and prosperity for your country hereafter". A further mandate in the same letter ended with the words: "Tremblingly obey and show no negligence!"

Here, the term "Under Heaven" was obviously used as a synonym for all countries in general, and the Manchu Emperor was the ruler of this Under Heaven.

When receiving European embassies, the Qing officials checked that the messages contained the word *biao*, meaning congratulatory report from a vassal, instead of the word *shu* signifying a letter with equal statuses of sender and recipient.⁸⁸ The members of the embassies, including the ambassador, were to kneel before the Emperor when prompted, and follow this with three prostrations. The same procedure was to take place at the end of an audience. Several embassies were unsuccessful, as they refused to take part in a humiliating ceremonial. Well, this only meant that some "barbarians" were still "unenlightened" ... It still did not contradict the idea that "enlightening" the rest of the world ("barbarians") was only a matter of time. For example, in 1795, the Emperor Hongli identified Tibet as *waifan* (periphery)⁸⁹, a border area outside the *Zhongguo*. At the same time, he said that Tibet "should not be compared with Russia, which was still wild and should be tamed, and thus was correctly labelled as barbaric".⁹⁰

Later on, the Qing Government tried to present the escalating pressure and aggression from the West as the traditional relations of tributary. Under the rule of the Emperor Minning (1821–1850), during the Opium War, his aides reported:⁹¹ "The British barbarians have brought their tribute to this dynasty several times. Their Table of Ranks was borrowed from our state, and all their officials speak Chinese".

The Qing Government tried to interpret in the same way even unequal treaties, which were forced onto it in the second half of 19th century by the Western powers.⁹² The regime of biggest prosperity was interpreted as "equal treatment of all

88 Lu, 1828.

89 Blondeau and Buffetrille, 2008, p.29.

90 In: Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.277.

91 In: Malyavin, 2000, p.604.

92 Spiritual Culture of China, 2009, p.166–167.

the barbarians”, emperor’s “equal compassion towards them”, or the “pacification of the barbarians”. The signing of an unequal treaty with a Western power was treated as a “resignation” from it, an opportunity to “keep it under control”, to “receive tokens of appreciation from the barbarians”. In the view of Beijing, such a relationship was to hold back the expansion of the West. The aggressions of Britain and France were treated as a “revolt of the barbarians” that were to be “tamed”. After 1860, the ambassadors of other countries were accredited in Beijing not in the presence of the Head of State, as the representatives of equal countries would be, but as representatives of the “countries-tributaries”.

All of this can be submitted as “documentary evidence” “proving” European countries to be subordinate to China.

Thus, Qing was a Manchu state, which borrowed Han imperial ideology. Manchu and Han are different peoples with different ethnogenesis and different histories. The Qing Empire was not China, but the state that was established by Manchus outside of China and before the latter was conquered. After annexing China, the Manchus borrowed its state system, and when they annexed Mongolia, they emphasized their continuity with the Mongol Empire. According to the Manchu aristocracy, careful adherence to sinocentric foreign policy model reinforced the legitimacy of the Manchu government inside the country.⁹³ This was also aided by the use of the Chinese administrative model on original Han lands, which provided a number of old rights and privileges of the Han feudal lords. In general, the Manchu Empire made the ideologies of the conquered Ming State blossom fully even if these ideologies were designed primarily for domestic use.⁹⁴

Thus, the European term “dynasty” and its Chinese translation have different meanings. In Europe, it is used to describe a name of rulers from one family, who are succeeding one another. “The Chinese dynasty” is a name of a state during the period of reign of one family that has adopted the Chinese concept of monarchic power; it is such a state which includes a part of China, or it contains China as a whole, or it is just China, or it is a part of it that was proclaimed to be a state, or it is a state adjacent to China’s borders whose ruler, having proclaimed himself the Emperor, claimed the Chinese throne. While in Europe, the concept and designation of dynasty (as a number of rulers from one family) is separated from the concept and designation of a state, in China – both are intermingled. In Europe, there may be different dynasties, states may appear, disappear, join with other states, crumble, etc. In contrast, China (Zhongguo) always exists because it surpasses other countries, and the mission of its Emperor is to rule the whole world. China may split at some point, but eventually, it will certainly reunite. It cannot become part of another state, even if it is conquered, as any State shall submit to it

93 Namsaraeva, 2003.

94 Goncharov, 2006, p.137.

by definition. Thus, any such change simply points to the change in power within China itself – or, more precisely, the name of a period of reign changes, which is used for naming the state at that time.

Whoever rules in China, no matter what state seized some of it or even the whole – these are all different “dynasties of China”. This archaic system has not sunk into oblivion. Rather, it formed the basis of “nation-building” in the PRC.

Solution to the “Ethnic Problem” in China

It is said that China was ruled by dynasties from “minority nationalities”. It always ended with the restoration of Han power and acquisition of new territories. Back in the early 20th century, this was clearly articulated by Liang Qichao, a pro-Western thinker, and advocate of democracy and Chinese globalism:⁹⁵

“There is one great deed for which our ancestors toiled for five thousand years. What is this deed? I call it “the expansion of the Chinese nation”. Initially, our Chinese nation had only a few small tribes living in Shandong and Henan. Over thousands of years they grew, grew, grew and turned into a great nation that created a huge and magnificent state. Our nation has grown in two ways: one way was the assimilation of countless nationalities inside and outside of our borders; and the second was the relocation of the people of our nation to the borders year after year and the expansion of territory. <...> Such was the way of history over five thousand years”.

Liang Qichao noted that, since ancient times, the Han were aware of themselves as fellow-brothers, united by strong bonds.⁹⁶ He noted also that the Han usually respected the customs of non-Han people that lived in areas with a mixed population.⁹⁷ This neutralizes any attempt to organize a resistance movement, and leads to successful implementation of assimilation. In his opinion, among the main weaknesses of the Han people are such traits as weak patriotism, abstract understanding of the state, and lack of firmness on the issue of independence.

Maybe this is because all those who conquered China over the last 900 years eventually brought harm to themselves. They did not understand that such an addition to their empires as a country, whose population exceeded that of the victors by hundreds of times, sooner or later would lead to their absorption.

In the early 20th century, the Han people successfully overcame their “weaknesses”. As was already mentioned (see Chapter 4), Xinhai Revolution took place under the slogans of Han nationalism. The Han nationalist was Sun Yatsen, “The Father of the Republic”. That, however, did not prevent him from starting a revolutionary career abroad. In his opinion, the Manchus had “a beastly temper, they did not have any

95 *Zui jin zhi wushi nian (The Last Fifty Years)*, Shanghai, 1923, 1–2. — in: *The Ideological and Political Essence of Maoism*, 1977.

96 *Spiritual Culture of China*, 2009, p.19.

97 *Moskalev*, 2005.

idea about how to shape relations between people. <...> Barbarians cannot govern a civilized nation, wild tribes can not rule over China. <...> We, the Han people, the descendants of Huangdi, cannot live under the same sky with the robber Manchus; either we will destroy them or they will destroy us”.⁹⁸

In 1905, in Tokyo, Sun Yatsen headed the Tongmen Hui, the Chinese alliance of revolutionary organizations. The declaration of that union in August 1905 outlined the goals of the revolution and the future governance of the country: “Since the founding of the Chinese State, it was always managed by the Chinese and, although it happened that the foreigners seized power, our ancestors have always found the strength to drive them out, to revive the glory of the motherland and save it for the descendants. Even now, the proclamation of the Han struggle for fairness and the expulsion of the northern barbarians is a continuation of glorious feats of our ancestors.<...> Those whom we now call the Manchus, descend from the eastern barbarian tribes who lived beyond our border forts. During the Ming Dynasty, they often harassed the borders of our state. Later, taking advantage of unrest in China, they invaded us, destroyed our Chinese state, took power and forced us, the Han people, to become their slaves. Millions of the discontented were killed by them. <...> China should be a state of the Chinese, and managed by the Chinese. After the expulsion of the Manchus, our national state will revive in all its glory”.⁹⁹ In a speech “On Three People’s Principles”, delivered in Tokyo in 1906, Sun Yatsen said that Hans will regain their own state, but only when they take power into their own hands: otherwise the state will still remain “not ours, not Chinese. <...> We are the world’s largest nation, most ancient and most cultured”.¹⁰⁰

The term “the Chinese” was synonymous with the term “the Han”. The main objective was to restore the Chinese national state by eliminating the empire of foreigners. In essence, the only thing that was new was the republican idea, borrowed from abroad. Until the 20th century, the Manchus in China were regarded as foreign invaders, who formed a separate military caste, who took advantage of their privileges. Despite the partial sinicization, they did not become the Chinese. The profound division between the Manchus and the Han, in fact, remained until the end of the monarchy.¹⁰¹

Thus the revolutionary accusations against the Manchus were not just propaganda. They were based on the reality of the time: the Manchu Empire was not China. Moreover, this fact became the basis for discrimination of Manchu in China after the revolution. They became the only large “minority nationality”, which had no regional autonomy. As far as I know, during the time of Mao, any attempt to

98 In: *Xinhai Revolution*, 1968, p.38, 53.

99 Sun Yat-sen, 1961, p.113–117.

100 Sun Yat-sen, 1985, p.110.

101 Rhoads, 2001, p.68–119.

organize a circle or a class for studying the Manchu language was immediately nipped in the bud as a struggle against counter-revolution and monarchism.

The Xinhai Revolution began in 1911. It led to the collapse of the Qing Empire and proclamation of the Republic of China. Some revolutionaries have even called it a “racial revolution”, sweeping aside all other social issues. All provincial governments made it their main objective to overthrow the monarchy and establish the republic of the Han nation.¹⁰² Sun Yatsen proclaimed the Republic of China on October 26, 1911, while he was in France. The solemn proclamation of the same took place on January 1, 1912 in the Chinese Nanjing.

The above quotations reflect Sun Yatsen’s early views. After the revolution, a question about China’s territory was raised. The claims were not limited to historical limits, the Great Wall of China, but stretched out to foreign lands, that were conquered by “barbarians” – the Manchu. The question had to be settled with the people to whom the lands belonged. Now, the great revolutionary thought that all nationalities should be “recast” as in the oven, thus assimilating into the Han nation; here he was influenced by the old American nation concept.¹⁰³ Maybe he was spurred by the realization that the Tibetans, Mongols and the Turkis wanted independence instead of revolution and a republic, and that the ancient Chinese doctrine of assimilation of neighbours was the best answer to that question.

Sun Yatsen’s travels abroad taught him more than just the concept of the American nation. Apparently, he had met with the classical nationalism of the beginning of the 20th century, when it was believed that unitary nations had to be constructed from minorities: the French from the Bretons, Languedoc and Parisians; the Turkish people from the Ottomans, Armenians and Greeks. The interests of minorities could be ignored in the process.

In the declaration that was promulgated during his inauguration as temporary President of China on January 1, 1912, Sun Yatsen expressed the need for the “national unity” of China, and the need to merge all the lands of all nations into one state, and the peoples themselves into “one family”.¹⁰⁴ Paragraph 2, Article 3 of the Tongmen Hui Charter, adopted in February 1912, stated: “Carry out assimilation of nationalities”.¹⁰⁵ On March 10, representatives of seventeen Chinese provinces have adopted a Provisional Constitution for the Republic of China, which stated that the Chinese territory included not just the twenty-two provinces, but also Inner and Outer Mongolia, Tibet and Qinghai (Art. 3). Though Art. 1 declared that “the Republic of China was established by the Chinese people”, the Mongols and the Tibetans were incorporated into it against their will. On September 1, 1912, in Beijing, Sun Yatsen argued that non-Han nationalities of China are better

102 Nepomnin, 2005.

103 Moskalev, 2005.

104 Sun Yatsen, 1985, p.121–122.

105 *Spiritual Culture of China*, 2009, p.22.

off as part of the Republic of China, where their political rights as citizens, in contrast to the monarchy, will be respected.¹⁰⁶

The General Yuan Shikai, who had enough forces to defeat the Republicans, did not do that. Instead, he put pressure on the court factions, demanding the abdication of the young Emperor. On February 12, 1912, Empress Dowager Longyu, on behalf of Puyi, signed a decree whereby Yuan Shikai was instructed to form a provisional republican government. Most of the Han traditionalists saw this, above all, as the victory of their nation over the Manchus. According to their point of view, the throne was to be taken by a Chinese dynasty. However, all members of the Zhu family, who ruled the Ming Empire, were killed by the Manchus, and the creation of a new dynasty was deemed as not possible.¹⁰⁷ The way out was to accept the republic. Han traditionalists hoped that the successful general, Yuan Shikai, would become the new emperor. In their understanding, it was just a regular change of dynasty, as the Heaven deprived Aisin Gioro clan from their “Heavenly Mandate”. But, for the first time in history, everything was different. A republic (Greek: democracy) came in place of the monarchy.

Six weeks after taking office, Sun Yatsen renounced his post in favour of Yuan Shikai. The rite of his abdication was conducted at the grave of Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming Empire.¹⁰⁸ His message was read out, which stated the establishment of a free republic in China and the destruction of a powerful nation’s enemy, i.e. the Manchus. It was also stated that “the Ming Emperor Taizu drove the Mongols out and revived the Chinese state”.¹⁰⁹

All these statements can be considered to be official recognition of the fact that the Republic of China had no continuity from the Yuan and Qing states, and that neither of these empires was China. Continuity was present with the Ming, the empire of the Han, which however lacked Tibet, Mongolia and Xinjiang. Hence, contradiction arose: for then the Republic of China could not claim the lands that were conquered by foreign “barbarians”, the Mongols and the Manchus, for themselves.

In the first months of the Republic of China, among the Han establishment, debates about “five nationalities” took place. Differences related to the principles of the Great China (*Da Zhongguo zhuyi*) and Native China (*Benbu Zhongguo*).¹¹⁰ In early 1912, an article appeared with their summary. Proponents of the first principle recognized the Han as the only people capable of nation-building, denying that trait to the other four nations. Proponents of the second principle were in favour of granting independence to the “border” peoples, so as to secure the external borders of the republic. The latter remained in the minority. The first principle proponents

106 Moskalev, 2005.

107 Nepomnin, 2005.

108 Sidikhmenov, 1985, p.288–289.

109 Sun Yatsen, 1985, p.112.

110 Esherick, 2006, p.244.

triumphed, and the Mongols, Tibetans and the Turkic people were to be included in the republic to protect inner China, but to stop them from establishing their own states that could be used by foreign forces.

This was how the concept of a “one Chinese nation” evolved. It was born only in the early 20th century under the influence from Western ideas of nationalism and the Han people’s understanding of their Huaxia ancestors and their range.

In the 1920’s, Sun Yatsen moved from the idea of “one nation” to the idea of the Han “state nation”, while the “aliens” were simply ignored for their minority. He said that Tibetans were under the influence of England, the Mongols – Russia, and the Manchu – Japan. Thus, “they do not have the capacity to defend themselves”, only the Han people can resist aggression.¹¹¹

However, he did not consider the seizure and colonization of “barbarian” countries by the Han as aggression. Hence, he had brought the idea of revolution and democracy from the West, but not the idea of disintegrating empires. By the beginning of 1920, Liang Qichao also came to a decision with regards to the Chinese nation (Chinese: Zhong-hua guo-min), basing the Republic of China (Chinese: Zhong-hua min-guo) as the commencement of state.¹¹² In his view, the formation of this nation took four to five millennia of tremendous efforts, and now it had to play the role of the “essential core of humanity”, which creates a basis for future “great unity”.

In 1924, having assumed the countries that had already proclaimed their independence to be an integral part of China, Sun Yatsen suggested that the Chinese Government help develop their abilities of self-determination and self-government.¹¹³ As if Tibet, and Mongolia did not have centuries of statehood experience... It was only after his death, that the Kuomintang created by him began to interpret the concept of “state nation” in a multi-ethnic way.

The Communists had gone from recognition of the right of nations to self-determination to its actual denial. The Declaration of the 2nd Congress of the CPC (1922) supported the idea of forming “three autonomous states: in Mongolia, Tibet and Huijiang” (i.e. Xinjiang).¹¹⁴ With this, the future Chinese federation was supposed to have freedom, and these territories had their right of withdrawal reserved. The adopted program of the 3rd Congress of the CPC (1923) talked about self-determination in Tibet, Mongolia, Qinghai and Xinjiang. At the time, the CPC was still following the recommendations from the Comintern and the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

In 1931, the Constitution of the Soviet Republic of Jiangxi proclaimed the republics’ right to secede and create their own independent states.¹¹⁵ At the 6th

111 In: Moskalev, 2005, p.81.

112 *Spiritual Culture of China*, 2009, p.21.

113 Sun Yatsen, 1985, p.637.

114 Moskalev, 2005, p.94.

115 Shakyas, 1999, p.123.

Plenum of the CPC Central Committee in 1938, Mao Zedong put forward three main principles of national policy: equality, self-government (i.e. autonomy) and unification. Self-determination was no longer mentioned. The new position was the result of temporary cooperation with the Kuomintang. In the 1940's, the CPC used the principle of self-determination to undermine the power of the Kuomintang and to attract support from the non-Han nations.¹¹⁶ In 1938, Mao Zedong wrote "The Chinese Revolution and the CPC" where he indicated the Chinese nation consisting of different nationalities. From 1930 and onwards, the KMT practically refused to support the paragraph of the declaration from the 1st Congress of the Party, which recognized the right of nations to self-determination.

Thus, in 1930, the approaches of both parties on the national question became similar. Shortly before that, the term "minority nationality" (Chinese: shao-shu min-zu) appeared for the first time in the history of China, and in 1924 it was used at a conference of the Kuomintang, and in 1926 at that of the CPC.¹¹⁷ This was how the people of Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang became "minority nationalities" in the Han State, which was announced as "a multi-ethnic China". Since then, Chinese national policy has been constructed based on this principle. The CPC declared unacceptability of the Great Han as well as local nationalism (although, it mostly persecutes the "local" kind). It is alleged that there is "the one Chinese nation" (Chinese: Zhong-hua min-zu), which consists of different nationalities: the Han and the non-Han. Thus, the Han, Mongols, Tibetans and others are all Chinese (Chinese: Zhongguo ren).

This was how the designation of the Middle State, which was historically associated with the Han ethnicity, was fastened to the non-Han peoples and territories. Their permanent branding as "Chinese" contributes to sinicization, although it is not officially declared. Mao Zedong understood that declaration of ethnic unity is especially advantageous to the Han majority:¹¹⁸ "The population of minorities in our country is more than 30 million people. Despite the fact that they comprise only 6% of the total population, their lands are vast and occupy about 50–61% percent of the country. Therefore, it is necessary to improve relations between the Han and minority nationalities. The key to this issue is to overcome the Great Han chauvinism. At the same time, it's important to overcome the local nationalism among minorities who exhibit it".

Thus, it is not so much the need for the "minority nationalities" as their land and resources. This was why federalism was rejected. In 1958, this point was well formulated by Wang Feng, deputy director of the PRC Commission of the State Council for Nationalities:¹¹⁹ "How can the Chinese who account for 94% of the

116 Moskalev, 2005, p.97.

117 Jin, 1987.

118 Mao Zedong. On question of the right solution...

119 In: Smith, 1996, p.433–434.

country's population and the people of the several dozen minorities who account for only 6%, set up separate federal republics... How are we to lay the boundary lines separating these minority republics from one another? <...> It is absolutely impossible for various minorities to build socialism without the leadership of the Communist Party. <...> How could all the minorities register within the short period of eight years what is universally recognized as marked growth politically, economically and culturally? <...> The gradual fusion of the various nationalities on the basis of equality is the natural law governing social development". That same year, Zhou Enlai said that assimilation is reactionary when one destroys the other's nationality, but if this is a natural fusion of the nations toward the greater well-being, it is deemed progressive.

In accordance with these directives, in 1960, the Chinese scientist Jian Bozan advanced ethnographic theory of assimilation.¹²⁰ According to that theory, a "highly developed" nation that is conquering a "less developed" one, contributes not only to the latter's progress, but to gradual assimilation as well. If the conquering people are weaker spiritually, as well as in terms of civilization, when compared to the conquered nation, the former are bound to dissolve among the conquered people. This theory is consistent with the views of Liang Qichao, and has roots in ancient China. The ancient Chinese tradition did not contain concepts of Chinese culture or other cultures – there may be either Chinese culture or no culture at all.¹²¹ For example, nomadism is a type of "barbarism". In order to raise the culture of the barbarians, they must be forced into a sedentary lifestyle and become increasingly dependent on the Chinese, and that is exactly what the Communists are doing.

Currently, they do not speak of assimilation but always about unity:¹²² "There are three main bonds between all nationalities of our country that unite them into a single family and transmit these relations from one generation to the next: firstly, it is the long lasting unity of the state; secondly, these are economic and cultural ties as a result of mutual support and coexistence of ethnic groups; and thirdly, it is the relations of common interest that started to develop when all of the nationalities became involved in repelling external aggression and joint long-term revolutionary struggle". These "bonds" were discussed in detail above.

While denying the federation system, the CPC has always declared its concern for originality and autonomy of "minority nationalities". What happens in reality? China is a unitary state. "For China, this means that values of the Han culture, and not of cultures of ethnic minorities, are primarily reflected in all spheres of life and functioning".¹²³ Self-management of the latter is a fiction, and critical issues

120 Buldakova, V.G. National policy of the PRC...

121 Smith, 1996, p.22–23, 438, 439.

122 Jiang Zemin, 2004, p.205.

123 Klinov, 2000, p.31.

were and are solved in Beijing. Mao Zedong oversaw purposeful destruction of national cultures, promotion of migration and assimilation, as well as the redrawing of national territories. “Minority nationalities” on their original territories have no advantages over the Han. When speaking about the development of national minorities, even terms like “preservation of minority nationalities” are avoided, with measures to preserve their languages and traditions being merely decorative.¹²⁴ They are threatened by assimilation, given the increasing dependence on other provinces and the high number of unconstrained influx of the Han people.

Again, let’s remember the ancient Chinese imperial concept: *Zhongguo* cannot be a part of another state. And now, let’s see how it was reformulated in a document dated October 8, 1969:¹²⁵ “More than two thousand years ago, China had already become a single multi-ethnic feudal state. And China has always existed as a multinational state, regardless of how feudal dynasties followed one after the other, and what nationality was governing the country”. Here is the recent one:¹²⁶ “The boundaries of China underwent many changes during history, but these borders were never confined to within the areas that were inhabited by Han; prior to the invasion of China by the Western imperialist powers in the mid-19th century, China’s borders have been clearly defined”.

Thus, the rulers of other states (Genghis, Kublai, Abahai, etc.) were the “outstanding representatives of minority nationalities”, who built their states “in the north of China”. For example, the Mongolian people can be considered as a minority nationality of China, and Genghis Khan as a ruler of the Chinese “minority nationality”.¹²⁷

Because of this, the question of self-determination is not even discussed. Never mind that the Mongols still feel they are Mongols, and Tibetans are Tibetans and not Chinese. What’s the difference, whether they want to live in China or not? They are part of it, by a definition that was invented by foreigners. Curiously, during the period of the Chinese Republic (in the early twentieth century), historian Ke Shaomin drew upon new sources to supplement and amend the medieval Yuan chronicle, “Yuan shi”. His new chronicle “Xin Yuan shi” (“New History of the Yuan”) was approved by a special decree by the President of China; this was the last case of the “official dynastic chronicles”.¹²⁸

Soon after the proclamation of the Republic of China, in 1916 and 1932, books started to appear, with the basic idea of “the return of lost territories”, which included the Far East region stretching from Kamchatka Peninsula to Singapore,

124 Buldakova, V.G. National policy of the PRC...

125 In: Myasnikov, 1979, p.238.

126 The border policy of the PRC...

127 E.g. Guangming Ribao, 10.09.1979 — in: Yurkov, 1981, p.13.

128 Khrapachevsky, 2004.

Bhutan, parts of Afghanistan, India, etc.¹²⁹ In 1939, Mao Zedong proclaimed:¹³⁰ “China, having been inflicted with a military defeat, was robbed by the imperialist powers of a large number of countries that were subordinate to China and a part of its original territories. Japan annexed Korea, Taiwan, Port Arthur, the Ryukyu Islands and Penghu; Britain had seized Burma, Bhutan, Nepal and Hong Kong; France captured Annam, and even such a measly state as Portugal has deprived us of Macau”. In 1965, Mao substantiated these claims:¹³¹ “We certainly must get hold of South-East Asia, including South Vietnam, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, and Singapore. <...> The area, like Southeast Asia, is very rich, there are many minerals, it is well worth the costs of getting it. In future, it will be very useful for the development of Chinese industry. Thus, we will be able to fully compensate for the losses. Once we have South-East Asia, we will be able to increase our forces in this area, and then we will have enough strength to oppose the Soviet-East European bloc”.

In those years, Mao launched the global goal:¹³² “We must conquer the globe... In my opinion, our globe is most important; we will create a powerful state here”. Here is a list of “lost territories”: Burma, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal, Bhutan, north of India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Ryukyu Islands, three hundred islands in South China, East China and Yellow Seas, Kyrgyzstan, southern Kazakhstan, Badakhshan Province of Afghanistan, Mongolia, Transbaikalia and south of the Russian Far East all the way to Okhotsk City.¹³³ The “lost territories” constitute more than ten million square km. This exceeds the area of the current territory of China (9.6 million sq. km). Such claims have never been made by any other state in the world.¹³⁴ So the Marxist-Leninist idea of world revolution concurred with the concept of “Mandate of Heaven” to universal power.

Presently, China does not declare the world revolution and does not officially make claim to all of these countries. Nevertheless, such an approach was applied historically. For example, the volume 5 of the multi-volume academic Atlas of Chinese History¹³⁵ states the following borders of the Tang Empire (618–907): in the west, up to the northern shores of the Aral Sea and Balkhash Lake (maps 32–33); in Eastern Siberia – up to the Angara River and the current Okhotsk (maps 50–51). At the same time, the northern border in the Far East is not displayed entirely for the lack of space. On the Tang territory in Central Asia (maps 63–64), even the military-administrative units are indicated, which existed only on paper. This area is called “General-Governorship of the Pacified West” (Chinese: Anxi du-hu fu).

129 Myasnikov, 1979, p.234–235.

130 Mao, 1948.

131 In: Sladkovsky, 1979, p.165–166.

132 Mao Zedong sisyang wansui, 1967 — in: Yurkov, 1981, p.3.

133 Rozhintsev, A. The four sides of the world...

134 Yurkov, 1981, p.10.

135 Zhongguo lishi ditu ji, 1996.

Obviously, most of these vast territories were never ruled by China, and the creators of the “Atlas” included them within the borders of Tang Empire based solely on not too confident localization of the tribes, which, according to written sources, at one time or another visited the Imperial court with “tribute”. It was rather strange to consider the vassal tribes, whose dependence from the Tang capital of Chang'an was only nominal, as part of the Chinese Empire governed from the centre along with the actual Chinese lands (there is no difference in the “Atlas” in fill colour between these areas and the central provinces).

But on maps 82–83, the “Five Kingdoms, ten States” (year 943), these kingdoms and states include territory that was not Chinese at that time. For example, Tibet (based on the borders and fill colour) is shown as overly vast, stretching to the north to Baikal Lake, beyond Amur and on Sakhalin. In volume 8, that was devoted to the Qing Empire, on general maps 3–4 for the year 1820, this country is shown to include the modern Khabarovsk Region with the Evreiskaya Autonomous Region, Amur Region, Sakhalin and Tyva (in Russia), Semirechie and Balkhash (Kazakhstan), as well as modern Kyrgyzstan and parts of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Ladakh is assigned to Tibet, and Tibet itself is shown to be one of the provinces, no different from other provinces of China proper. The islands of the South Seas, which the PRC now claims, are also shown to be Chinese (Zhong sha, Dong sha, Nan sha).

It is reasonable to explain such mishaps in academic publication by political order of the Chinese leadership. I can also mention the 4-volume “History of Tsarist Russia’s Aggression Against China” published in 1978–1980. It was argued there that if China’s Han and Tang dynasties sent their armies far abroad, if different nations created their dynasties of Liao, Jin, Yuan and Qing, if Manchus invaded the Russian Amur region or captured Mongolian lands – then all of these were the internal affairs of China, while the revolt of dependent peoples was treated as treason or an attempt to split the motherland.¹³⁶

Since the 1990’s, Marxist education in the PRC has been replaced by a “patriotic” one. It emphasizes the “unique national conditions of China” that distinguish it from other countries.¹³⁷ It is no longer the Communist Party that is glorified as such, but rather the PRC as a nation-state that is guarded by the CPC. The latter legitimizes itself through “patriotism” and “unique national conditions”.

Economic success makes China one of the world’s greatest powers. In the attempt to control the inevitable in this case westernization, the authorities have increased their attention to the Chinese culture. The emphasis is on “soft power”, Chinese nationalism, and Confucianism as a purely Chinese doctrine. Besides, the teachings of Confucius are more ethical than religious. Because of this, it has fewer contradictions to the materialist dogmas of Marxism, when compared to other

¹³⁶ Yurkov, 1981, p.12.

¹³⁷ Zhao Suisheng, 2004, p.215–240.

religions. Confucianism and Chinese nationalism are supported outside China too. In the late 1980's, Chinese authorities decided to create a hundred Confucius Institutes worldwide, and about forty are already functioning. In this way, China is undergoing internal integration and is also creating a region of Confucian culture in countries that surround it.¹³⁸ Isn't this the "transformation of barbarians" that was referred to above? As the ideological base of the CPC is Marxism-Leninism, this "transformation" is now linked with the communist ideology.

Thus, by declaring the equality of nationalities of the PRC, the Republicans (the bourgeois, and then the communist) have adopted (and are adopting) policies that give real advantages to the most numerous nationality. "The one Chinese nation", which consists of different nationalities of the PRC, is actually the Han nation in its process of assimilation of "minorities". This is how we returned to the conclusions drawn by Liang Qichao, which were quoted at the beginning of this section.

The Status of Tibet: a Historical Retrospective

The "Tibet is an integral part of China" concept appeared in the 20th century. Initially, the Republic of China only pointed to its vassal subordination to various empires.¹³⁹ A detailed investigation of numerous Chinese sources has shown that modern Chinese historiography (both in PRC and in Taiwan) is characterized by an endorsement of policy of the Qing government, and modern research in Taiwan is largely explained by provisions of the KMT on "the one Chinese nation".¹⁴⁰ At the same time, if the PRC research is under a strong influence of Marxist-Leninist ideology of the CPC, then in Taiwan it is influenced by the KMT ideology (for example, one of the modern maps that was published in Taiwan, shows Mongolia and Tuva to be within the boundaries of the republican China). However, in recent times, there is a trend of moving away from such views both in Taiwan and in the PRC.

Nevertheless, the old maps, which placed Tibet within China, remain to be an important argument. Not everyone knows that there are many other maps. For example, there is an ancient map of the Ming Empire, where Tibet was not marked at all (see below). There are European maps, on which it was shown as an independent state. For example, these are maps of P. van der Aa (1680), G. de L'Isle (1700), W. Guthrie (1785), A. Finley (1827), S.A. Mitchell, Jr. (1860). In 1908, in London, an atlas was published, which showed "the eighteen provinces of China proper, and four dependent territories", with Tibet included among the latter. The map that was published in 1942 in the U.S. shows China, Manchukuo, Mongolia and Tibet as individual states. In 2008, these cards were published as a calendar.¹⁴¹

138 Lukyanov, 2005.

139 Sperling, 2004.

140 Namsaraeva, 2003.

141 Maps of Tibet, 2008.

“Since ancient times Tibet was an inalienable part of China. Even two thousand years ago, people living in Tibet already had ties with people of Han nationality, who lived in Central China. <...> While China has long been in decline, was ruled by many dynasties and its Central Government has repeatedly alternated, at all times Tibet was under rule of the Central Government of China”.¹⁴²

In fact, the Tibetan nation formed on the Tibetan Plateau independently from the Chinese. Tibetan statehood has formed independently also. As a neighbour of the Chinese Tang Empire, Tibet was at the peak of its power. Tibetans conquered the Chinese capital, the city of Chang'an. As for the “tribute” that was brought by the Tibetans, it can be seen from the history of Tibetan-Chinese relations in the 7th–9th centuries that it was the Chinese who had to pay tribute to Tibet, and not vice versa.¹⁴³ This means that it was certainly not under the “rule of the Central Government of China”. It is noteworthy that the independence of Tibet from the Tang Empire is recognized by unbiased Chinese historians.¹⁴⁴

Some authors consider the marriage of the King of Tibet Songtsen Gampo with the Chinese Princess Wencheng (in 646) to be the most important event in the history of Tibet, which initiated its integration into China. The Treaty of 821–822 is interpreted in the same way, because the Chinese Emperor of the Tang State was indicated as “uncle” there, and the Tibetan King as “nephew”. These interpretations are wrong. Wencheng was the second wife of Songtsen Gampo, his first wife was Bhrikuti, the Nepalese princess. Thus, by this logic, we should discuss the joining of Tibet to Nepal.¹⁴⁵ Songtsen Gampo had totally five wives. Then, the contract that was signed in 821, between Tibet and Tang (see text in Chapter 2), was a treaty between equal states. Most researchers agree on this.

Further, treaties of these types have been long in practice in Asia, as well as Europe.¹⁴⁶ If suzerains' statuses were different, one of them was called “uncle”, “elder brother”, etc., while the other was “nephew”, “younger brother”, etc. This did not mean the subordination of one monarch to another or the suzerainty of one state over another.¹⁴⁷ Both Asia and Europe had independent states, whose monarchs bore titles of different rank, such as princes, kings, emperors, etc. Moreover, even the persons of the same rank interacted with one another as a senior and junior, depending on the power status of their nations. However, the Chinese emperors who claimed authority over the world interpreted such differences as subordination. In this case, there were no signs of subordination of Tibet by the Tang State (see Chapter 2).

142 Briefly on Tibet: a historical sketch...

143 Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.47.

144 See Vembu, 2007.

145 Ngabo, 1988.

146 The Chinese have used these widely since the 2nd century BC

147 E.g. Yuzefovich, 2007.

Moreover, the position of strength was occupied by Tibet, and not by China. The situation is somewhat similar to the famous episode that happened to the ancient Russian Prince Vladimir. In 988, having seized the Byzantine City of Hersones in Crimean Peninsula, he demanded that the emperors Basil and Constantine arrange his marriage with their sister Anna.¹⁴⁸ After marriage, Vladimir received a Byzantine court title, and helped to suppress a revolt in the Byzantine Empire. That is, from the perspective of Constantinople, he became the vassal of Byzantium. However, in reality, Kievan Rus' remained an independent state, and the Russian Federation or Ukraine did not become "an integral part" of Greece.

During the period of the disintegration of the Tibet, following the reign of Langdarma, the key ties shifted from being with China to Nepal and India.¹⁴⁹ After three hundred years of disintegration, Tibet became united under the authority of spiritual leaders "in the shadow of the Mongol supremacy". In the 13th century, foundations were laid for relations between theocratic rulers of Tibet and the Mongols and, later, the Manchu emperors according to the principle of "spiritual priest – secular patron". This is something else other than the well-known relationships such as "vassal – suzerain" or "citizen – state". An analogy of this concept in medieval Europe may be seen in the theory of "two swords": the Pope, possessing the spiritual sword, gives the secular sword to an emperor or king.

The agreement was concluded not between Tibet and Mongolia, but between Prince Godan and Sakya Pandita. During the time of Kublai, the relationship of the Mongol khans with the highest Sakya hierarchs was formalized in accordance with the "priest – patron" principle. From a formal point of view, Sakya Pandita was granted secular power over Tibet from outside of his country, by the Mongolian Khan. But the Khan himself established the legitimacy of his "universal" power in accordance with a religious mandate from the Lama. International law does not have a standard category to denote the relations between Tibet and the Mongols of the Yuan state.¹⁵⁰

The official Chinese historiography of dynasties attempted to indicate state borders clearly (it's another question to what extent they represented the real situation). But Tibet was not included in the list of Yuan State's provinces.¹⁵¹ The Mongols did not impose taxes on Tibet, Tibetans did not have to serve in the imperial military; did not carry out compulsory work at the empire's request; they were not assigned to any of the four classes of the empire's population; all imperial documents only related to Tibet's relations with the Mongols, but not with the Chinese.¹⁵² Moreover, Phagpa Lama established "priest – patron" relations with

148 Karamzin, 1989.

149 Van Walt, 1987.

150 Van Walt, 1987.

151 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005; *The Mongols and Tibet*, 2009.

152 A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

Kublai Khan and was granted authority over Tibet in 1254, that is, long before China was annexed to Mongolia (1279).

The relationship between the Mongols and Tibetans was much closer than that between the Mongols and the Chinese or other peoples of the Yuan State. These relations were established independently from Mongol rule over China. Thus, the Mongolian-Tibetan and Mongolian-Chinese relations were separate. The old relations between Tibet and Yuan were cancelled before China's breakaway. As was rightly pointed out by M.C. van Walt, the source of power was then once again in Tibet and not beyond it. Thus, Tibet and China were not linked by Mongol subjugation.

Then, during the Ming Empire, for the first time since the Tang era, bilateral relations of Tibet with China reappeared. These were personal "priest – patron" relations of Tibetan lamas with Chinese rulers, which were maintained in parallel with the relations with Mongols. These links did not affect the governing of Tibet. During this period Tibet was completely independent (see Chapter 2). Over time, these ties ended. Hence, it is strange to see the assertion that "the Central Government of the Ming Dynasty inherited methods of the Yuan Dynasty in terms of Tibet's management".¹⁵³

The exchange of gifts continued, as well as bestowments of titles, seals and offerings to Tibetan aristocrats and lamas. This did not imply subordination.¹⁵⁴ However, this point of view was not shared by the Chinese court. They thought that if someone has brought "tribute" and received a seal, then he became a Chinese official. The opinion of the other party and the reality were not taken into consideration. These allegations are at the core of modern Chinese propaganda that Tibetans were authorized officials of the Ming. Relationships between the Ming Empire and Tibet were identical to those between other independent countries. This is evidenced, for example, by a detailed map of the Ming Empire that was drawn up in 1594 by a legal officer Wang Feng.¹⁵⁵ Its accompanying notes stated that it included all of the Chinese territory. However, it shows no Tibetan regions, not even the east of Amdo.

The 5th Dalai Lama established the rule of the Dalai Lamas over Tibet. Since then, a Dalai Lama or his office has always been a source of power. That is, this source was located inside and not outside of the state.¹⁵⁶ At that time, the Aisin Gioro, or Manchu Dynasty, ruled the Qing Empire, which included China as a constituent part. In this Empire, from the Chinese perspective, the Manchus were the same kind of foreigners as the Mongols and the Tibetans. The bilateral ties between the governments of Tibet and China were once again interrupted: the latter once again became a part of another state.

153 Briefly on Tibet: a historical sketch...

154 A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

155 The Mongols and Tibet, 2009, p.34 and map.

156 Van Walt, 1987.

The Mongols and, possibly, the Tibetans regarded the Manchu Empire as the successor to the Mongolian one. The Qing emperors made efforts to support this view. After the death of the Mongolian Ligden Khan, the eldest in the Golden clan of Genghis Khan, the Manchu Khan Abahai (Hongtaiji) proclaimed that he obtained the seal of the great Mongol khans. With this he stressed his legitimacy as the monarch of the Mongols. In 1636, the congress of the princes of southern and eastern Mongols sent an embassy to Abahai to bestow him with a title of the Bogdy Khan, which corresponds to “Emperor”. Therefore, part of the Mongols (in subsequent Inner Mongolia) recognized the continuity between the Qing and the Yuan empires. Nevertheless, the closeness that existed between the Tibetans and Mongols did not exist between the Tibetans and the Manchus: the latter were distant in ethno-cultural terms from the Tibetans when compared to the Mongols. However, this relationship was still much stronger than that between the Tibetans and the Chinese.

The title Dalai Lama was not bestowed on him by the Qing Emperor. This title was given by the Mongol Altan Khan. Only later did the Qing Emperor exchange titles with the Dalai Lama, due to mutual recognition and respect. It is argued in some Chinese documents that Gushi Khan was subordinate to the Chinese, and that it was he who led the 5th Dalai Lama to power; thus, he was also subordinate to the Chinese.¹⁵⁷ This is wrong: Gushi Khan was an independent Mongolian ruler at the time, and he was not Chinese. His relations with the Dalai Lama were based on the “priest – patron” principle. While in Tibet, Gushi Khan maintained that relationship and did not become a Tibetan king.

It is difficult to agree that the Tibetan hierarchy, and the Qing emperors treated their relationship in different ways: the former in terms of “priest – patron” principle, the latter in terms “vassal – suzerain”; that at first they tried to “ignore” these inconsistencies, and later, these relations turned into a typical vassalage to the emperor, and that the Tibetan hierarchy continued to deceive itself to “save face”.¹⁵⁸ Characters of dependence, which are listed in the cited work, do not contradict the “priest – patron” relations for the following reasons.

The Chinese historiography unambiguously interpreted the exchange of titles between the Emperor Fulin and the 5th Dalai Lama in 1653 and later (for details, see Chapter 3) as subordination of Tibet to Beijing authorities: one of the titles of the Dalai Lama translates as “Manager of the affairs of Buddhism under Heaven”; he was given a diploma and seal; and his subsequent embassies with gifts to the emperor were a tribute. Russian historians reasonably consider such an estimate as biased and not reflecting reality, as the status of the country (Tibet) is defined by status of the person, who at that time was not the formal head of the political

157 In: Shakabpa, 1988.

158 Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.116, 299 etc.

authority.¹⁵⁹ In addition, it is improper to treat polite speech of estate society as a sign of subordination. For example, the 13th Dalai Lama ended one of his letters to Nicholas 2nd with the following: “Great Emperor, as you earlier granted us your mercy and protection, so don't forget the obedient Tibet in the future”.¹⁶⁰ Following Chinese logic, this phrase should be understood as the subordination of Tibet to Russia.

The 14th Dalai Lama argues that Tibetans were not connected with China through their relationship with the Manchus.¹⁶¹ Their Emperor invited the 5th Dalai Lama even before the Manchus conquered China. He was received in Beijing already after the capture of the city by the Manchus. The latter invited the Dalai Lama not as a vassal, but because of his power and authority among the Mongols. He was received as a foreign leader. The autobiography of the 5th Dalai Lama said that at the emperor's reception, he was sitting on a lower throne. But this does not imply that he was a vassal. It was just that the Emperor led a stronger state.

Based on the fact that the Emperor Xuanye never met with the 7th Dalai Lama and the 2nd Panchen Lama and did not receive teachings from them, some conclude that he could not be regarded as the patron, even formally.¹⁶² Meanwhile, “priest – patron” relations do not require mandatory personal meetings of all the hierarchs with all of all the emperors. Further, in the text engraved on the stele in front of the Potala, the Emperor praised himself and his troops for the expulsion of the Dzungars: “Let the future generations remember the sincere devotion of the Dalai Lama and others to the three monarchs of our house, and the long-standing ambans' commitment to the Yellow law”.¹⁶³ This statement has the form of a Confucian document that declares the supreme authority of the Emperor. But it contains no contradiction to the “priest – patron” relations: “devotion” (judging from the context) does not imply submission of a vassal, and the ambans' commitment to Yellow faith implies commitment to the Gelug Sect of the Dalai Lama.

The Manchu emperors utilised different styles for different addressees: in their eyes, Confucian and Buddhist conceptions do not contradict each other. In late 1718 – early 1719, Tibet was visited by the Qing mission. Summing it up, Emperor Xuanye wrote an edict to his dignitaries: “Seeing such a situation, it is easy to come to the conclusion (on what to do). As for the new reincarnation, we should grant him the title of the Dalai Lama and present him with a diploma and seal. The next year, when the grass is green, you need to accompany him to Tibet and order him to take the throne of the Dalai Lama”.¹⁶⁴ However, in an imperial rescript that was

159 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

160 In: Belov, 2005, p.82.

161 See: Laird, 2006, p.170.

162 Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.171.

163 In: Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.171.

164 In: Besprozvannykh, 2001, p.167.

sent to the Dalai Lama to the Kumbum Monastery, he stated: “In the 4th month of the next year four senior officials, together with the commander of the great army, with great reverence, will deliver the brilliant Lama to Ü-Tsang of Tibet; they will put the lotus of his feet on the great golden throne, which was created by five fearless demons, into the incomparable Grand Lokeshvara Palace or Potala”. The two documents used different terminology: one was meant for the Chinese and Manchus, expressing terms for communication with the “barbarians”, and the other was meant for Tibetans and utilised Buddhist titles. That is, for the former, the Emperor was presented as the Son of Heaven and the lord of the Middle State, and for the latter as the patron of Buddhism.

This is not surprising. The Chinese imperial system did not permit equal relations with *any* countries. Thus, their relations with Tibet could only be of the “vassal – overlord” type.¹⁶⁵ We remember this was also the case with the Russian, British, Dutch, etc. Similarly, the Tibetan hierarchs did not become actual vassals of the emperors “with all inherent responsibilities”. They did not carry out the duties of vassals, but continued to follow the “priest – patron” scheme, something that was not denied by the emperors themselves. The latter tried to defend Tibet from external and internal dangers. That’s when the Qing troops entered Tibet, and strengthened the influence of the Qing.

The Emperor, carrying out his patron duty, participated in political appointments in Tibet, and issued its legislative acts, etc. However, the Tibetans themselves then decided on whether to follow them or not. In Tibet, there was no provincial administration, it was not subject to typical “vertical management” of China, the Dalai Lama had not only spiritual authority, but also real power.¹⁶⁶ The authority of the Dalai Lama was effective both in Tibet and on the Tibetan lands that were incorporated into Chinese provinces. In a message to the 7th Dalai Lama, the Emperor Yinzhen wrote: “At the present time, the West and our countries of Sichuan and Yunnan have common borders. Consequently, each year, there is the ceaseless exchange with envoys between the two parties”. The Chinese side is wrong to interpret this document as evidence of the subordination of Tibet to China: on the contrary, it shows that even in the middle of the 18th century, the emperors acknowledged that China was separate from Tibet (“West”) by borders.¹⁶⁷

Appointment of ambans to Lhasa increased imperial influence, but did not imply Tibet entered the Qing Empire. Tibet did become a dependent state. China’s relations with it resembled a protectorate. Ambans normally did not interfere in the affairs, acting as observers and mediators between the Tibetans and the Emperor.

165 Besprozvannykh, 2005, p.114–116.

166 Kychanov and Melnichenko, 2005.

167 A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

After 1793, their influence increased, but did not lead to the establishment of Qing sovereignty. From then, international relations were exercised by Tibet itself or by the ambans, acting in its name. Their influence ranged from being substantial to almost zero, depending on the specific situation and personality of an amban. Appointment of ministers (kalons) could have been discussed with the ambans, but Tibetans were appointed after taking into account the views of the ruling circles and the people.

A.S. Klinov writes that, in 1793, as a result of Lhasa's acceptance of "The Highest Approved Charter to Bring Order to the Situation in Tibet" (i.e. the "Tibetan Code" of 1792), which delimited the authority of Lhasa and Beijing, Tibet became a part of China.¹⁶⁸ In his view, this event added more exactness to the "priest – patron" principle: priest, as a resident of this country, accepted a lower position than that of the monarch. Therefore, Tibet became a vassal state. The Emperor asked the Dalai Lama to accept or to reject this document, and he accepted it, which means he accepted Chinese suzerainty as well. Therefore, this Code fixed the position of Tibet as an internal vassal of China. It takes precedence over the "priest – patron" principle due to being a more specific normative act, and the solution of legal conflicts is based on specific laws, not general rules. By agreeing to adopt The Code (i.e. to enter China), the Tibetan Government recognized the supremacy of Chinese law over Tibetan. The sphere of influence of the "priest – patron" principle is geographically narrower than that of Chinese law, which covered the East and a large part of Central Asia.

This argumentation is difficult to accept. China is not identical to the Qing Empire. The Code does not have priority over the "priest – patron" principle. These norms cannot even be compared within the paradigm of modern international law. Besides, The Code did not specify Tibet's annexation into the Qing Empire, nor its position as an internal vassal. The Tibetans accepted only some of the articles of The Code. By this, they accepted support in management, but did not become part of the other country, and they had not abandoned the "priest – patron" principle that was not contrary to The Code.

One of the important arguments in favour of Tibet being subordinated by the Qing is identifying reincarnations of high lamas by the Golden Urn draw. But it was not always used, and ambans did not "direct" it, but simply participated or were mere observers. One can agree with the conclusion that was based on the analysis of multiple sources:¹⁶⁹ "The Imperial representative was assigned the role of arbiter in the reincarnation selection procedure by drawing lots". Imperial seals that were conferred to the Dalai Lamas had no binding force for the Tibetans.¹⁷⁰

168 Klinov, 2008, p.41–46.

169 Namsaraeva, 2003, p.125.

170 A 60 point commentary...

The events that the Chinese sources interpreted as real control over Tibetan affairs, actually showed only help in conducting them, rather than the implementation of government functions.¹⁷¹ This is analogous to the role of high profile ambassadors in some countries. For example, the socialist bloc countries were satellites of the USSR, which had a great influence on their policies, governmental elections, formulation of legislation, and domestic and foreign policy. Soviet ambassadors had greater effect on these countries than the Qing ambans did in Tibet. But this does not mean that the socialist bloc was part of the USSR. For example, Moscow directed policies of the Mongolian People's Republic, and the Soviet forces there were much more numerous than the Qing in Tibet. I remember how in the early 1980s, on almost a daily basis, fully loaded trains with soldiers and military equipment went to Mongolia from the Soviet Union. But no one believed Mongolia to be part of Russia.

As was shown above, one should not attribute much importance to the Chinese historiography, which treated any mission as a mission of "tributaries". If Tibet and Mongolia were considered as integral parts of the Qing Empire (like China or Manchuria), they would not have had "tributary" relations resembled suzerainty. Tibetan affairs were overseen by a Beijing division of Lifanyan, which concentrated not on the Manchus and the Chinese, but on "foreign" peoples: the Mongols, Tibetans, Russians, and Turkic people. In 1906, Lifanyan was transformed into Lifanbu, an office of Zongli Yamen (Foreign Policy Office). In general, the activity of Lifanyan on its subject territories was largely duplicative of the central authorities of the Empire, combining executive, legislative and control functions.¹⁷²

Thus, the relationship of the Manchu Emperors with the Dalai Lamas was that of the "priest – patron" kind, with some signs of a protectorate during the periods when Tibet was provided with military assistance.¹⁷³

The British intervention in Tibet-Manchu relations breached the balance. Although Tibet was considered by both parties as a political entity that was distinct from the Qing Empire,¹⁷⁴ it was Britain who recorded its suzerainty over Tibet in an international legal document. When doing this, it cared, above all, about the retention of India, her colony.

To the north of India, Britain tried to maintain a buffer zone, which would be free from influence of the Qing and Russian empires.¹⁷⁵ But Britain tried to achieve its goal without helping Tibet procure independence, as well as without trying to annex it to India as a protectorate, similar to Sikkim or Bhutan. Trying to avoid international problems, the British instead promoted the idea of autonomy

171 For detailed analysis of the Qing documents on Tibet see: A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

172 Namsaraeva, 2003.

173 Van Walt, 1987.

174 Van Walt, 1987.

175 Goldstein, 2003, p.536.

in the form of the Qing's suzerainty, that is, de facto independence in the context of symbolic subordination to Beijing.

Apparently, apart from political expediency, euro-centrism also played a role here, and the "priest – patron" relationship quite simply did not fit it. According to the diplomat Charles Bell, the 13th Dalai Lama considered relations of Tibet with the Qing to be no more than his personal relationship (as a priest) with the emperor (as a patron).¹⁷⁶ Bell was one of the few Europeans who understood the irreducibility of these relations to European concepts. And in 1903, Lord G.N. Curzon, Viceroy of India, stressed that the Dalai Lama was the sovereign of the Country, both factually and legally. On 8 January 1903, he wrote to London: "The so-called suzerainty of China over Tibet is a constitutional fiction – a political affectation, which has only been maintained because of its convenience to both parties".¹⁷⁷ Curzon noted that the amban in Tibet did not have the status of "viceroy", but was an ordinary ambassador. It is wrong to assume that the "so-called Tibetan independence has only appeared in the second half of the 19th century, during the colonial and imperialist aggression against China".¹⁷⁸ Quite the contrary: the product of this aggression was the establishment of Britain's "Chinese suzerainty" over Tibet – which became an obstacle to international recognition of the latter.

The 1904 Lhasa Convention denied the prerogative of the Qing Government to enter into contracts on behalf of Tibet. Moreover, the obligation not to lend its territory to "foreign Power" literally meant any country except Great Britain, including the Qing Empire.¹⁷⁹ The importance of the Lhasa Convention lies in the recognition by the British Government of the full capacity of the Tibetan Government to enter agreements independently from the Qing Emperor. However, in 1906, under pressure from critics, Britain signed an additional agreement with the Qing Empire. It eliminated the Qing from "foreign powers" and gave a prerogative to the Manchus of managing foreign affairs on behalf of Tibet. Now it was the Qing (to a greater extent than the United Kingdom) who became responsible for the territorial integrity of Tibet. Later, the Chinese authorities wrongly interpreted it as the abolition of autonomy.

In 19th – early 20th century, Tibet was not regarded as an integral part of any state under any agreement. The latter only recognized the power of the Emperor to sign international affairs agreements on its behalf. But even that was not regarded as inalienable. The Empire's signed international treaties and agreements were not considered valid as far as Tibet was concerned, if they were not signed specifically for that country.¹⁸⁰ This implied that there was no applicability to Tibet of contracts that

176 Bell, 1992, p.215.

177 In: Van Walt, 1987, p.32.

178 "Representative of the interests of the Tibetan people"...

179 Van Walt, 1987.

180 Van Walt, 1987.

corresponded to the Empire as a whole. C. Ran¹⁸¹ wrote that the 1907 Convention of Russia and Britain with regard to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet was illegitimate, because it was signed behind China's back. In fact, it was illegitimate because it was signed behind the back of Tibet. The PRC considers this convention to be "the first official international document, which substituted the 'sovereignty' of China over Tibet with the 'suzerainty'".¹⁸² Such thinking is exactly the one that is responsible for substitution of notions, as sovereignty was the European notion. In the Qing Empire, the very concept of power was different, and this Empire was not China in any case.

The Tibetans never recognized this suzerainty, nor the Qing's right to sign agreements on their behalf. The recognition of that suzerainty by other countries was purely nominal too. It did not limit the international personality of Tibet and created obstacles for its inclusion into the British sphere of influence.¹⁸³ This gave rise to the Manchus attempts to include it in their empire. Great Britain's privileges in Tibet, gained through the "unequal treaties" doctrine that was later adopted in the PRC, could have been declared invalid – but only if Tibet itself relinquished the agreements of 1856 and 1904. But Tibet did not do, preferring only to revise certain provisions.

In the early 20th century, the Manchu broke the "priest – patron" relations, as they did not prevent a foreign invasion of Tibet, and then attacked it themselves. The Dalai Lama was "deposed", although Beijing authorities had no right to do so. Hence, he (quite legally) declared the end of these relations. It must be stressed that these actions of the Manchus and the termination of the "priest – patron" relations occurred when the emperors themselves did not have any actual power, with the real rulers being the Empress Dowager Cixi and the Regent Empress Dowager Longyu.

The Xinhai Revolution that started in 1911, led to the abolition of monarchy and to the collapse of the Qing Empire. "In 1911, the Xinhai Revolution broke out, as a result of which, the Republic of China was formed, uniting the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui and Tibetan nationalities. The Central Government, as was the case during the dynasties of the Yuan, Ming and Qing, continued to govern over Tibet".¹⁸⁴ This is wrong. The rulers of Tibet and Mongolia had links with the Manchu Dynasty of Aisin Gioro, but not with the Republic of China. Then these links were broken.

The Revolution and the abdication of the Emperor implied the breaking of hereditary continuity of power. The act of abdication and the transfer of power to the Republican government was signed by the regent while under duress, implied transition to a new model of state and could not legitimize "transfer" of the

181 Ran, 1991.

182 Who has sovereignty over Tibet...

183 Van Walt, 1987.

184 Briefly on Tibet...

dependent countries to China. The new power was not supported not only by their peoples, but also by many Han. This can be seen by the subsequent fragmentation of China, the struggle of its various territorial groups, and the restoration of Puyi as Emperor of Manchukuo at his initiative. Thus, the successor to the Qing Empire was not China, but Manchukuo, which became the product of transformation of the autonomy of the Three Eastern Provinces in 1934.¹⁸⁵ Despite the fact that Japan restricted the sovereignty of Manchukuo, it was a state recognized by some other states. It had relations also with the Soviet Union, whose leadership in 1945 annexed it to China, and sent its Emperor to jail. The Republic of China had not declared itself to be the successor of the Qing Empire. The PRC neither declared itself to be the successor of this Empire, nor of this Republic. In addition, the Republic of China and the PRC are nation-states. This is another type of state than an empire.

It was then, that it was thought to be necessary to invent a concept of a “one multi-ethnic China”, similar to the concepts of Young Turks in the former Ottoman Empire. Using this, the Han nationalists started to “return” foreign lands. On April 8, 1912, the Chinese President Yuan Shikai issued a decree abolishing the status of Mongolia, Tibet and East Turkestan as vassal territories, and they became equated to ordinary provinces. Subsequently, this activity continued through military superiority of China over its weak neighbours, the European habit of identifying the Qing State as China, and the “big game” of the imperialist powers in Asia.

As was stated above, the legitimacy of a State that was formed as a result of a revolution is determined by the degree of its actual independence. All of the empires in such cases fell apart, and there was no doubt regarding the right of the former vassals to independence. Knowing this, for example, Soviet Bolsheviks did not conquer the lands of the former Russian Empire, but exported the revolution there, after which the new authorities asked to be united with the USSR. As a partially restored Empire, formally the USSR was not a unitary state.

A suitable case for comparison with the Qing Empire is the Ottoman Empire. Of course, one cannot talk about absolute similarity, but only of an analogy, to the extent that there are common patterns in different imperial systems. Just as the Qing (Manchu) Empire captured the Ming (Chinese), the Ottoman (Turks) conquered the Byzantine (Greek). Both the Manchu and the Ottomans made capitals of the captured states as their own capitals (Beijing and Constantinople respectively). The Manchu extended their power to Mongolia, Dzungaria and East Turkestan, and their influence to Tibet and other areas. The Turks annexed the Balkan countries, Egypt, Iraq, etc., and their influence included Algeria, Arabia, Moldavia and other countries. In both cases, there were vassal and dependent states. Both empires collapsed and went through revolutions. Because of the national liberation movement and defeats

185 Levkin, G.G. The answers to the guest book visitors...

in wars, countries (the capitals of which were the capitals of the empires) separated from them, i.e. Greece and China. Greece regained part of the original Greek lands and does not purport to the rest of the Ottoman Empire's "heritage". For example, it does not state that Yemen and Moldova are integral parts of Greece. But China, in a similar situation, announces Mongolia, Tibet, etc. as her integral parts.

The United States is another example. Nobody denies the legality of the "Declaration of Independence" of July 4, 1776, even though it was accepted without the permission of Britain. The explanation was even simpler than the one in the Tibetan case:¹⁸⁶ "It becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station".

Perhaps domestic relations of Tibet with China emerged after the revolution? At that time, China and Tibet, the Chinese President and the Dalai Lama, had no subordinate relations. Tibet had always rejected the territorial claims of China. This is well illustrated even in Chinese governmental statements of that time: that Tibet "approved", "accepted" or "joined" the Republic of China.¹⁸⁷

After returning from India, the 13th Dalai Lama officially declared the restoration of the Tibetan Government. In 1913, documents on independence were published, and then, for almost 40 years, the Tibetan Government exercised complete authority over its state. Therefore, the inclusion of the "delegates from Tibet" in the list of the Chinese Parliament members in May of 1913 was illegitimate. In 1913, the Governor of Kham became legally appointed by the 13th Dalai Lama, because Kham was not a part of China. Together with the effective central and local authorities, Tibet possessed all of the necessary State's attributes: an army, a legal system, taxation, telegraph, mail, currency, and self-sustainment. It minted its own coinage, and printed banknotes and stamps. The first delegation, headed by W.D. Shakabpa, which went to the West in 1947, possessed Tibetan passports, which were recognized by all of the states that they visited. Tibet had its own emblem and flag that are still used by the Central Tibetan Administration and freedom fighters.

Chinese propaganda stated the following with regard to this flag:¹⁸⁸ "In 1947, with support from the UK, USA and other Western countries, the Tibetan Government sent a delegation to participate in the Inter-Asian Conference that was held in New Delhi. In order to participate in this conference, they quickly made a flag of the Tibetan army depicting snow lions, and proclaimed it to be the 'Tibetan national flag'. Tibetans made their own flag, whereas the flag of P.R. China was based not on authentic national symbols, but on the ones that were borrowed from abroad – from the world revolution and communism.

186 Declaration of independence...

187 Van Walt, 1987.

188 The aid of the U.S. special services...

According to the economic criteria, Tibet was also quite consistent with the characters of a State. The boundaries of modern States with a developed economy coincide with the boundaries of the territories on which a single economic mechanism is operating.¹⁸⁹ Tibet had a self-sufficient economy and provided for its needs (see Chapter 6).

In 1947, China's National Assembly adopted a Constitution, which stipulated that Tibet was guaranteed autonomy status. Its meetings were attended by Tibetans. This is interpreted as Tibet's subordination to China. However, those Tibetans were mere observers and not participants (see Chapter 4). They did not recognize and did not sign the Constitution, having no credentials to have done otherwise. Consequently, its article on Tibet was no more legitimate than, say, if the modern Constitution of the Russian Federation published articles on the autonomy of Finland or Poland (which formerly belonged to Russian Empire). The Chinese Republicans once again used the trick from the times of the monarchy, and it turned out that the envoys of foreign State arrived to express submission and that that official reception was a ceremony of subordination of their country.

Researchers often point to the "weak spot" – the clear absence of international recognition of Tibet. The argument, in general, is as follows. According to general doctrinal provisions of public international law, an independent State should possess three main elements of juridical personality: the right of self-dependent participation in international treaties of a political nature; self-dependent participation in international organizations; and the implementation of international relations with subjects of international law on a diplomatic basis.¹⁹⁰ In 1911–1951, Tibet did not have any of the above. Although, in 1913, Outer Mongolia formally recognized Tibet's independence, from the point of view of international law, it had no right to do that, because it was officially a part of China. Bhutan and Nepal, that were maintaining relations with Tibet, were themselves countries dependent on Great Britain.

Conclusions of the International Commission of Jurists are an optional expert opinion and, according to Clause 1, Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court, are an aid when compared with international conventions, which in this case would be the Simla Convention of 1914 and the Agreement between the PRC and India in 1954.¹⁹¹ The Simla Convention is not recognition of Tibet's independence, and later it was replaced by other documents. The UN resolutions are recommendatory and not mandatory. Consequently, when answering the question regarding Tibet's status, the priority of international documents should be given to the Agreement between the PRC and the Republic of India on Trade and Relations between the Tibet Region of China and India from April 29, 1954, before

189 Klinov, 2000, p.31.

190 Klinov, 2008, p.41–46.

191 Klinov, 2000, p.450.

the UN resolutions and conclusions of the International Commission of Jurists. This agreement recognizes China's sovereignty over Tibet. Consequently, according to the priority of international documents, Tibet is a part of China.

Such reasoning is difficult to accept. In this case, the decisive treaty would be the one between Tibet and Mongolia, and here is why. The Tibetan-Mongolian Treaty was signed on January 11, 1913, in the Mongolian capital of Niislel Khuree. It said that "Mongolia and Tibet, having left submission of the Qing Empire and separated from China, formed their independent States". This treaty has not received wide international recognition, but is nonetheless a legitimate act of establishing inter-state relations for the following reason.¹⁹² Long before it, on November 3, 1912, the Russian-Mongolian Treaty was signed (in the Russian version, the "Agreement"), which declared the "original" or "autonomous system" of Mongolia, and the latter became entitled to enter contracts "with China or other foreign countries" (Art. 3). The contents of this document, the way it was negotiated and adopted (independently, i.e. bypassing Beijing) acknowledged the formation of an independent state, as it was indeed treated at that time by a number of international experts. Instead of "Outer Mongolia" the broader term "Mongolia" was used in the Russian version and "Mongol Uls" ("The State of Mongolia") in the Mongolian version. The system of Mongolia was marked as "autonomous" or "original" in the Russian version, and in Mongolian, the corresponding terms are translated as "self-dependence" and "independence". Both versions have equal legal effect. As a result, Russia recognised Mongolia as a state on a conventional basis earlier than the Chinese Republic. The promulgation of the signing of this document was recognition of the State and its name "Mongolia". Since that day, the State of Mongolia became a legally capable subject in international law. The Tibetan-Mongolian Treaty did not require recognition by other States at that time. Hence, the recognition of Tibet by Mongolia made Tibet an international personality as well. Only in 1915, following a tripartite Kyakhta Agreement between Russia, China and Mongolia, did the latter become nominally recognized as a Chinese autonomy (subsequently becoming independent again).

In 1949, Tibet was recognized by Nepal, when it applied for UN membership.¹⁹³ Specifically, Tibet was included in the six countries with which it had diplomatic relations. Nepal sustained these relations with Tibet, while being an independent State and not part of another State or a colony. Since the international recognition or non-recognition does not affect the existence of the new State (see above), these acts are merely additional evidence supporting the statehood of Tibet.

Thus, until the invasion of imperialist China in 1950, Tibet was an independent State both factually and according to the law. During this period it had attributes

192 Batsaikhan and Kuzmin, 2008, p.68–86; Kuzmin, in press.

193 Van Walt, 1987.

of real as well as formal independence and statehood, despite significant foreign involvement during certain periods of time.¹⁹⁴ Under international law, its State's continuity was never disrupted. Otherwise, for example, Cambodia, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and the Mongolian People's Republic could not be regarded as independent States. In 1950, Tibet was less connected to China than the Netherlands were to Spain or France, whose rulers also proclaimed their power over them in past centuries.

The Paris Pact of 1928 that was joined by China, prohibited war as a means of settling international conflicts and as an instrument of national policy.¹⁹⁵ Such war, under international law, constitutes a war crime. The governments of China consistently condemned wars of aggression and threats of using force. According to Paragraph 4 of Art. 2 in Chapter One of the UN Charter, "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations".¹⁹⁶ The Charter came into force on October 24, 1945, i.e. before the PRC invasion of Tibet.

This invasion is contrary to international law, violating the principles of state sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, non-intervention and prohibition of the threat of force. It contradicts the spirit and letter of Versailles Covenant of the League of Nations, Paris Peace Pact (Kellogg-Briand Pact), the UN Charter and other agreements to which China is formally adhering.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, the invasion of Tibet is an act of aggression under Art. 2(2) of the Convention for the Definition of Aggression of 1933, and a crime against peace under Articles 6a and 5 of the charters of the Nuremberg and Tokyo international military tribunals.¹⁹⁸ China was among the 11 Allies that created the Tokyo Tribunal.

On 23rd May 1951, "Agreement between the Central People's Government of China and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" (the Seventeen Point Agreement) was signed. In September 1954, the 1st session of the National People's Congress, which adopted the Constitution of the PRC, was attended by the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and other Tibetans, and the Dalai Lama was elected as deputy chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, and the Panchen Lama as its member. In both cases, the Tibetans undoubtedly acted under external pressure. In addition, in 1951, the delegation had no credentials to sign such an agreement, and the seals were fabricated in Beijing (see Chapter 7).

If an agreement is imposed by the State, whose superior forces have occupied "the victim State", or if the latter is in the process of being occupied, or is under

194 Van Walt, 1987.

195 Van Walt, 1987.

196 United Nations Charter...

197 Van Walt, 1987, p.154.

198 Van Walt, 1987, p.153–155.

its threat in violation of international law, then such an agreement has no legal value by the fact.¹⁹⁹ According to Art. 52 of The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, “treaties and similar agreements concluded under the use or threat of force are invalid under international law *ab initio*”.²⁰⁰ According to commentary by the International Law Commission to Article 52, “the invalidity of a treaty procured by the illegal threat or use of force is a principle which is *lex lata* in international law today”.²⁰¹

The Seventeen Point Agreement was signed during ongoing aggression, the beginning of occupation of Tibet and under duress. This corresponds to the points of this Agreement, especially those that involve its “internal” status and military occupation; the statement that China would take full control of all of Tibet; and the threat of an immediate attack on Lhasa, if Chinese conditions were not accepted. The Dalai Lama and his Government never ratified the Agreement.

There are three important points. Firstly, the PRC considers this Agreement to be not international but domestic, and the 1969 Vienna Convention forbids aggression or its threat only in relation to States. But the facts that were set forth above, do not allow Tibet to be considered as part of another state. In contrast to the Qing era, in 1951, Tibet did not ask for foreign troops. Therefore we cannot equate the sending of troops into Tibet by the Manchu emperors and the Chinese communists. Secondly, it was the consent of the Dalai Lama and his officials with the new situation and their participation in the new government, created by the Chinese. Thirdly, it was the widespread opposition against the Chinese presence in Tibet and the Seventeen Point Agreement. The last two items do not represent the opposing views of Tibetans, on the contrary, these are interlinked reactions to coercion.²⁰² In such circumstances, the Dalai Lama tried to avoid unnecessary violence, to at least save Tibet a status of autonomy – something that would be impossible if he resisted.

If a treaty was acquired under the threat of force, the “victim State” never loses the right to declare its invalidity, which is what the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan officials did following their emigration, when able to openly express their position. The Dalai Lama declared this Agreement to be null and void.²⁰³ The fact that the Chinese forced the Tibetans to accept their conditions was stated by the Dalai Lama in his message that was brought by Taktser Rinpoche to the U.S. in early 1952.²⁰⁴

Consequently, from the standpoint of international law, the Seventeen Point Agreement was illegitimate since the moment of its signing, and did not become

199 Van Walt, 1987.

200 U.N. Doc. A/CONF. 39/27 (1969), 8.I.L.M. 679 (1969). Done at Vienna on 23 May 1969, entered into force on 27 January 1980 — in: Van Walt, 2007, p.98.

201 In: Van Walt, 1987, p.153.

202 Van Walt, 1987.

203 His Holiness’s Middle Way Approach...

204 Smith, 1996, p.320.

legitimate later. The same concerns other actions of Tibetan delegates in Beijing in 1950 because they did not make decisions freely when the occupation of their country had started. Some lawyers doubt this.²⁰⁵ According to them, in this case the agreements of Tibet with Nepal (1856) and Great Britain (1904), signed during war, should also be considered illegitimate. These doubts do not seem to be well-founded. This principle became valid from 1945 onwards (see above) and does not apply to agreements of the 19th – early 20th century. In addition, the Seventeen Point Agreement was constantly violated by China.

For the sake of comparison, let's consider other precedents of captured countries having their governments forced to authorize their capture, which happened in the first half of the 20th century. One example of this is the Anschluss of Austria by Nazi Germany. On February 12, 1938, the Chancellor of Austria was summoned to Hitler's residence and signed an ultimatum, which put his country under Germany's control. On February 22, 1938, British Prime Minister Chamberlain stated that Austria could not count on the protection from the League of Nations. On March 11, the Austrian Chancellor resigned, and German troops entered Austria. The Austrian army capitulated. On March 13, the law on the "Reunification of Austria with the German Empire" was launched. Then, in Germany and Austria, a plebiscite took place (this never happened in Tibet). The vast majority of Austrians voted "in favour".

Another example is the seizure of Denmark in 1940. In his directive for preparation of the operation, Hitler wrote:²⁰⁶ "In principle, we should strive to make this operation one of peaceful capture with an aim to provide armed defence of the neutrality of the Nordic countries. Simultaneously with the start of the operation, the governments of these countries will be presented with relevant requirements. If necessary, to provide the necessary pressure, demonstrative actions of the fleet and aviation will take place. If, despite this, the resistance will continue, it must be broken by using all of the available military means". On April 9, 1940, the German Ambassador in Copenhagen presented the Danish Government with an ultimatum, demanding it immediately accept the "protection of the Reich". Waiting for assistance from Great Britain was pointless. The King said that he and his Government would do their utmost to preserve peace and order in the country, and to eliminate any friction between the Danes and the German troops. He wanted to spare his country from harm.

The Danes and the Austrians did not rebel. Ethnically and culturally, they are closer to the Germans than the Tibetans are to the Chinese. Indeed, Austria and Germany once belonged to the same state, the Holy Roman Empire. Nevertheless, both cases, with Austria and Denmark, are interpreted by international law as forceful seizure. The Anschluss of Austria was once recognized by the UK and U.S.,

205 Song, 2007, p.39–40.

206 In: Shirer, 1959.

the very countries that have created obstacles to international recognition of Tibet. However, currently, they recognize Austrian independence.

The integrity of other countries (including the colonial empires), which have since disintegrated, was also recognized at some point. In recent years, the belonging of Tibet to China was confirmed in the PRC's bilateral declarations with different countries. History shows that such declarations do not guarantee perpetual possession of seized territories.

However, try to adopt the point of view of those who believe the Seventeen Point Agreement to be legitimate. Because of the Tibetan uprising in 1959, it was no longer adhered to – in fact, it was nullified by order of the State Council on March 28, 1959, and the subsequent actions of the PRC (for details, see Chapter 8). The uprising itself was held without the participation of the Tibetan Government. Consequently, the Tibetan side is not responsible for the uprising and the breaking of the Agreement. Responsibility for this lies with the Chinese side. Nevertheless, the latter theoretically could continue adhering to the Agreement after the uprising, but did not want to do so. Thus, China abolished the legal framework that is referenced to this day. Thus, if we assume that the Chinese rule in Tibet was legitimized by the Seventeen Point Agreement, we will have found that, since 1959, this legitimization has been ended by the Chinese side.

The history of independence and the inclusion of Tibet in China in the 20th century has running parallels with Mongolia. Outer Mongolia was dependent on the Manchu Dynasty to an even greater extent than Tibet. The Manchu Emperor exercised his suzerain rights and bestowed the Mongol princes with land, governmental posts, addressed issues of inheritance, divided principalities, etc. At the twilight of the Qing Empire, Tibet and Mongolia decided to separate from it, and later signed an interstate treaty. The Russian Empire achieved recognition of the autonomy of Outer Mongolia by China, and Britain recognized suzerainty of the Qing and factual independence of Tibet. Both Mongolia, and Tibet, had ongoing national liberation movements. Having become a satellite of the USSR, Mongolia got rid of the threat of Chinese occupation, but paid dearly for this, as the Reds demolished its religion and culture. At that time, Tibet remained independent.

After the Second World War, the world order was defined by Yalta agreements between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill. Britain did nothing to preserve the independence of Tibet. However, the Soviet Union, in respect to the MPR, behaved differently. Stalin had recorded the status quo of the MPR in the Yalta agreements, and then authorized a referendum on independence. As a result, China had to recognize the MPR. Tibet became occupied by the PRC.

The right of peoples to self-determination is declared in the UN Charter and a number of other international documents. It is not entirely consistent with non-

colonial situations.²⁰⁷ However, specifically for the Tibetan people, this right was confirmed by the UN General Assembly Resolution 1723 (XVI) of December 20, 1961. However, neither this nor other resolutions on Tibet have been followed through, as they are advisory in nature and it is unprofitable for great powers to adhere to them.

In the 1990's, the experts on human rights and international law met twice in order to discuss the question of the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination.²⁰⁸ A permanent Tribunal of Peoples, which met in Strasbourg in November 1992, came to the conclusion that the Tibetans generally met the criteria of people that had the right to self-determination, and therefore they need to be able to exercise this right. The Tribunal concluded that "the presence of the Chinese administration on Tibetan territory must be considered as foreign domination of the Tibetan people" and that "the Tibetan people have from 1950 been continuously deprived of their right to self-determination".²⁰⁹

At another conference, which was held in London a few weeks later, thirty prominent international lawyers from Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America, among whom were leading authorities on the right of peoples to self-determination, extensively reviewed all materials (including Chinese ones) and made a written statement:²¹⁰ "1) Under international law the Tibetan people are entitled to the right to self-determination, that this right belongs to the Tibetan people and that it is not for the state apparatus of the PRC, or any other nation or state, to deny the Tibetan people's right to self-determination. 2) Since the military action of 1949–50, Tibet has been under the alien occupation and domination of the PRC and has been administered with the characteristics of an oppressive colonial administration. 3) In the particular case of Tibet and having regard to its long history of separate existence, the Tibetan people's claim to self-determination, including independence, is compatible with the principles of national unity and territorial integrity of states".

Thus, "the People's Republic of China could not have obtained a legal title of sovereignty over Tibet on the basis either of the military invasion of the State or of the subsequent exercise of a measure of effective control. The continued support of the Dalai Lama among the overwhelming majority of the population, the active resistance to Chinese rule in Tibet, the successful development of Tibetan polity in exile, and the functioning of a government in exile are all factors that contribute to the continuity of the Tibetan State. On the other hand, in view of the illegality of China's invasion of Tibet and the nullity of the Seventeen Point Agreement, neither

207 Van Walt, 1987.

208 *Tibet: the Truth*, 1993.

209 Session on Tibet: Verdict. — Permanent Tribunal of Peoples. Strasbourg. 1992. 20 Nov., p.15, 23 — in: *Tibet: the Truth*, 1993.

210 International Lawyers' Statement on Tibet. London, 1993, 10 Jan., p. 6–8 — in: *Tibet: the Truth*, 1993.

the degree of control exercised by China through maintenance of a strong military presence in Tibet, nor the amount of time that has elapsed since the invasion has been sufficient to permit the conclusion that China has legally acquired the whole territory of Tibet. To the present time nothing has occurred that, according to generally accepted norms of international law, can justify the conclusion that the State of Tibet has been totally extinguished and legally incorporated to form an integral part of the People's Republic of China. <...> The State of Tibet still exists ... as an independent legal entity, with a legitimate government, in exile in Dharamsala, to represent it. Accordingly, that government and the people of Tibet have the right to resume the exercise of sovereignty of their own territory, free from the interference of other States".²¹¹

The pre-revolutionary Government of Tibet and then the Tibetan Government in exile, were accused of liaising, entering agreements and seeking assistance from other countries, which is interpreted as "treason", etc. The above quotation implies that these accusations are unfounded, as the legitimate government of any State has the right to establish relations with other countries. Creation and development of the PRC has also taken place with foreign assistance (see chapters 4, 7 and 10).

The relations of the ancient and medieval states differed from those of today. One cannot extend modern international law to them. But the same applies to the opposite: it is unacceptable to apply archaic legal concepts to the present and one model of statehood to another; the worldview of one civilization should not be transferred to a different one. Some time ago, world domination was claimed by Assyrian, Babylonian, Byzantine, Chinese, Mongolian, and Manchu monarchs. However, in our time, only Chinese politics mix archaic and modern concepts of statehood. It turns out that the people, who conquered China, created not their own empires, but foreign "dynasties of China". Such logic is not found anywhere else. According to it, if country A has captured country B, this does not mean that country B has become part of country A. On the contrary, country A becomes country B. If one state recognizes itself as a part of another, then it must be agreed on both sides. There can be no way that one country regards another as its part, and this part considers itself independent and lives like this for centuries.

The Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing are not dynasties of one country, but are different empires governed by different dynasties. There is no document recording the fact that Tibet was included in any of them. Many old documents that were published in the PRC as evidence of Tibet's subordination to China prove

211 Van Walt, 1987, p.188.

the opposite.²¹² Tibet was dependent only on the Mongol Yuan Empire and the Manchu Qing Empire, but never lost its statehood.

It is known that at the time of Confucian monarchy, the official historiography was advocated as a single organized system. Its official status implied not only it being subject to governmental control, but also the government's active involvement in the historiographic process.²¹³ The history was serving the system of government. Because of this, one cannot accept this historiography as an argument for the inclusion of some countries into the empires that were considered to be China. The bringing of "tribute", the distribution of titles, edicts with orders, "administration authorities" that were created unilaterally, and the like – are signs of an ancient sino-centric tradition, and not of real subordination.

The rulers of Tibet did not consider themselves as someone's vassals, and exercised control over their state. High lamas had "priest – patron" personal relations linking them with the emperors, these were established on a bilateral basis. That concept is difficult to describe in terms of modern state power and was understood in different ways at different times. Beijing claims of sovereignty over Tibet are based on the Confucian concept of the Emperor's global power. In order to justify its occupation of Tibet, China is reinterpreting medieval relations in terms of the modern nation-state.²¹⁴ This is not legitimate.

The idea of "the one Chinese nation", although rooted in ancient sinocentric ideology, is largely a product of the first half of the 20th century. This was a period of collapse of multinational empires and the subsequent construction of nation-states. In China, these ideas were brought from the West.

One part of a state cannot make claim to another. Therefore, the Chinese claim to the "legacy" of the Mongol and Manchu empires is unfounded. This is contrary not only to historical facts and international law, but also to Marxism-Leninism. The latter recognizes the right of nations to self-determination. According to Engels, the population of the disputed areas should itself decide its own fate.²¹⁵

Lenin wrote: "The national self-determination means separation as states from collectives made up of foreign nationalities, and this means formation of independent nation-states"²¹⁶ (p.259). "The Marxist program's 'self-determination of nations', from the historical-economic point of view, cannot have a value other than political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a nation-state" (p.263). "To accuse the supporters of freedom of self-determination, i.e. the freedom of separation, of promoting separatism, is as foolish and hypocritical as to accuse those who advocate freedom of divorce of encouraging the destruction

212 A 60-point Commentary, 2008.

213 *Spiritual Culture of China*, 2009, p.36.

214 Van Walt, 1987.

215 Engels, 1965, p.317.

216 Lenin, 1961, p.255–320.

of family ties” (p.286). “To deny the right to self-determination or separation, inevitably means, in practice, support for the privileges of the dominant nation and police methods of administration to the detriment of democracy” (p.286). Lenin stressed: “It would be a betrayal of socialism to refrain from exercising self-determination of nations under socialism” (p.18).²¹⁷ And the CPC, according to its Charter, is guided by Marxism-Leninism, adheres to it firmly, and requires its party members to study it.²¹⁸

Neither the Tibetan Government, which until 1959 was in Lhasa and then in exile, nor the people of Tibet, accept the Chinese power. As in the past, they revere their leader, the Dalai Lama. *In the eyes of most Tibetans, the Dalai Lama continues to unite religious and secular power. The Central Tibetan Administration is not a new structure that was created abroad. It preserves the continuity of the legitimate Government of Lhasa. Tibet is an occupied State. Consequently, the Tibet question is not just an internal affair of China. Tibetan demands for independence of their State should not be interpreted as separatism. This is not a demand to separate a part of a State to create a new one.*

However, to explain borders in this way is a thankless task. Until now, in international practice, there are two mutually exclusive principles: self-determination and territorial integrity of States. They are applied in accordance with political utility. The UN, more than 25 years ago, reaffirmed the right of Tibetans to self-determination.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, this solution is ignored. If the USSR was legitimate and recognized, why did some States not recognize its inclusion of the three Baltic Republics? By the way, before the 20th century, two of them did not have statehood. Why do the same States recognize China’s inclusion of Tibet, which had statehood for centuries? Why was the emergence of independent states from Eastern and Western empires (Spanish, British, Portuguese, French, Ottoman, etc.) legitimate, but such emergence from the Qing Empire was not? Why were the revolutionary collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Soviet Union legitimate, but the integrity of the PRC, within the boundaries of the Qing Empire undeniable? Why is it possible to recognize Kosovo or South Ossetia, but not Tibet?

This line of rhetorical questions can be continued. But the answer to them is one and only: because, for centuries, the over-riding right in international relations is the right of the strong. International standards are used only for balancing the interests of powers. If a weak continental country has no strong backers, then sooner or later it will lose its independence from its neighbours. Natural barriers, so useful in the past, in our time, do not guarantee protection. The fate of Tibet is an example of this.

217 Lenin, 1962, p.18–22.

218 The CPC Charter...

219 There are strong evidences for the fact that Tibet should be recognized by the UN as an independent State as according to the formal criteria: Van Walt, 1987; Johnston, C. Tibet: the international mistake...

CHAPTER 12

Decline of the Tibetan-Mongolian Civilization?



There is a view that there is a world-historical process, which inevitably involves the whole of mankind. Since the most developed technology is in the West, the most widely distributed is the Western type of civilization. Its variants are diverse: socialism, communism, fascism, bourgeois democracy, etc. Typically, these are alien to societies that belong to other civilizations. In the 20th century, export of revolution, colonialism and globalism became methods of democratization of “backward” countries according to “progressive” (bourgeois or communist) recipes. This results in violent change of social systems, destruction of traditionalism and levelling according to the standards of the “civilizers”. If people want to live in their own way, there appears a national liberation movement, counter-revolution, civil war or a non-violent resistance movement. No wonder the forces that are fighting against the expansion of foreign “civilizers” are called reactionary (for example, the “revolt of reactionary forces in Tibet”).

Mao Zedong was wrong that “all the progressive wars are just, and all wars that impede progress are unfair”.¹ In reality, there are different value systems. They cannot form a line from “backward” to “progressive”. They are just different and not entirely comparable. Something that seems backward can be seen as advanced even within the same civilization. A good example of this is communism: Marxists consider it to be a more progressive system than capitalism, while the anti-Marxists see it the other way round. Most, if not all, of the revolutions of the 20th – 21st centuries were somehow inspired from abroad by importing different variants of progressive ideology with the training of local cadres or through direct intervention. This was the case, albeit to varying degree, with the Xinhai bourgeois-democratic and the New-Democratic revolutions in China, the February and October revolutions in Russia (1917), the People’s Revolution in Mongolia (1921), democratic reform in Tibet, the revolution in Nepal, “velvet revolutions” in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Georgia, etc.

¹ Mao, 1966, p.62.

Tibet has always been a traditional society, and it never had the prerequisites for a revolution. The Tibetans did not waive the benefits of progress, but history has shown that traditionalism to them is something of much more value. The events in Tibet since 1951 signify a national liberation movement. Its task is not of changing the social system, but to end the foreign occupation. Tibetans do not want to instil foreign ideology, but rather to get rid of it.

Tibetans have lived as a separate state for centuries, and never considered themselves to be residents of China. “When the Chinese arrived and told us that Tibet had always been part of China, we did not understand them. We had a different sense of history. Of course, the Communists tried to dismiss these stories as childish tales, but for us they were powerful narratives, part of what it meant to be Tibetan”.² Not only has the group consciousness of the people showed that their State was never part of China, but also the law and the facts of history. Furthermore: Tibet was never a part of Chinese civilization.

Here are some simple but vivid examples.³ The Tibetans consider themselves derived from the Perfect Being, the Chinese from the Yellow Emperor; the Chinese motherland is the Middle State, for the Tibetans it is the Snow Country; Chinese religion is Confucianism, Taoism and Chinese Buddhism, Tibetan is Tibetan Buddhism and Bon; Chinese script is ideographic, disyllabic and monosyllabic, Tibetan is alphabetical, disyllabic; the Chinese ruler is the Emperor, Tibetan is the Dalai Lama; the political system of the Chinese State is bureaucratic and centralized, Tibetan is theocratic; traditional Chinese food is rice, Tibetan is tsampa; the art and literature of the Chinese are dominated by worldly motives, Tibetan – by religious, etc.

Tibetans, together with the Mongols, developed their own civilization that was distinct from the others. Its formation is associated with the thorough blending of the cultures of these peoples, especially after the campaigns of Genghis Khan and his successors. Although Tibet was not a part of China, separate areas populated by Tibetans were parts of medieval Chinese and Mongolian states. The Mongols repeatedly helped the Tibetans to unite their State under a single authority. Their actions have not only aided the centralization of Tibet and the rise of the Sakya and then Gelug, but the further development of the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization.

Most probably, the concept of a compassionate ruler, the bodhisattva (i.e. the Dalai Lama, the embodiment of Avalokiteshvara) was only possible in order to unite Tibet.⁴ The primacy of the spiritual over secular authority was salutary for Tibet, and not fatal, as is sometimes claimed. During the periods when secular rulers came

2 Palden Gyatso, 1997, p.13.

3 Norbu, 1998, p.24–26.

4 Elikhina, 2006.

to power, in-fighting and the collapse of the State were starting (approximately as in Mongolia). It was integrated by supreme lamas, whose personal relationships with the Mongolian, and then with the Manchu emperors were of the “priest – patron” principle, and prevented the transformation of Tibet into an ordinary province. The conception of this relationship is difficult to define in terms of modern state power. But this is no reason for its refutation.

Unlike in Europe and the Qing Empire, in Tibet there were no significant class antagonisms until the Chinese democratic reform. The feudal-theocratic system suited people for the most part. Tibetan “serfs” were, in fact, farmers, and “slaves” were domestic servants. Brutality against the Tibetan people under the feudal-theocratic system was less pronounced than that in the PRC.

In the 17th – 19th centuries, the territory of the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization, stretching from Dzungaria and Lake Baikal to the southern slopes of the Himalayas, became included in the spheres of influence of the Qing and Russian Empires. Nevertheless, the Tibetans and Mongols continued to live in their own way, that is, largely preserved religion, social structures, traditional economy, customs, etc. Both empires had legal establishments, defending their originality. Moreover, the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization at that time was developing as a whole, and helped to preserve contacts and routes that accumulated over centuries, from the Himalayas through Kokonor to the north and the west of Mongolia. Unlike the PRC and the USSR, the Qing and Russian empires never aimed for stirring up class hatred, the destruction of religion, elimination of traditionalism and a general levelling.

Revolutions in the Russian and Qing empires inflicted irreparable damage to the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization. Instead of monarchies, republics were formed, whose basis of ideology was breaking up the feudal society, closed borders and unification of life on a democratic basis, bourgeois in case of the Republic of China and socialist in the USSR. This led to artificial division of the ethnic and cultural community and destruction of traditional culture in the Soviet Union and Mongolia. This was the price that Mongolia paid to become an independent state through the help of the Soviet Union.

Neither Great Britain, nor the U.S. were going to consolidate in Tibet, or to seek its independence. Relations with China were more important than historical truth and international law. Neither the Tibetans nor the Mongols had enough forces to defend their independence. Over a few decades, no reforms would have been sufficient to make their states so strong that it alone would repel the intervention of the PRC, which, with help from Stalin, became the strongest regional power. The fate of Tibet was determined from outside.

Shortly after the death of Stalin, the PRC ceased to be guided by their country-patron. Mao Zedong declared the Soviet Union to be a revisionist state,

and presented far-reaching claims. Thus, Stalin, unwittingly, created a long-term strategic threat for his country.

The Maoists did not export the revolution to Tibet from China, but simply arranged it themselves. The Han received at least some benefit from their revolutions: deposed the foreign (Manchu) rule, got rid of the unequal treaties imposed by the West, established the unity of their country, and incorporated former dependent and vassal lands of the Qing Empire into their ownership. The “minority nationalities” received destruction of culture and religion, sinicization, Han colonization, and a bystander viewpoint at how the Communist Han authorities integrate them into their State and modernize at their discretion. The centuries-old heritage of the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization was almost completely destroyed by the communists.

What are the main results of the annexation of Tibet to China? They can be viewed in two aspects: the humanitarian and the civilization. According to the humanitarian point of view, the main achievement is the increase of the average level of welfare of the people. Reduced infant and child mortality, improving health, anti-poverty measures are undoubted merits of the CPC! But this success was preceded by the death of a significant part of the population of Tibet in the Mao era. The unrest continues today, which implies further reprisals. This is despite the increase in material wealth. Therefore, “man cannot live by bread alone”. What is the reason for this? Here we turn to the civilization aspect.

The reason is that the Tibetans want to remain Tibetans and not to become Chinese. They want to preserve their ancient civilization. However, after the annexation of Tibet to China, it was instilled with an alien civilization model.

In the field of ideology, it is communism with Chinese characteristics. In recent decades, direct destruction of the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization gave way to “soft” sinicization and westernization. The Communist Party wants all the people of China to constitute a single civilization, but in reality they belong to different civilizations; for most part, to the Chinese, Tibetan-Mongolian and Islamic. Tibetans mostly prefer poverty and self-determination to transformation into rich Chinese. “Once a nationality’s language, costume, customs and other important characteristics have disappeared, then the nationality itself has disappeared too – that is to say, it has turned into another nationality.<...> Because the religion, which they deeply believed in and loved had been greatly weakened, and because they were not permitted to believe, religious feelings grew stronger in the thinking of many people, and their belief was deeper than in the past”.⁵ These words of the 10th Panchen Lama, spoken before the Cultural Revolution, became prophetic. This is the reason why it was so difficult to eliminate the traditionalism of Tibetans. However, today’s “soft” methods of modernization are

5 Panchen Lama, 1997, p.69–70, 52.

even more dangerous than the violent ones, as they change motivation and the value system of men.

The reason for the suppression of religions in China is the materialistic messianic ideology of the Communists, which is not inconsistent with their pragmatism. This arrangement legitimizes the CPC, allows it to keep its State in line with globalization and to build a society of consumption. After all, the Communists see religion as nothing more than human fiction.

As before, the CPC leaders continue to believe that religion is subject to elimination, although in some period it can be used for political purposes. Strategic direction of the CPC to eliminate religion is seen from statements by Jiang Zemin.⁶ “The members of the Communist Party are atheists, and should always adhere to atheism, as well as promote it. <...> In our country, together with the destruction of the exploitative system and the exploiting classes, the class source of religion has largely disappeared as well. However, the remains of society’s old ideas and old habits cannot be completely eliminated in a short time. The solution to the religion problem at its very root is possible only through the development of material and spiritual culture, and the gradual elimination of sources that feed the existence of religion. In other words, economic development needs to be furthered, it is necessary to improve the quality of people in terms of their scientific world view, and in terms of their cultural level. <...> A member of the Communist Party must firmly assert the Marxist view on religion, and not only be an atheist, but is also obliged to promote atheism, to help the masses to raise their consciousness”(p.221-225). “The simultaneous construction of the material and spiritual civilizations is our main course. Creation of spiritual civilization, in short, is aimed at improving the quality of the whole nation, at the education of a new socialist man who has ideals, morality, culture and discipline. <...> The more the economy develops, the higher the level of material standards of living, the greater the necessity to further the ideological and political work and the creation of the spiritual civilization”(p.241).

Communists do not prohibit religions, but put them at a disadvantage to materialism: their main provisions should be arbitrarily changed (i.e. for profanation) in the interests of socialism, but not the opposite. This approach seeks to make religions “obsolete” from within. It corresponds to Marxism-Leninism, which was defeated in an open confrontation with idealism.

The PRC authorities do not understand how the traditional Tibetan economy functioned because it was a different civilizational system. They have always considered this system to be backward and subject to destruction (through democratic reform and the Cultural Revolution), or subject to bourgeois modernization with Chinese characteristics (the current strategy). They believe that an increase in productivity and consumption are keys to a brighter future of Tibet. Unrealizable

6 Jiang Zemin, 2004.

Marxist equality has now changed to *xiao kang* – a well-off society, measured only in material comforts. The destruction of the traditional economy leads to the fact that the region cannot support itself and falls into economic dependence on China. This will accelerate the disappearance of its unique civilization. Thus, in retrospect, the measures of the Manchu Dynasty represented a real protection of “minorities” from the assimilation by the “majority”.

Tibet has been integrated into China, who never asked the Tibetan people whether they wanted it, whether they wanted democracy, modernization, or changes in social structure and their culture. The course of history has shown that they did not want that. Because of that, the CPC policy always ruled out such an expression of will. The CPC leadership does not want any compromise on the Tibet question. What for? It completely dominated over Tibet. The “integrity” of China is not in danger, and “the international community” have put up with the status quo and, for the sake of economic benefits, does not even discuss the legitimacy of this.

Nowadays, the small islands of the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization diverge more and more, following the trajectories of countries to which they belong. China, Russia and independent Mongolia are on track to post-industrial development and globalization. In such circumstances, the dominant idea is productivism and bourgeois levelling (even if under communist ideology). The experience of all countries shows that in such conditions, for the most part, culture is preserved as an object of a tourist destination.

The only way to avoid this in the Tibetan-Mongolian sphere is to rely on the ideology of traditionalism and the Buddhist religion. In Russia, China and Mongolia such is unlikely, but traditionalism can still be preserved in the Himalayan Tibetan communities: in India (including Sikkim, Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh), Bhutan and Nepal. In order to meet this aim, cultural mutual integration of these communities is required. Then they can become a source of future spiritual revival of the Tibetan-Mongolian civilization.

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Mountains in the vicinity of Lhasa (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



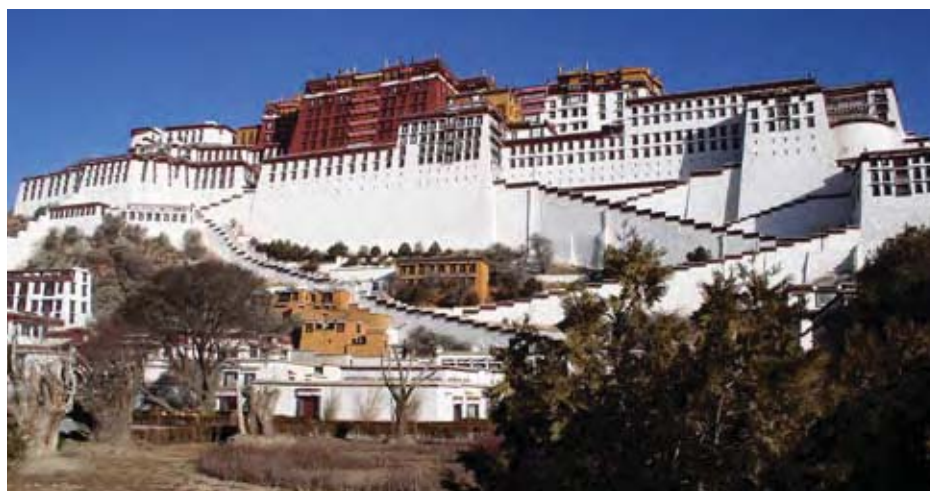
The Yamdrok Tso Lake (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



Shigatse Dzong: 1 – in 1938 (Bundesarchiv, Bild 135-S-17-22-34/foto: Ernst Shaefer / LicenseCC-BY-SA 3.0); 2 – in 2005 (photo: A. Strelkov) 3 – in 2008 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



The Qing Empire at its peak and other territories on the map of Asia in 1827 by the American cartographer A. Finley. Tibet is not included in this empire (Maps of Tibet, 2008, fragment)



The Potala Palace (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



Jokhang, Tibet's main temple (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



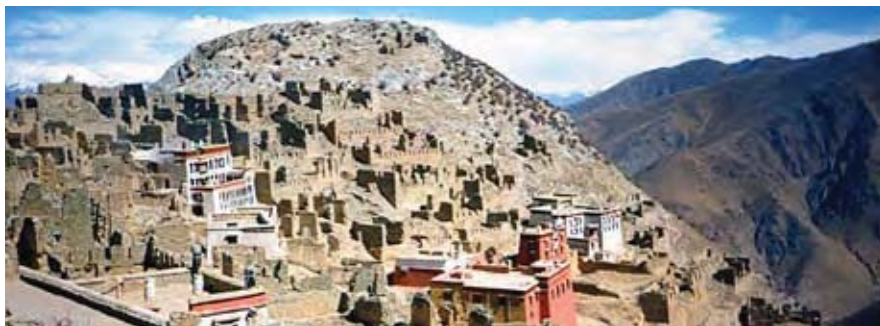
Barkhor Street near the Jokhang Temple (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



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Ganden Monastery: 1 – before 1959 (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration); 2 – after its destruction in 1966 (Norbulingka Institute Archive, Dharamsala); 3 – the start of its reconstruction in the early 1980s. (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration); 4 – in 2008 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



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The Drepung Monastery: 1 – in the 1900s (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration); 2 – temples that were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (photo: S.L. Kuzmin), 3 – general view of the Monastery in 2008 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



1

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*Western ritod of the Sera Monastery (photo: Alex Catanese / permitted by Jose Ignacio Cabezon).
1 – before its destruction; 2 – after its destruction during Mao's rule; 3 – after its reconstruction.*



The Tashilhunpo Monastery, 2008 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



The statue of Buddha Maitreya (height of 26 m) in the Tashilhunpo Monastery, Shigatse, in 2008. In front of it portraits of the three last Panchen Lamas; the current Panchen Lama is shown to be Gyaltsen Norbu, i.e. the Panchen Lama, who was elected on the initiative of the Chinese administration to replace the kidnapped Gedun Chokyi Nyima, who was found by the Tashilhunpo Search Committee and approved by the 14th Dalai Lama (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



Chinese military staff on an excursion to the Tashilhunpo Monastery. During their visit to the temples, they showed good discipline, and some showed reverence to the deities.



Caves and temples of Tsaparang (photo: A. Roshchin, A.J. Goryainov)



Statue of Buddha in the Gyantse Kumbum Stupa at the Pelkor Chode Monastery, city of Gyantse (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



Kumbum Monastery, Amdo. The temple at Tsongkhapa's birthplace with the famous tree on which, according to tradition, one can distinguish his image on the leaves (photo: S.V. Dmitriev)



The eight stupas in the Kumbum Monastery (photo: S.V. Dmitriev)



The Emblem of Tibet: the sacred Kailash mountain, the wheel of Dharma, the pair of snow lions that symbolize the acts of the Tibetan Government, combining spiritual and secular forces.



The flag of Tibet: the snow mountain in the center symbolizes Greater Tibet, a country surrounded by snow-capped mountains. The six red light rays in the sky symbolize the six original Tibetan peoples; the alternation of red rays and a dark blue sky represent the perfect virtuous conduct (to protect the spiritual and temporal power) of two protector deities (red and blue-black) that have patronized Tibet since ancient times. Rays of light emanating from the sun rising over the summit of the snowy mountains symbolize the light of freedom, spiritual and worldly happiness and prosperity of the Tibetan people. Snow lions symbolize the complete victory of the government's acts, which combine spiritual and worldly powers. Three-colored jewel symbolizes the spiritual Refuge of the Tibetan people: the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; the two-coloured preciousness of grace vortex implies observance of moral principles in accordance with the supercilious traditions represented in the first 10 divine virtues and 16 human moral rules. Yellow border of the flag symbolizes Buddha's teachings, which are likened to pure gold



Tibetans wearing traditional dress (Losell Doll Museum, Norbulingka, Dharamsala) (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



The ruins of the Yundrungling monastery, Kham.



Flag of the Tibetan Chushi Gangdrug insurgency: the yellow color represents the color of the Buddhist religion, the flaming sword – a symbol of the wisdom Bodhisattva Manjushri, implies elimination of ignorance; the second sword symbolizes the courage of Tibetans and their inherited law and is their traditional weapon (<http://www.phayul.com>. 03.04.2008)



Gampo Tashi Andrugtsang. Memorial plaque at the Buddha statue in Sarnath, India, 2009 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin). The inscription means that this image of Amitabha Buddha was commissioned by Gyari Nyima Gyaltsen in honour and memory of late Dzasak Andrug Gampo Tashi founding leader of the Chushi Gangdruk Movement and all those Tibetan men and women who made a supreme sacrifice for Tibet. May their sacrifice be remembered and emulated by every Tibetan. May the Tibetan people be re-united in our beloved fatherland under the leadership of the 14th Dalai Lama.



The square in front of the Potala in the center of Lhasa. Behind the Chinese flag is a monument to commemorate the “peaceful liberation” of Tibet (Photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



Broken religious sculptures in Norling Nyiwoe Phodrang, photo made in 1980 (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)



Pieces of sculptures and brass fittings piled in the Norbulingka Palace (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)



Broken religious objects in a former monastery in Lhasa (Norbulingka Institute Archive, Dharamsala / Ngodup Tsoknyid)



Boy-monk with a sculpture from a warehouse with broken religious objects in the Lhasa area, 1991 (photo: Alison Wright)



Chinese warehouse in the hall of the temple of the Rebkong Monastery, Amdo, 1979 (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)



Religious scriptures piled up in storage, Tawo Nyitsen Gone, Ü-Tsang, 1980 (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)



Ruins of Shide, one of the main temples near the Jokhang in Lhasa (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration). It was built in the 14th century and pertained to the Reting Monastery



Poster of the Cultural Revolution, 1966: "We will destroy the old world and build a new one." A Chinese worker uses a sledgehammer to smash a Christian cross, a statue of Buddha and a classical Chinese text.



Picture of Chairman Mao on the wall of a temple in the Drepung Monastery (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration). Approximate translation of the slogan: "Big Leader – the great universal teacher, a great guiding force – the Great Helmsman. Long live Chairman Mao for ten thousand years!"



The ruins of the Tingrig Monastery, Shekar Dzong, Ü-Tsang, that was destroyed in South-western Tibet during Mao's rule, 1993 (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)



The remains of Ga-Shew Do-Gon Monastery, destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, Nangchen, Kham, 1979 (DIIR Archive, Central Tibetan Administration)



The ruins of the Reting Monastery destroyed during Mao's rule (Norbulingka Institute Archive, Dharamsala / Lobsang Dargyal Album)



The ruins of a monastery destroyed in Central Tibet during Mao's rule (Norbulingka Institute Archive, Dharamsala / Linnea Bohm)



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Takten Phuntsokling Monastery in the valley of Tsangpo River (photo: Don Croner): 1 – the ruins of the monastery, which was built in the 17th century and destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, 2 – a building of the new monastery



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2



3

Destruction of the Tholing temples, Ngari (photo: Ray Kreisel): 1 – pieces of the temples interiors, statues and books; 2 – heads of statues; 3 – place of a destroyed statue



1



2

*Ruins of the Tsaparang temples, Ngari (1 – http://savetibet.ru/uploads/posts/1236625784_monastery.jpg;
2 – photo: A.I. Roshchin, A.J. Goryainov)*



1



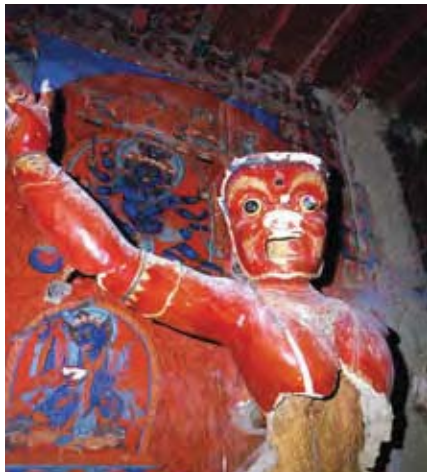
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Destruction of the Tsaparang temples: 1 – a place where there was a large statue (photo: A.I. Roshchin, A.J. Goryainov); 2 – statue of four-armed Mahakala (?) (photo: A.I. Roshchin, A.J. Goryainov); 3 – one of the six broken statues of Buddha Vairochana in the Lakang Karpo Temple (photo: Ray Kreisel). How the statues, icon cases and carved pillars looked prior to vandalism by the Red Guards, see: Govinda, 2002, p.170–174, 179, 180; 4 – statue of blue Vajrapani (photo: Ray Kreisel); 5 – statue of red Hayagriva (www.mountainsoftravelphotos.com / Photo: Weyer / Aschoff: Tsaparang, Tibets Grosses Geheimnis / permitted by Charlotte & Jerome Ryan); 6 – remains of the statue of Bodhisattva Padmapani (?) (photo: Ray Kreisel); 7–8 – heads of Buddha statues (photo: Ray Kreisel); 9 – the foot of a Maitreya statue with fragments of sculptures and a page from an old Tibetan book written with special gold and silver ink powder on a black background (photo: Ray Kreisel); 10 – pile of wood bindings of old xylographic books that were probably destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (photo: Ray Kreisel); 11 – a heap of rubble lies with a black page from a Tibetan book, written in gold and silver ink (photo: Ray Kreisel); 12 – the Jovokhang Chapel in the White Temple (www.mountainsoftravelphotos.com/ photo: Bruno Baumann / permitted by Charlotte & Jerome Ryan). In front: a space formerly occupied by the main sculpture. Before the Cultural Revolution, each shelf on the wall had small statues.



View of Lhasa from the Potala, 2008 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



Pilgrims in the Tibetan quarter of Lhasa, 2008 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin),



Pilgrim in a new quarter of Lhasa, 2008 (photo: S. Kuzmin)



Destruction of the Padmasambhava statue in Samye in 2007 (TCHRD)



The new quarter of Shigatse, 2008 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



One of the Chinese military camps near Lhasa



Demonstration of Drepung monks, March 10, 2008 (TCHRD)



The square in front of the Jokhang, after confrontations in March 2008 (<http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?Act=news&id=69153>)



Chinese shops ablaze in Lhasa, March 2008 (<http://times.ua/story/15835/>)



Chinese troops in Lhasa, March–April 2008 (TCHRD)



Demonstration in Labrang, March 14, 2008 (TCHRD)



Bodies of Tibetans who were killed by Chinese soldiers during the peaceful demonstration were carried to Kirti Monastery, Ngaba, for prayers, 16 March 2008 (TCHRD)



Ghepan Talho, 64 years old, killed during dispersal of demonstrations at Kirti Monastery, Ngaba, March 2008 (TCHRD)



Police in Kirti, Ngaba, protects homes of Tibetans who serve for the Chinese Government, March 2008 (TCHRD)



Majnuka Tila, Delhi, India. The Tibetan refugees quarter (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



Macleod Ganj, the Tibetan part of Dharamsala, March 2009 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



The Tibetan Parliament in exile. Dharamsala, March 2009 (photo: S.L. Kuzmin)



The 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, and the 11th Panchen Lama Gedun Choekyi Nyima, the spiritual leaders of the Tibetan people. Contemporary folk painting.

HIDDEN TIBET

History of Independence and Occupation

Tibet is a land of mysteries. It is not only about religion and occultism: its history remains largely hidden. This book disproves some of the erroneous views on the history and religion of the Tibetans. Tibet has never been a part of China. At the time when China was an inalienable part of the Mongolian Yuan Empire and Manchu Qing Empire, Tibet was a separate country dependent on the Mongol and Manchu emperors, but never lost its statehood. A widespread view that Tibet was an integral part of neighboring empires is related to an ancient Chinese concept of the emperor's universal power. Chinese claims to the "legacy" of the Mongol and Manchu empires are unfounded. Incorporating the name of the state into the "dynasty of China" concept ties sovereign states of other nations to Chinese dynastic history. The inclusion of Tibet into the People's Republic of China was not legitimate. Tibet is an occupied country.

This book traces the history of Tibetan statehood from ancient times to our days, describes the life of the Tibetans at the times of Feudalism and Socialism, the coercive inclusion of Tibet into People's Republic of China, the suppression of the national liberation movement, the Cultural Revolution, and subsequent reforms. Many pictures and data concerning these events are being published for the first time.

The book has garnered much interest in Russia, particularly in academic and political science circles.

"S. Kuzmin is convincing in his conclusions, and his work is a serious contribution to the progress of Russian and world Tibetology" (Dr. T.L. Shaumian, Tibetologist, Russian Academy of Sciences).

"The conclusions are quite convincing as they resulted from strictly scientific and objective analysis" (Dr. S.V. Dmitriev, Sinologist, Russian Academy of Sciences).

"Author's goal was to analyze the problem in detail instead of adapting facts to fit the concept" (A.A. Khramchikhin, Vice Director of the Institute of Political & Military Analysis).

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