TIBET POLICY JOURNAL

Tibet and Tibetans:

Prospects and Challenges

Proceedings of the Young Tibetan Research Scholars Conference

The Tibet Policy Institute

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Editor's Note

Tibetans as a people have been transitioning through major political and social landscapes at great speeds. In the past 60 years or so, we were at times forced to change preferences and at other times used our good senses to adopt and innovate systems and structures that best served our immediate needs as well as our future goals. The gamut of these social evolutions and political experiments are crucial steps on our long, daunting and rewarding journey of nation-building.

Despite these tumultuous times on alien shores, our common vision for the future takes courage and conviction from the growing pool of highly qualified young scholars who are passionate Tibetans yet are equally dispassionate students of Tibetan studies. This breed of scholars assume the unique position of studying Tibet from inside out, equipped with modern knowledge and techniques while being removed from fear or faith in their research.

The Tibet Policy Institute in October 2015 organised the first ever conference of young Tibetan scholars currently pursuing doctoral degrees in some of the most respected universities in India. More than 20 scholars presented papers relating to the broad theme, '*Tibet and Tibetans: Prospects and Challenges*' and engaged in lively discussions over a period of two days. The scholars chose to touch upon Tibet's history and its revisionism, China's unsustainable economic development and environmental policies in Tibet, various facets of the Tibetan resistance movement, exile, modernity and the Tibetan identity and the geopolitical significance of Tibet.

The research papers complied in this journal capture the essence of the conference - the moral fibre to analytically untangle the past, the expertise to meticulously study the present and the acumen to predict and address future challenges.

This edition of the Tibet Policy Journal is an honest attempt at enriching - and to an extent - reclaiming the knowledge production on Tibet by qualified young Tibetans.

Tibetan studies and its various discourses and narratives, which have off late been bromidic at best and specious at worst, stand to benefit enormously from these inclusive and indigenous scholarly voices that will be heard louder and clearer in the coming decades.

Tibet Policy Institute will continue to encourage young scholars to explore their potential and provide them with opportunities to play pivotal roles on our long journey home.

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CONTENTS

China's Mode of Gaining Legitimacy in Tibet – Co-Option and Incorporation of Tibetan Buddhism

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In the 7th century AD, Buddhism gained legitimacy in Tibet through the activities of the Indian saint Guru Padmasambhava whom we Tibetans adoringly refer to as Guru Rinpoche. He was invited by Trisong Detsen, the 38th emperor of Tibet, on the behest of another Indian Buddhist master Acharya Shantarakshita who had been tasked with the building of Tibet's first Buddhist monastery but had his attempts thwarted by indigenous local deities. Guru Rinpoche's tantric powers emerged victorious over the hostile forces, which eventually led to the establishment of the Samye Tsugla Khang. It was the process of "taming" (Tib: *dulba*) of the hostile pre-Buddhist forces and turning them into defenders of Tibetan Buddhism that laid the groundwork for Buddhism to gain legitimacy in Tibet. The tamed local hostile deities were co-opted and incorporated into the ever-growing Buddhist pantheon, where they assumed a slightly lower position in the hierarchy of deities.

Apart from symbolism, this inclusion, over the centuries have been deeply ingrained in Tibetan Buddhist practices and beliefs, forming an important value system for Tibetans as seen in the form of "*sungmas*", "*yul-lhas*" and also the "*dab-lhas*", for whom a series of rituals and rites are performed. Furthermore, the addition of certain practices like "*sangsols*", furling of "*lungtas*" and offering of "*tormas*" are all pre Buddhist practices that were incorporated to gain a form of legitimacy by the proponents of Buddhist ideology.

This form of gaining legitimacy, which comprises of co-option and incorporation, is comparable to the modern 20th century situation in Tibet, where in a similar process of "taming", the modern day communist state of China is seen to be incorporating the institutions of Tibetan Buddhism, especially the religious elites; the lamas and the tulkus. As part of their policy of gaining legitimacy - mirroring the centuries-old process of "taming" or "*dulba*" coupled with the provision of symbolic positions in the power structure - the communist state is seen to be placing religious figures at slightly lower positions in the current ruling system which will be discussed later.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tibet was a working theocracy till 1951 with political power resting in the hands of the Buddhist elite and the aristocracy. Under such a system, Tibetan Buddhism guided the political ideology with religious heads either backing political leaders or themselves receiving political and military patronage from powerful rulers. The Gaden Phodrang government established in 1642 under the Great Fifth Dalai Lama was supported by religious ideology that provided the required legitimacy to the governing institutions (Goldstein, 1989:1). Furthermore, with the majority of Tibetans following Buddhism, the popular faith provided consent to the ruling groups. Tibet's commitment as a religious state and the universality of religion became the core for Tibetan national identity (ibid, 2). The traditional government infused with religious ideology was given the term "*chosinyidrel*" which can be literarily understood as religion and political affairs joined together, whereby it was not only the Dalai Lama who was part of the ruling elite but there was also the presence of a large number of monk officials who controlled religious and monastic affairs and played an important role in the administration of secular affairs (ibid, 8). Even in the eastern Tibetan areas of Kham and Amdo outside the purview of the Lhasa authorities, the Tibetan Buddhist elites held much sway over the local population. For instance, the fourth Jamyang Shepa (1856-1916) of Labrang monastery in Amdo had reorganised the monastic governance to place the monk assembly and other tulkus under his own "*labrang*" and also established an eighty-men personal guard, a prison and the closer oversight of lay communities and the market by the monk officials (Makley, 2007:62). The tulkus at Labrang also encouraged the nomadic families to settle and to strengthen the traditional "*dewa*". According to anthropologist Charlene Makley, the Tibetan Buddhist institutions such as monasteries and tulkus gained legitimacy through emphasis on ritual techniques and the sacredness of the tulkus which has been termed as "mandalisation" that made tulkus and the monasteries into governing authorities in the region. This

process also emphasises on the Tibetan Buddhist tantric practice of taming the region and its population and thus gaining power and authority.

However, the rise of monasteries like Labrang as a local power centre in the 18th and 19th centuries were through their collaboration with the Mongol and Manchu leaders in an effort to win the loyalties of Tibetan and Mongol tribal alliances. Successful tulkus were able to carve out privileges and relative autonomy for their monasteries (ibid, 39). This hybrid form of authority becomes highly important as in the past, the former Yuan and Qing dynasties were patrons to a number of Tibetan Buddhist elites, who in turn could provide these dynasties with some semblance of legitimacy over the Inner Asian regions whose populations were followers of Tibetan Buddhism. A similar policy was adopted by the Chinese nationalists in the 1930s – 1940s when a policy of co-opting Tibetan Buddhism was adopted by the leaders in their project of nation building. Even though the Ninth Panchen Lama had sought refuge in China after falling out with the Lhasa government, still in the early periods the Kuomintang (KMT) had not utilised Tibetan Buddhism to incorporate Tibet into the imagination of the Chinese nation. However, with other secular means unable to provide a solution, the Nationalists eventually turned to Tibetan Buddhism to incorporate Tibet in the modern Chinese nation state.

One of the strongest advocates in utilising Buddhism in uniting the modern Chinese nation was the Nationalists party leader Dai Jitao, who employed a strategy of bringing exiled lamas in the Nationalists government. He argued that Buddhism was the corner stone not just of Sino-Tibetan relations but also of relations throughout Asia. Regarding Tibet, he wanted the government to play an active role in repairing the damaged relations between the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama and also to attend Tibetan Buddhist activities in China and foster interaction with borderland Tibetans (Tuttle, 2005:12). Tibetan Buddhists were also employed in this process and hence in 1931 and again in 1934, the Panchen Lama held the Kalachakra ritual in China which was attended by tens of thousands of Chinese including former presidents of the Republic (ibid, 11).

Tibetan Buddhists began to assume political roles in post dynastic China. The local warlords who supported the KMT in provinces like Sichuan such as Liu Wenhui also supported and promoted Tibetan Buddhist leaders such as the influential abbot of Nyitso monastery, the largest Geluk monastery in Tawu County named Mawu Chowang (1890-1966). He joined the Nationalist Party in 1940, and a year later became an advisor to Xikang Province. Mawu Chowang was a member of the Supervisory Committee of the Nationalist Central government and a member of the Supervisory Committee of the Xikang Provincial Party Committee. In 1947, he was further elected as a member of the Xikang People's Congress. He was also president of the

Buddhist Association of the Tawu County (Tsomu, 2015). The KMT also tried to incorporate Tibetan Buddhism and hence Tibet itself by informing the nobility and monastic leadership inside Tibet that the Chinese government were supportive of Tibetan Buddhism. In 1934, upon the death of the 13th Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama was named Commissioner of the Chinese State with responsibilities for propaganda on the Western Frontiers. At the same time, an envoy, Huang Musong was sent to Tibet with 400,000 silver dollars to make religious offerings, also emphasising that the Nationalists would respect Tibetan Buddhism and maintain the political system prevalent inside Tibet (Tuttle, 2005:13). However, a major objective of his visit and the tribute paying was also to initiate the incorporation of Tibet into Nationalists China (Norbu, 2001:106). With the defeat of the Nationalists and the victory of the Communists in 1949, a similar strategy was adopted by them towards incorporating Tibetan Buddhism.

However, prior to the victory of the CCP and formation of PRC and the subsequent "peaceful liberation" of Tibet in 1951, the Chinese communists had their first encounter with Tibetan Buddhism in 1934-35 during their "Long March", when the communists and their Red Army were escaping from the onslaught launched by the Nationalists. When they passed through the eastern Tibetan areas they faced an immensely hostile population, who violently resisted the Red Army (Norbu, 2001:213). During this period, the communists did receive aid, especially from the head of the Beri monastery, Getag Tulku who offered food and other provisions to the Red Army (McGranahan. 2012). Getag Tulku was one of the first Tibetan Buddhist elites to support the Red Army and the communists and was one of the central figures in the erstwhile "people's government". In 1950, he was appointed a member of the Southwest Military and Administrative Committee and Vice Chair of the Provincial government of Sikang (Kham). Getag Tulku was to act as an important medium between the CCP and the Lhasa government for which he had left his monastery on 10 July 1950 for Chamdo, arriving on 24 July 1950. Here, he explained the policies of the party state and wanted to persuade the Tibetan people, monks and other elites to accept the people's government. He also called for close unity between the Tibetan people and the PLA and had gained support from the people. However, he was reportedly murdered by the British radio operator Robert Ford who was in Chamdo then, which is an issue of much debate. According to the CCP, Getag Tulku's main objective of going to Lhasa and act as an intermediary between China and Tibet, which was a dangerous proposal for the imperialists got him killed (FBIS, 1950). Getag

Tulku continues to be an important figure for Beijing till date as he remains an important tool of gaining legitimacy for China and for exercising hegemony over the Tibetans. This is seen in the 21-episode television show released by China's state owned broadcasting network dedicated to his life and also the establishment of a memorial hall for Getag Tulku (Woeser, 2011).

These policies adopted by the communists stemmed from the United Front tactics that had been adopted by them from their interactions with the Nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s. Under this, the main principle is to rally as many allies as possible in order to achieve a common cause, usually to defeat a common enemy. The United Front was a policy that had been formulated by the "Comintern" as a strategy to win like-minded groups in countries to establish a socialist revolution. This strategy was extended to the Tibetan regions as an effort to win over the traditional ruling elites. The policy of the United Front has been institutionalised by the CCP into the United Front Work Department (UFWD), a body that has direct bearing on the issue of Tibet. The UFWD is seen to be formulating policies towards Tibet, handling the interaction with non-Communists and also forming a linkage with the exile representatives of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND BUDDHIST ELITES IN THE 1950s

With the establishment of the PRC in 1949, one of the primary objectives that the Communists set out to achieve was the "liberation" of Tibet and uniting it with the motherland. The principle guidelines on which their policies towards Tibet would be formulated was the Common Program of 1949 adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) that would also influence their Constitution of 1954, which provided the freedom of religious belief to its citizens while emphasising that feudal landlords, bureaucratic capitalists and reactionary elements would be eliminated. Hence, in 1950, Mao had remarked that the Buddhist monasteries were centres of feudal system of exploitation, where the slaving agricultural workers were seen to be working on the agri-estates of both the monasteries and the nobility and hence they were to be liberated (FBIS, 1950). This stand underwent a change which is evident from the more liberal approach of Mao and the other communists towards religion as reflected in the provisions on religious freedom in the Seventeen-Point Agreement signed on 23 May 1951

in Beijing between the Central government and representatives of the Tibetan Local Government. Under the Agreement, the traditional political system in Tibet would not be altered and also the policy of religious freedom laid down in the Common Program of the CPPCC will be carried out while respecting and protecting the religious beliefs and customs and habits of the people and the monasteries. More importantly, there was also an assurance that the income of the monasteries would not be changed (Claude Arpi, 2012). The liberal policy of the party state towards Tibetan Buddhism is also seen in the meeting between Mao and the head of a Tibetan delegation Liushar Thubten Tharpa who visited Beijing in 1952, during which Mao had emphasised on the protection of temples and monasteries and respecting the religious culture of Tibetans (FBIS, 1952). In response to this overture from Mao, news reports carried out a series of comments made by Tibetan religious elites. For instance, the junior tutor of the Dalai Lama, Venerable Trijang Rinpoche who later was appointed as head of the Religious Affairs Bureau in 1956 (Goldstein, 1998:8) positively endorsed the guidance given by the Chairman. Another high ranking monk from Drepung monastery expressed joy and remarked that the idea of the communists destroying Buddhism were all rumours spread by the imperialists. They were overjoyed with the fact that a clear guidance was set by Mao for protecting religion (FBIS, 1952).

To attract the religious elites, the party state also organised a number of visits of these individuals to Beijing and other Chinese cities. For instance, a year after the *liberation* in 1952, a group of 30 delegates from Chamdo area, Sikang (Kham) province arrived in Beijing. The group included Hsieh-wala, the Living Buddha of the Chamdo Lama monastery; Kang-ku, the Living Buddha of Chaya County, Kungpu, acting commander of the ninth regiment of the Tibetan local army, lamas of various sects in Chamdo and representatives of the Tibetan population. The Living Buddha of Lungwu monastery, Hsia Jihtsang in Tungjen County, Qinghai and six other Tibetans also arrived in Beijing on 24 March 1952 to pay respects to Chairman Mao (FBIS, 1952). The communists also claim to have created harmony in Tibetan Buddhism through uniting the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama which is also termed as their historic responsibility (FBIS, 1952). This is seen as the continuation of a legacy from the Qing period onwards which was also carried forward by the Nationalists. A prominent example of co-option of religious elites by the communists can be seen in the case of Geshe Sherab Gyatso, who provided the much needed legitimacy to the party state during the early periods as he

strongly supported the socialist revolution. However, Geshe Sherab Gyatso's co-option into the ruling system is seen to be fraught with fault lines. In 1950, he made radio broadcasts in Amdo and other parts of Tibet where he appealed to Tibetans to support the Communist Party and its *liberation* of Tibet. In his broadcasts, he emphasised on how Buddhism teaches freedom from misery, which is seen to be absent due to the present feudalistic fetters in Tibet which could only be broken by Mao Zedong (FBIS, 1950). He was subsequently appointed as a vice chair to the Qinghai Provincial Government (FBIS, 1952).

Around 1956-57, Sherab Gyatso was seen to be criticising the growing rebellion against Chinese authorities especially in the eastern Tibetan areas, where democratic reforms had been implemented and the earlier privileges and power of the monasteries and other ruling groups were curbed. Hence, the rebellion that had taken place was occurring in the name of defending religion. In response to this, Geshe Sherab Gyatso criticised Tibetans who were termed as using Buddhism to further political ends and hostility to the CCP, articulating the view that it would lead to the destruction of Tibetan Buddhism and not its advancement. However, Sherab Gyatso, in a speech delivered on 22 June 1956 in the National People's Congress (NPC), criticised officials of the CCP for trying to constrain Tibetan monasticism in ways that are incompatible with its foundational norms (Goldstein, 1999:8). In his speech, he makes a highly important point whereby he emphasises on the need to understand and respect the values of Tibetan Buddhism, which made it difficult for the monks and monasteries to survive in the aftermath of the Democratic Reforms and especially when collectivisation was imposed upon the general population including the monks and monasteries. Geshe Sherab Gyatso was subsequently appointed as chairman of the Buddhist Association of China in 1961, who also worked towards the maintenance of autonomy of Tibetan culture. He was later tortured and passed away while under house arrest (Arjia Rinpoche, 2010: 257). Sherab Gyatso exemplifies Buddhist figures that were co-opted by the communists thus providing them with some form of legitimacy from the Tibetans.

Sherab Gyatso also stands as an example of a reflection of "agency" of Tibetan elites or intellectuals who time and again have expressed strong autonomy in their interactions with the party state. The policy of co-option is one that strives towards the creation of hegemony, through gaining consent from traditional ruling groups which in the case of Tibet are mostly the Tibetan Buddhist leaders. Hence, the ruling elites are seen as giving consent and

legitimacy to the policies and the domination exerted by the CCP in Tibet. This includes a process which is similar to the Buddhist practice of "taming", where the traditional elites are tamed for the party state but are also given some degree of power and a privileged status towards the state (Groot, 2004:2). Another important instance of gaining legitimacy through co-option by the CCP has been the case of the Tenth Panchen Lama who was born in Amdo and recognised by the Chinese but not accepted by the Lhasa government. It was only through the Seventeen-Point Agreement that the Lhasa government and the Dalai Lama accepted the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. The importance of the Panchen Lama is seen during the course of the signing of the Seventeen-Point Agreement when the chief Tibetan negotiator Ngabo Nawang Jigme argued that he did not have the authority to deal with the issue of the Panchen Lama's reincarnation, which was exclusively under the authority of the Lhasa government (Wangyal, 2006). Subsequently, the Dalai Lama and the traditional government accepted the Tenth Panchen Lama, who along with the Dalai Lama assumed a number of official positions. In 1953, on the eve of the second anniversary of the peaceful liberation of Tibet, the Panchen Lama sent a report of progress to Chairman Mao where he emphasised the need to uphold the importance of the Seventeen-Point Agreement for the liberation of Tibet. In the report, the Panchen Lama is seen to be toeing the Communist Party line using a Marxist understanding, whereby he emphasises that the Tibetan nationality had been long oppressed and exploited by imperialist aggressive forces, which had been overcome through the liberation of Tibet. Under this, the Tibetans have been provided with the right of equality of nationality and the freedom of religious belief. He also underscores the fact that the Tibetans have been at the forefront of consolidating the national defence of China. The PLA officials and other cadres are deemed as developing a spirit of unity and democratic consultation and having faithfully executed the agreement and the policy of nationalities and religion (Panchen Lama, 1953). He also mentions about how religion, culture and tradition of Tibetans are being protected and preserved.

The PLA is termed as showing great respect for monasteries, monks and customs and religious activities are seen to be permitted in full swing. What is most important is also a point stressed immensely by the Panchen Lama, whereby the *liberation* brought about by the PLA and by Mao is seen to have led to stronger unity among the Tibetans as historical differences have melted and the ecclesiastical and secular officials of the Kashag and the Panchen

Kanpo Lijia (private office) are seen to be enjoying an amicable relationship. On the economic, cultural and health front, the Panchen Lama's praise for the strides that had been brought especially in the hospital and the school set up in Lhasa was of prime example. Similar institutions were soon to open in Shigatse, Tibet's second city and the seat of the Panchen Lamas. On the cultural level, Tibetan language publications had increased much. He further mentions about the Tibetan nationality having suffered under imperialist aggression, the Manchu and KMT aggression and had now finally received liberation through the Seventeen-Point Agreement (ibid). This report by the Panchen Lama in 1953 to Mao is definitely written by one of his aides as the Panchen Lama was only fifteen years old then. However, the report was a major bolster to China's legitimacy in Tibet and the sense of consent from the Tibetan ruling elite for China's policies in Tibet was an important tool of gaining hegemony by the party state.

However, in 1962 the Panchen Lama wrote the famous 70,000 character petition directed to Mao Zedong, which was critical of the various policies implemented by the party state in the Tibetan regions. It especially recounted the deaths of thousands of Tibetans from a famine caused by the failure of the Great Leap Forward. The Panchen Lama employs a Marxist understanding of the situation in his analysis and also in his discourse especially emphasising on the leadership of the CCP and the historic importance of the Chinese revolution. He also remarks on the peaceful liberation of Tibet being an important achievement whereby Tibetans embraced the motherland. The material achievements brought about by the CCP is well elaborated by him along with remarks on the fact that the communists have always respected religion, which the Tibetans termed as "loving as their life itself" (Panchen Lama, 1996). The report also emphasises on how a small group of rebels belonging to the upper strata were responsible for scuttling the process of liberation of Tibet and instigating the uprisings which were crushed by the authorities. He terms the thorough elimination of the feudal serf owning class from the Tibetan plateau as an important event which has entered the history books (ibid). He also mentions about supporting the democratic reforms in 1959, especially the implementation of the "Three Antis" and "Two Reductions" along with the redistribution of land which also raised the consciousness of the lower classes. The positive aspects of the democratic reforms are also well elaborated. However, the Panchen Lama brings out a series of criticisms

against the party state concerning the suppression of the rebellion whereby a more moderate policy was to be followed towards those who surrendered which was not done. The cadres were seen to be enacting vengeful methods on the rebels and subsequently religion was severely targeted especially through the Democratic Reforms.

The Panchen Lama mentions how arbitrarily the Democratic Reforms were imposed upon the masses especially with regard to land redistribution. There is also strong criticism levied upon the United Front and on Democratic Centralism of the party and also on the party's policies towards religion. However, these criticisms are not direct challenges to China's legitimacy over Tibet as the Panchen Lama re-stresses on the importance of the liberation brought about by Mao and the communists to Tibet. In response to this petition, the Panchen Lama was stripped of his position and his petition was termed as a "poisoned arrow" shot from the feudal reactionaries. He was to be brought down as his concerns were termed as attempts to resurrect "the zombie of feudalism" (Shakya, 1996:28). The Panchen Lama was denounced and placed under arrest. Subsequently, he was struggled against which reached the zenith during the Cultural Revolution when Red Guards from the Minority Nationalities Institution in Beijing subjected him to his first struggle session in Beijing (ibid, 26). For Mao and the other communist leaders, the Panchen Lama's humble petition was seen as a dangerous weapon aimed at the party especially during a period when Mao had been challenged by Peng Dehuai in 1959, hence leading to a rise in intolerance towards criticisms and challenges to party rule. The Seventy Thousand Character Petition was also seen by the party as an attempt by reactionary feudal groups to raise the issue of freedom for minority nationality in PRC, hence deemed as subversive and problematic.

The policy of co-option by the Communists in Tibet was also seen in their policy towards His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama who was appointed vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC in 1954 which was also followed by his appointment as the chair of the Preparatory Committee for Autonomous Region of Tibet (PCART) in 1956 till his departure in 1959 after the failed uprising in March that year in Lhasa. Even after the Dalai Lama had gone into exile, the Chinese Communists emphasised on the idea that the Dalai Lama had been kidnapped by the feudal reactionaries and also the Tezpur statement issued on 18 April 1959 in India was dubbed as being forced upon the Dalai Lama by his kidnappers

(NCNA, 1959). There were strong attempts made by the communists to emphasise on the policy of co-option especially in the post 1959 period, after the quelling of the uprisings in Tibet. This is also seen in the speech made by Sera Khenpo Ngawang Jaltso in the NPC on 22 April 1959 as a deputy whereby he condemned the Tezpur statement and termed it as not emanating directly from the Dalai Lama but being made by him under duress. He reemphasises on the idea of the Dalai Lama being kidnapped by the feudal reactionaries whom he blames for carrying out the rebellion of 1959 which was severely condemned. Furthermore, in his speech he also brings back the issue of the death of the former regent of Tibet; Reting Rinpoche, who had been imprisoned and made a victim of the power struggle by the upper strata reactionary clique (FBIS, April 1959). Through the speeches of religious figures like Sera Khenpo, the Tenth Panchen Lama and Geshe Sherab Gyatso who condemned the uprising, the CCP tried to gain legitimacy for its harsh policies implemented in the aftermath of 1959. From 1966-76, the policy of co-option towards religious elites came to a halt as the CCP tried to gain legitimacy through the implementation of the radical policies of the Cultural Revolution in which religious figures and institutions were severely attacked.

It was only with the death of Mao in 1976 and the rehabilitation and accession of Deng that led to reforms and opening up of China. The right to freedom of religion was provided to Chinese citizens and also extended to the Tibetan regions that led to a massive revival of Buddhist practices and its institutions, including the resurgence of the Buddhist elites - the tulkus. The ban on the recognition of tulkus imposed during the late 1950s was lifted and new tulkus were eventually recognised (Kolas and Thowsen, 2005:73). The policy of gaining legitimacy through co-opting these religious elites by the state was also restarted. A primary way of incorporating them was through giving tulkus and other religious elite officials titles and positions in the People's Congresses and the CPPCC at all administrative levels, as leaders of the local Buddhist Associations and also sometimes as government officials (ibid). With economic reforms and opening up, a large number of these institutional mechanisms have emerged to co-opt the non-communist elites. This revival was a part of the liberal phase in CCP policy introduced by Deng under which the United Front policies played a significant role. More importantly, the liberal attitude of the party and United Front was also needed for the creation of a good atmosphere for economic growth.

CO-OPTION OF RELIGIOUS ELITES IN THE POST 1980 PHASE

The period of the 1980s has seen the resurgence of a number of religious elites and their eventual rehabilitation into the power structures of the state. In this, one of the most important rehabilitation has been that of the 10th Panchen Lama. Till the time of his death in 1989, the Panchen Lama worked for the welfare of Tibetans especially the preservation of Tibetan language and culture. Through his visits to a number of Tibetan areas in Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai, large number of monasteries and temples were rebuilt and received government funding. The Panchen Lama was involved in the opening of a number of educational institutions for laypeople and was responsible for the establishment of the High Level Tibetan Buddhist Institute of China in Beijing which was set up in 1987 and headed by him till his demise (Kolas and Thowsen, 2005:77). The efforts by the Panchen Lama facilitated the re-flourishing of Tibetan culture especially in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, hence leading to a strengthening of Tibetan identity. He was also appointed to a number of government positions which made it easier for him to carry out more welfare activities for the Tibetan community. Hence, the 10th Panchen Lama emerged as an important source for legitimacy by the PRC in the Tibetan regions with much of the policies implemented by the Panchen receiving strong support from the Chinese authorities. However, these policies did add to the strengthening of Tibetan identity and especially Tibetan Buddhism. The Panchen Lama also criticised the developmental policies adopted by the Party in Tibet, which is seen to be eroding the Tibetan culture. Hence, the Panchen Lama remains an important figure for the party state to gain legitimacy within Tibet and for Tibetans as an organic intellectual who laid the seeds for the development of a counter hegemony against China.

The religious elites are seen to be receiving support from the party state for the various social welfare activities which includes opening of schools that cater to a modern secular education, health care institutions in remote Tibetan areas and also efforts in resolving conflicts among Tibetans. This is seen in the case of Jamyang Shepa, abbot of Labrang Monastery and also Gungthang Rinpoche from Dzoge in Ngaba prefecture who had intervened on behalf of the communist authorities to prevent nomadic tribes; the Arig tribe of Sogpo County and the Ngulra tribe of Machu County from fighting over pasture. Jamyang Shepa had then proposed splitting the land between the two tribes even though the agreement was not reached (TIN, 2000:88). This is highly important as the religious elites are seen to be providing peace and stability in the region which in turn forms a core form of gaining

legitimacy by CCP. The party authorities are seen to be encouraging the intervention by the religious elites. This was also seen recently in Dzoge County when residents of seven different villages had gathered in a monastery to take a pledge not to engage in activities that fly in the face of religious beliefs, which was well supported by the local party authorities as it would also mean brining peace and social stability in the region (Monlam, 2015).

Even though the party state sees this as a form of gaining legitimacy, there is an emergence of fissures in their legitimising process as the local populations, to whom the social welfare services from the religious elites are provided, are seen to be granting a certain degree of authority to the Tibetan Buddhist leaders. They are seen as having a primordial authority over the region and its people which is understood and co-opted by the party state but the state is unable to control the meanings and direction of the population towards the religious figures (Yeh, 2003:518). This is also reflected in the field of education where the process of legitimisation through religious figures has created much of the fissures and fault lines as state authorities are seen to be not only approving the establishment of private schools run by monks or monasteries but relied on them to provide education in Tibetan areas (Kolas and Thowsen, 2005:112). While the school's curriculum and textbooks are all state sanctioned and the authorities are seen to be regulating these schools, these educational institutions have turned out to be important sites for the preservation and growth of Tibetan culture which in turn has fuelled Tibetan identity. The resurgence of Tibetan identity is an important tool of generating Tibetan nationalism and unity which is seen to be growing strong inside Tibet and challenging China's legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

Although the religious elites inside Tibet are seen to be not directly involved in posing a challenge to China's legitimacy, the process of incorporating them in the power structure by the communists as a form of "taming" to gain legitimacy has led to more complications. Much of these have emerged from the process of the failure of the incorporation of Tibetans into the modern Chinese nation as the traditional elites are seen to be much entrenched in the psyche of the Tibetans as forms of authority and legitimacy. Hence, efforts at co-opting Tibetan Buddhist elites to gain legitimacy has resulted in mixed results, with the religious figures providing some semblance of authority to the CCP but also leading to the evoking of strong primordial ideas of Tibetan identity and authority.

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Understanding China's Economic Development Policies in Tibet: From Mao Zedong to Jiang Zemin Period

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INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that economic factors have played a significant role in designing China's Tibet policy since the beginning of the Chinese annexation of Tibet and continues to do so even today. China's economic development policies were proposed to perform multiple tasks. For instance, the economic development policies are not only aimed at improving income and the living standard of Tibetans, but are also aimed at ensuring regional stability and national security. The high economic growth rate that Tibet has achieved over the years plays a significant role in legitimising People's Republic of China's (PRC) leadership and control over the region, especially while addressing international criticism. The core theme of China's numerous white papers on Tibet are on the economic development of Tibet under the PRC.

Apart from using economic tools as a means to achieve social stability and gain international support for their control over Tibet, Chinese leadership has employed these tools to achieve other objectives as well. It is evident that China's economic development of Tibet has played various significant roles in defining China-Tibet conflict.

It is in this context that the primary objective of this paper is to study China's economic development policies in Tibet and build a broader perspective on the subject. The paper analyses the subject by looking at the various discourses associated with the concept "economic development" and what are the aspects included in measuring economic development of a region. Based on this development, this paper studies the evolution and changes in China's economic development policies in Tibet and examines what are the focuses of Chinese development approach in Tibet and the hurdles in their policies. This paper also discusses the role of China's economic development policies in the China-Tibet conflict.

THE CONCEPT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There is a significant discourse on the concept of economic development specifically after the end of the Second World War. The earliest definition of the concept of economic development was interpreted only in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/Gross National Product (GNP) growth. Meier (1964) explains that "economic development is a process whereby an economy's real national income increases over a long period of time."[1] Therefore, economic performance was measured by an annual increase in GNP or GDP. The countries during that period were primarily concerned with the efficient, least cost allocation of scarce productive resources and the optimal growth of these resources over time so as to produce an ever-expanding range of goods and services, also known as traditional economist.[2] Problem with this development strategy is that it causes rapid growth at the expense of agriculture and rural development. The experience of most of the developing countries in the 1950s and 1960s has shown that the GDP/GNP growth does not necessarily result in a better life for the national population (Dang, G and Sui L, 2015:11). There has been a growing resentment towards the traditional approach to economic development mainly due to the prevalence of a high rate of poverty, unemployment, high mortality rate and the inability to control the spread of high risk diseases despite achievements made in GDP growth rate. The concern of most of the development economists since 1970 has turned to

1   Meier, M.Gerald and Baldwin, E. Robert (1957), "*Economic Development: Theory, History, Policy*", New York; John Wiley and Sons, Also see Rostow: 1960, Harrod-Domas:1948, Lewis :1954, Chenery :1960 are strong advocate of this group.

2   Todaro, P Michael and Smith (2012) "*Economic Development*" 11th edition , Boston: Addison-Wesley

the eradication of poverty, enhancement of health and education, change in the composition of input and output, increase in per capita output of material goods. In the 1970s, redistribution of growth became a common mantra.[3] In the 1990s, the definition of economic development widened by including income distribution, environment, health and education. United Nations in 1994 highlighted that "Human beings are born with certain potential capabilities. The purpose of development is to create an environment in which all people can expand their capabilities, and opportunities can be enlarged for both present and future generations".

Amartya Sen (1999) pointed out that development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom, poverty and tyranny, poor economic opportunities and systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities and intolerance or over activity of repressive state. Economists such as Michael P. Todaro and Stephen C, Smith (2012, 2009, 2008, 2006) maintain that economic development or development is not purely an economic phenomenon but rather a multidimensional process involving reorganisation and reorientation of entire economic and social system. It is a process for improving the quality of all human lives mainly by achieving three important objectives:

1. To raise the living standard of people, which includes incomes and consumption, quality of food, medical services, education through relevant growth process.

2. Increasing people's freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choice variables i.e, varieties of goods and services.

3. Creating conditions conducive to the growth of people's self-esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions that promote human dignity and respect.

In essence, economic development is a multidimensional concept. It includes not only an aggregate and per capita real incomes, but it is also associated with

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3   Dudley Seers (1972) called a question against GDP growth as key indicator of development, where he argues that it would be strange to call the result development if a country has high level of poverty, inequality and unemployment even if the per capita income doubled. In 1972, McGranahan emphasised on social factor. Singer and Ansari (1977) argues that if a country is able to eradicate poverty, and unemployment along with the growth of GNP, only then can genuine economic development to talked of.

economic, social and institutional mechanism that are necessary for bringing improvement in the levels of living standard of the masses.[4] It includes both economic and non-economic factors. It implies the process of achieving higher level of productivity in all sectors of the economy and stepping up the rate of capital formation that is needed for rapid economic development.

CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FROM 1950 TO 2000

In the last sixty-five years since the imposition of its first series of policies in Tibet,[5] the Chinese government has implemented several policies in redefining China-Tibet conflict. Among various policies, China's economic development policies have played a crucial role in designing China's position over Tibet and Tibetans.

1950-1980: SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION OF TIBET

In 1950, following the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) occupation of Tibetan areas like Chamdo and some other areas of Kham and Amdo, Mao Zedong was determined to bring socialist transformation in Tibet as well.[6] Mao consciously brought social transformation in Tibet primarily because Hans and Tibetans were ethnically different from each other and the relation between the two for centuries ranged from being marginal to turbulent. Mao was cognizant of rebellion by the Tibetan population in Central Tibet.[7] He

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4   Living standard includes per capita income, health, education, freedom to choose, infrastructure development like electricity and the basics medical facilities.

5   Tibet in general refers to all Tibetan areas in China including the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and the Tibetan area that have been incorporated into the provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan. However, this paper has consulted various Chinese government white papers and documents and tends to used data available on TAR to represent other parts of Tibet by default. In this study, Tibet refers to the Chinese government definition, which is Tibet Autonomous Region.

6   Unlike Central Tibet, it is also important to note that most of the development and reform policies and pro-grams under democratic reform program were implemented in Tibetans area of Amdo and Kham without any exception since the beginning of 1950. Reforms were carried out in these two areas since they were not under the jurisdiction of Lhasa. PRC treated Tibetans living in these two areas as both *de jure* and *de facto* Chinese. For PRC, Tibet constitutes only the Central Tibet. See Dawa Norbu : *China's Tibet Policy*, 2001Pg 215, Goldstein (1989), Ma Rong (2011)

7   Mao was also careful in curbing some of the immediate impacts of deploying a huge number of PLA soldiers in Tibet. He ordered the PLA to administer strict budgeting on the army's own needs and also warned that Tibetan living standard should not fall because of PLA presence (Selected Work of Mao-Tse-Tung). But what Mao was most worried about actually happened in Tibet; PLA's intrusion led to a shortfall in food supply and price rise of

exempted central Tibet from all forms of socialist reforms from 1950 to 1958 in order to win over the Tibetan elite's loyalty and secure a stable foothold in Tibet. The failure of this particular strategy resulted in the 1959 mass uprisings in Lhasa, Tibet's capital. Consequently, Beijing drew another conclusion that the fundamental improvement of nationality relations depends on the complete emancipation of the working class within each nationality. Through class struggle, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) proclaimed itself no longer a party of the Han but a leader and spokesman of every poor people in China. The class struggle aimed to win over the poor or lower class Tibetans from their national and religious allegiances to the elite (Wang Lixiong and Tsering Shakya 2009:51). Eventually after the 1959 mass uprising, PRC rigorously transformed Tibet, especially central Tibet, making it an equal part of the socialist transformation of China. Some important aspects of China's economic development policies during the Mao era were agricultural reforms, industrialisation, infrastructure development, mutual aid and the commune system. In accordance with these socialist transformations, property and other possessions of wealthy and aristocratic families and monasteries were confiscated. Initially, their land was confiscated and distributed equally but was collectivised later. By April 1960, over 186,000 hectares of land was distributed to 100,000 peasant households.[8] Private ownership was still present during mutual aid system. In 1965, the Chinese authorities phased out the mutual aid team policy and introduced commune system whereby Tibetans were subjected to Mao's radical ideology of "eat less and produce more" bringing to an end practices of private ownership of land.[9] Before 1966, there had been over 1,200 small retailers in Lhasa but by 1975, only 67 remained. In Jalung county 3,000 privately owned wool-looms and spinning-wheels were done away with in the name of 'cutting off the capitalist tails' (Ibid: 66). Through the mutual aid group and commune systems, farmers were directed to build canals, dams and cultivate the waste lands.[10] Irrigation system was also improved. A good

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local grains, which put a terrible strain on local economy. Consequently, Tibetan frustration grew. See Dawa Norbu (2005) June Teufel Dyer(2005), Gyalo Thundup and Anne F. Thurston (2015:133)

8   Norbu, Dawa(1988), "*Changes in Tibet Economy: 1959-76*", China Report ,24:221

9   Norbu, Dawa (2005) "*Economic Policy and Practice in Contemporary Tibet*" in Barry Sautman and June Teufel Dreyer (eds), " *Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development and Society in Disputed Region*", East Asia Gate, Pp:157

10   Besides these policies, under the "land reclamation and the crop diversification", the government built two big state farm called the July First Farm and the August First Farm. These two farms aimed to grow grains and vegetable and were built in an area that was not used by the Tibetan government. See Yeh (2013), *Taming Tibet:*

1959 harvest was considered to be the result of all the new techniques, the improved irrigation system and the hard work of labourers. Every commune member worked an average of 15 hours a day or more. The average work point earned annually by each member came to 3500 and each work point earned about eight fen with 100 fen valued at 1 Yuan, the annual income of each member was around 288 Yuan. (Dawa Norbu, 2005, 1997:213). An intensive cultivation technique and inappropriate choice of crop led to the disaster harvest of 1979. The key objective of the commune system and the reforms accompanied by the forced manual labour people were put through was to increase the national total production within a short period of time.

Besides reforms, number of infrastructure development projects like highways and road building were carried out. Projects connecting Dartsedo-Tibet, Chengdu-Ngaba, Lhasa to Shigatse by road were part of the First Five-Year Plan of China. By the end of Mao's era, PRC had constructed 91 highways totalling 15, 800 kms and 300 permanent bridges in TAR alone.

A number of analysis have been produced relating to the above policies: Dawa Norbu argued that the fundamental objective of reforms and development initiated by the Chinese government was neither "liberation" nor "progress" but strategic development (Dawa Norbu, 2001: 347). He further argued that the highways that were built in the 1950s and 1960s "although initially were built for transport and communications purposes, were equally valuable for the takeover and the long term liberation project." China saw new dimension as well as urgency in the development of Tibet that would henceforth define its basic foreign policy on Central Asia.[11] June Teufel argues that the road and highway constructions were to ease the integration of the Tibetan area with Han China.[12] Elizabeth Freund Larus (2012) and Allen Carlson (2004) argues that the above-mentioned policies were aimed to integrate Tibet and reduce the obvious differences between Tibet and mainland China.[13] With respect to state farms, most of which were directly under military control, Emily Yeh argues that those were modes of state territorialisation and state incorporation. (Yeh, 2013: 62-89).

Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development, Cornell University Press

11   Dawa Norbu, 2005

12   Ibid

13   Larus, Elizabeth Freund (2012), "*Politics and Society in Contemporary China*", Pg :229, Carlson, Allen (2004)" *Beijng Tibet's Policy: Securing Sovereignty and Legitimacy*", East West Centre, Washington

1978-1988: ECONOMIC REFORMS AND LIBERALISATION

The end of Mao's era saw a shift in China's development policies in Tibet. Following the First Tibet Work Forum in March 1980 coupled with Hu Yaobang's visit to Tibet, Beijing implemented policies such as "the land use under household management" and "animals belong to household as private property" (Ma Rong: 2011).[14] Although the liberalisation of Tibet's economy began by 1980, it continued to remain under the tight control of the Chinese government. However, economic development of Tibet was seen as a major policy for integrating Tibet further with China. This was certainly a turning point in the post-Mao era in Tibet. (Warren W. Smith, 2008:166). Few important policies which were implemented during this period were:

1.   Paring-up-support policy: 'Paring-up-support' is a policy model where the central government made developed provinces and cities in the mainland responsible for providing economic support, which includes finance, skilled workers and projects to the less developed areas with which they are paired (Jin Wei, 2015).[15] Although it was introduced and implemented in 1960, it gained prominence in Tibet in 1980. Two important and immediate features related to the paring up policies were 'population transfer'[16] and 'state financial assistance'. According to the Chinese government, the key objective of this particular policy was to encourage skilled Han Chinese from other areas to help develop Tibet at a fast pace (Ibid).[17] In 1983, the Chinese government abolished the administrative restriction over migration and work permit in Tibet, consequently 50,000 Han Chinese workers migrated to Tibet. In 1984,

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14   Under this policy, "peasant households received an equal share of arable lands in their community according to the size of the household. They managed their productive activities themselves and all harvests belonged to this household. They signed contracts with the government and community for a period of time. They were not allowed to sell the land but could rent it to others for one to three years" (Ma, Rong, 2011: 157)

15   Wei, Jin (2015), "*Tibet as Recipient of Assistance and its Sustainable Development*", China Policy Institute Policy Paper 2015:No 9

16   China's population transfer policy has been going on since the 1950s. In 1950, the nature of policy was centrally planned and coordinated and it composed of the army and administrative staff (cadre). The nature of population transfer changed in 1980, it became more flexible and was both centrally planned and induced by local developments. The 1980s policy encouraged the immigration of more numbers of ethnic groups in addition to government officials. The open up policy invited more number of businesses and private enterprises as well.

17   See various white papers published by the Chinese government, which gives same arguments relating to the policy.

10,000 Chinese households from neighbouring province settled in TAR's few urban areas. In May 1984, about 60,000 Han "peddlers and craftsmen" from twenty Chinese provinces and cities arrived at Tibetan urban areas to work on new projects.[18] As far as state subsidies are concerned, the Second Tibet Work Forum in 1984 approved 42 major construction projects with an investment of 0.48 billion Yuan. In 1991, under the 8th Five Year Plan, rivers project consumed 2.189 billion Yuan of state investment (Jin Wei, 2015). Since 1980, the central government has been increasing total economic production through state subsidies. The doubling of the 1960s industrial and agriculture production was caused by state subsidies (Dreyer, 2005:135). In 1985, citing lack of skills and education among Tibetans, 4000 middle school Tibetan students were dispersed among schools in 17 provinces and municipalities in China where the language of instruction is Chinese.[19]

2. Inventing tourism as a gateway for the economic development of Tibet: Starting from 1981, Lhasa was declared an open area for tourism. In the same year, 1,059 overseas tourists visited Tibet. The figure was four times higher than the total number of tourists who visited Tibet from 1959-79. Due to political reasons, the number of tourists were limited to 1,500-2,000 people each year.[20] The capacity to receive tourists and the area open for tourism were controlled. In 1984, under the Second Tibet Work Forum, Tourism Corporation of TAR was established as an economic entity, which was financially independent and responsible for its own profits and losses. In 1985, the General Affairs of the State-Council issued a report prepared by the State Tourism Administration and the government of TAR titled "Report on the Tourism Development Program of Tibet", requesting the entire related departments to render support for realising tourism as another sector for boosting Tibet's economy. After two years, in 1987, the tourism industry was formally included in the plan for economic and social development in Tibet, emphasising its importance to the national economy also. In 1986, the Tourism Corporation of TAR was rechristened the Tibet Tourism

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18   Norbu, Dawa (2002), "*Economic Policy and Practice in Contemporary Tibet*" in Barry Sautman and June Teufel Dreyer (eds), "*Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development and Society in Disputed Region*", East Asia Gate, Pp:157

19   It is an open question about the intention of this particular policy.

20   Dreyer 2005, CTA:DIIR "*Tibet Under Communist China*", 2001

Administration. Statistics demonstrate that between 1985 and 1987, 88,902 overseas tourists visited Tibet generating a revenue of 96,807 million Yuan. In 1987, China earned 130 million Yuan from 43,000 tourists visiting Tibet.[21] Since the 1980s, tourism industry in Tibet has been an important sector and the revenue from the tourism industry has increased manifold. The approach towards "ethnic sensibility" which was practiced during the initial period of Mao was displaced by a less conciliatory policy in which modernising Tibet and creating a new breed of "modern" Tibetans took precedence (Goldstein, 1997: 94).

There are two main discourses on China's economic development policies in Tibet during the decade of 1980. One section argues that these policies were really meant to improve Tibet's economy at the earliest possible so as to match other areas in China. In addition, they believe that the government's population transfer policy was not intended at creating a huge influx of Han Chinese overtaking Tibetans business opportunities, but rather was aimed at helping Tibet develop with the support of technicians and skilled workers. (Goldstein 1997:84, Yasheng Huang[22] 1995: 184-204).

The other section argues that the economic policies were intended to integrate and assimilate Tibet into Han chauvinism (Norbu: 2006, Dyer 2006, 134 and Ma Rong 2011). They note that allowing Han Chinese into Tibet without any prohibitive rules will consequently turn Tibet into another Inner Mongolia or Xinjiang; minority areas which have been territorially and economically integrated into China. Today, the number of Han Chinese in Tibet outnumbers the local population and a large share of the benefits of the market economy is being absorbed by the Han immigrants.

1990-2000: ERA OF STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

The third major change in China's economic development policies came in the 1990s. A number of instances including the 1987-1990 anti-China protests, China-Tibet negotiations, intensification of international campaigning for Tibet, the popularity of His Holiness the Dalai Lama had played a significant role in modifying China's economic development policies from the previous

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21   Li, Luo (2008), "*The Economy of Tibet: Transformation from a Traditional to a Modern Economy*", Beijing: Foreign Language

22   Huang, Yasheng, "*China's Cadre Transfer Policy towards Tibet in the 1980s*" MODERN CHINA, Vol 21 No 2, April 1995 184-204, University of Michigan

decade. In October 1989, the reconstituted Politburo Standing Committee of the communist party held a special meeting on Tibet affairs during which Chinese president Hu Jintao released a document titled "Meeting minutes of the Politburo Standing Committee on Tibet Affairs". According to the document, the main task of the central government in Tibet is to maintain stability and develop the economy. The document maintained that the foundation of social stability, however, was economic development (Bo Zhiyue, 2010:24).[23] Therefore, the Chinese government implemented the twin policies of "stability and development"[24] and the public denunciation of the Dalai Lama throughout the 1990s. In 1994, the central government held the Third Tibet Work Forum, which further emphasised on these two policies.

As far as economic development is concerned, there were four key objectives and three key policies. The three policies were providing state subsidies, population transfer and infrastructure development.[25]

Infrastructure development included transportation facilities and communications, electricity, technology for agriculture and animal husbandry. It included mining, commerce and services and education as well. As a result, the central government provided 4.86 billion Yuan for the completion of the construction of 62 projects during that period (June Teufel Dyer, 2005, Jin Wei, 2015).The cornerstone of the central government's new policy was economic growth and modernisation (Goldstein, 1997, Tibet Justice Centre 1994).[26]

The four key objectives of these policies were: economic growth, safeguarding national unity, curbing separatism and preserving social stability and the overall development of Tibetan living standard (Pitman B, Potter, 2011:124).

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23   Zhiyue, Bo (2010), "*China's Elite Politics: Governance and Democratisation*", World Scientific Press

24   There are various discourses over the policy of "Stability and Development". Pitman B.Potter (2011) analysed the policy through Premier Li Peng making direct linkage between the lack of economic development in Tibet including poor education, electricity, transportation and communication, per capita income with the potential for separatist activities (Pg124). See Potter, B. Pitman (2011), "*Law, Policy, and Practice on China's Periphery; Selective adaption and Institutional Capacity*" London: Routledge Contemporary China Series. Whereas Robert Barnett emphasised more on the Chinese leaders linking religion, superstitions and its impact on the economic development. He also emphasised on the Chinese government linking religion and politics, hence one way to maintain stability in the Tibet regions was through patriotic reeducation among monks and nuns and the public denunciation of Dalai Lama. See Barnett, Robert (2012), "*Restrictions and Their Anomalies: The Third Forum and the Regulation of Religion in Tibet*", Current Chinese Affairs, 41, 4, 45–107.

25   See June Teufel (2005), Dawa Norbu (2005), Goldstein (1997), Pitman B. Potter (2011), Robert Barnett (2012), TJC (1994)

26   Third Forum on Work in Tibet (1994) [p.242], Translation by Tibet Information Network, http://www.tibetjustice. org/materials/china/china10.html

THE ROLE OF CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN SHAPING CHINA-TIBET CONFLICT

China's economic development policies in Tibet, apart from securing national unity and stability, play other significant role such as:

Promoting Propaganda: Since 1992 till date, the Chinese government's State Council Information Office has published around 14 white papers on Tibet.[27] Each of these papers carry pages upon pages elaborating on the backwardness of the traditional Tibetan economy and the unprecedented growth it has seen following China's occupation. Complementing the official statistics, Chinese economists and academicians have also published a number of books on the subject of Tibetan economy. Some of these books are: "*Tibet Past and Present*" by Shuzhisheng, "*Transformation of Tibet Economy from a Traditional to a Modern Economy*" by Luo Li (2008), "*What do you know about Tibet: Question and Answer*" by Foreign Language Press, 2011. These books and white papers play a significant role in defining China-Tibet conflict on international platform and also in shaping the opinion of the Han Chinese towards Tibet. Through these publications, the Chinese government, to a certain extent has been able to legitimise their control over Tibet within China and also across the world. After the 2008 mass protests in Tibet, most of the white papers on Tibet are directly related to the development of Tibet.

China's national interest: Many highways, railroads and airports have an important role in securing China's borders. Dawa Norbu argued that for China, Tibet is its backdoor which remains a gateway for all sorts of foreign influences and interventions into China. "Therefore, once the backdoor region was occupied, Communist China began to perceive Tibet, especially during the 1970s as China's "south-west outpost against imperialism, revisionism and reactionism", terms that are specific references to countries considered hostile to China - the then Soviet Union and India".[28] Hence, the geographic location of Tibet remains strategically significant for China as far as its national security is

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27   Some of the most recent white papers on Tibet are: "*Successful Practice of Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet* (Sept 2015)", "*Tibet Path of Development Driven by an Irresistible Historical Tide*" (April, 2015) and "*Development and Progress of Tibe*t" (2014), available at http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/

28   Norbu, Dawa, "*Chinese Strategic Thinking on Tibet and the Himalayan Region*", Strategic Analysis, July 1988, P:374

concerned. Also, the policy of population transfer, despite huge criticism, continues to intensify. Beijing's reluctance to terminate this influx of Chinese migrants is, of course, politically and strategically motivated. The large numbers of non-Tibetans living and working in Tibet provide Beijing a new and formidable pro-China constituency that increases its security there.

ASSESSMENT

The focus of the discourses and the debates in defining the concept of economic development has shifted from traditional growth oriented and profit maximisation towards the development of overall human welfare which is sustainable. Today, economic development is measured not only in terms of GDP growth rate but also in terms of human development index (living standard, literacy and life expectancy) and poverty index.

If one compares the evolving discourses on the concept of economic development and China's economic development policies in Tibet, economic growth continues to be the benchmark of development in Tibet. As a result, despite six decades of development pumped by free-flowing capital from Beijing, the local TAR government is still dependent on state subsidies to maintain its economic growth rate. The condition is such that the local government is able to produce only around 5-7 percent of the local budget demand (Jin Wei, 2015). What the Chinese government today propagates about the unprecedented economic transformation of Tibet is mainly based on GDP growth rate and infrastructure development. The GDP growth rate of TAR is double that of the national rate and continues to increase by about 10-14 billion year on. The region also has the highest GDP growth rate among all 27 provinces in China. However, the government's white papers as well as the other documents fail to mention the fact that Tibet's illiteracy rate, which is 42 percent, is highest among all the 27 provinces in China. Not just that, skilled labourers are also extremely in short supply, with only 15 percent of the TAR population having some form of secondary education or higher, versus 40 percent in Qinghai, 48 percent in Sichuan and 55 percent nationally.

Although the government has remarkably reduced the poverty rate, many parts of rural Tibet, where most of the Tibetans live, still lack access to proper medical, educational and healthcare facilities, electricity and other basic

infrastructures. According to the United Nations Development Program, TAR is the least developed region in China as far as human development is concerned (UNDP, 2013). The gap between GDP growth rate and human development has remained a serious challenge for China's economic development policies in Tibet. Given the bigger picture of the China-Tibet conflict, including the political contestations and the urgency of preserving Tibetan culture and identity, the Chinese government has been largely concerned with improving the economy of Tibet with the greater goal of securing their national interest of stability, territorial integrity, sovereignty and integration of regions. The Chinese government has failed to address the fundamental aspects of developing sustainable economic policies in Tibet such as getting markets for local production and enlarging Tibetan participation in the designing and implementation of economic development policies and determining how to target funding and state subsidies to better address poverty and unemployment.

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China's Transport Infrastructural Build-up in Tibet: Impacts & Implications

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INTRODUCTION

China recently announced the continuation of its preferential financial policies in Tibet[1] even though scholars such as Dexter Roberts and Jin Wei have been critical of such measures pointing out that the area not only derives little direct benefit from the investments but further exacerbates its dependency economy. Since the 1990's, the government of the Communist Party of China (CPC) has made an unprecedented scale of investment in infrastructure build-up in Tibet,[2] specifically in the areas of connectivity such as railways, roads and airports. Investments were also made in Tibet to build hydro-power energy, for urbanisation, mining, tourism, military and government infrastructure. These massive investments in infrastructure build-up have increased the urbanisation growth rate, meeting official targets and also artificially catapulted Tibet's GDP, which grew at an average of 12-percent in 2015.

This paper argues that besides the marginal positive impacts of the infrastructure build-up and urbanisation, there are more adverse immediate

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[1] http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/business/china-to-continue-preferential-financial-support-for-tibet/articleshow/50306502.cms?prtpage=1

[2] Tibet, here refers to the Tibetan plateau consisting of the three traditional provinces of Kham, Amdo and U-Tsang

impacts and long term implications to Tibet as a land and its people. The cardinal question here is, how much and in what ways are these infrastructure build-ups affecting the Tibetan people? Though the natural growth of urbanisation can't be avoided but the deliberate push for creation and expansion of urban cities have colossal repercussions in Tibet. Moreover, infrastructure build-up in Tibet is diametrically different from how it takes place in other parts of the world. Firstly, urbanisation in Tibet is unilaterally imposed by CPC without the consent of the local people. Secondly, the infrastructure build-ups are a deliberate effort to win the loyalty of the Tibetan people, thus paving way for maintaining political stability in Tibet which is China's western strategic frontier. These investments are intended at stubbing out Tibet's attempts at building on its distinct historical status within the People's Republic of China (PRC). The facade of development is also to project Tibet's achievement of prosperity and liberation under PRC upon the international community.

Urbanisation with large infrastructure build-ups are located in towns and cities on the Tibetan plateau but they impact a larger section of the Tibetan people living in remote and rural areas. The rapid infrastructure build-up in Tibet has increased the demand for minerals and hydro-power energy resulting in unscientific mining and a cascade of dams choking the natural flow of Tibet's rivers.

In short, this paper outlines the Tibetan perspective on impacts of infrastructure build-up in Tibet on the lives of the Tibetan people and Tibet as a land. The historical phases of infrastructure build-up in Tibet is not dealt in this paper. The entire study focuses on the existing, ongoing and planned infrastructure projects in Tibet. The Chinese military infrastructure in Tibet is not dealt here due to inaccessibility of reliable information. The paper is in two sections. The first section explores transportation infrastructures and the second examines the impacts of these infrastructure build-ups in Tibet in a larger context.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURES BUILD-UP IN TIBET

Transportation in terms of modern infrastructure was almost non-existent in Tibet till the early fifties. Horses and yaks were the major means of transportation for traders and nomads. The economy of Tibet during those times was self-sufficient unlike today's total dependency on Chinese government subsidies

and blood transfusion economic growth. After the occupation of Tibet by PRC, the infrastructure, especially transportation infrastructure has 'changed' the landscape of Tibet and the lives of millions of Tibetan people. So, the question begs, has it changed for better or worse? According to China's White Paper published in September 2015, a comprehensive network of roads, railways and aviation has been built to further facilitate transportation in Tibet.[3] Exploring the existing transportation infrastructure build-up in Tibet is significant before analysing its impacts.

A)   RAILWAY LINES

The Chinese authorities stress that railway connectivity is absolutely necessary to "consolidate national defence and the unity of nationalities" as Tibet encompasses the southwest frontiers of China with an international border stretching over 4,000 kms. The first railway project to connect the Tibetan plateau with China was implemented during China's Second Five-Year Plan (1958-1962). In May 1958, Beijing began the construction of a railway line from Lanzhou to Siling (Chinese-Xining), the capital of Amdo province (now designated as Qinghai Province). The line was completed in October 1959 and became operational in March 1961. This was the first time in history that the Tibetan plateau was connected to China by a rail link. The work to extend the railway line from Siling to Nagormo (Chinese: Golmud)
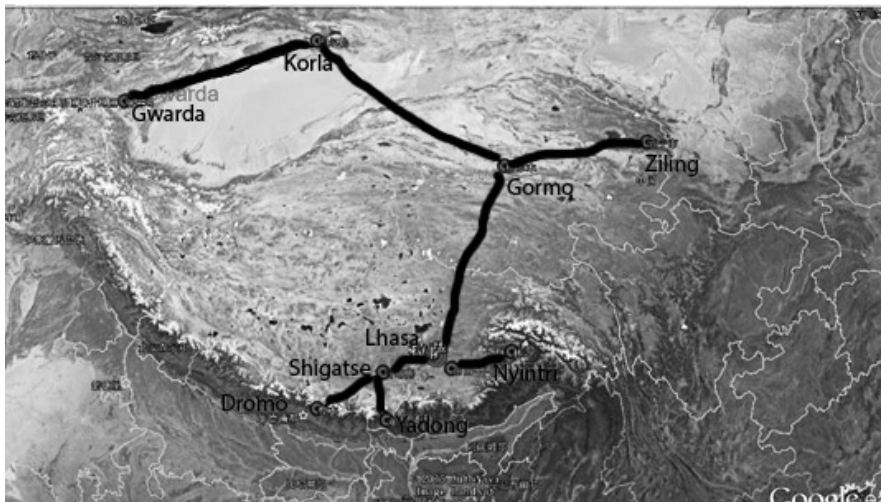
Source: googleearth.com

was launched in 1958. However, the project had to be halted in 1960 due to the crippling famine caused by Mao's Great Leap Forward. The project was revived after 17 years in 1977 and was completed in 1979. However, it was only in 1984 that the 845-km railway line became operational.

Today, as stated in China's White Paper, the Nagormo-Lhasa and Lhasa-Shigatse (Chinese: Xigazê) railways are fully functional and work on an extension connecting Lhasa to Nyingtri (Chinese: Nyingchi) is underway and is scheduled to be completed by 2021.[4]

The Chinese government has plans for extensions further south, connecting Lhasa with Dromo (Yadong in Chinese) bordering the Indian state of Sikkim and another extension connecting Shigatse with the border town of Dram in Nepal by 2020. The latter line will not only boost China's bilateral relations with Nepal where Beijing already exercises strong influence but will also provide an easy corridor for Chinese businesses and the military alike to the great northern plains of India. Another 1,214 km long railway link from Nagormo to Korla (southern Uyghur: Chinese: Xinjiang) will provide direct rail transportation between Tibet and Xinjiang. This line will be further connected via Kashagar in Xinjiang to the Gwardar port in Pakistan which is a key destination in the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor. In 2015, Pakistan and China signed a deal to acquire the usage rights to more than 2,000 acres of land for a Chinese company for the next four decades. The extensions of railway network to Gwadar port and to Kyaukpyu port in Myanmar are possibly Beijing's answer to its "Malacca Dilemma". For China, securing its energy transportation is crucially linked to its national security. Without enough oil, China will think twice before launching any large-scale military action.[5]

In addition, according to China's official news agency, *Xinhua*, a plan for a new railway line connecting Lhasa and Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province, in southwest China was released in the draft outline of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020).

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4   Ibid
5   You Ji, Dealing with the Malacca Dilemma: China's Effort to Protect its Energy Supply, STRATEGIC ANALYSIS Volume: 31Issue: 3, May 2007

B) AIRPORTS

According to Claude Arpi, author and a keen observer on developments in Tibet, the recently announced PLA/Civil integration of the airports in Tibet will probably help Beijing to "strengthen the infrastructure" and consolidate its presence on the Plateau. There are nearly 15 airports on the Tibetan plateau. Five airports are in the so called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), with Gongkar Airport in Lhasa serving as the main hub connecting Bangda Airport in Chamdo, Minling (Chinese: Mainling) Airport in Nyingtri, Dgunsa Airport in Ngari (Chinese: Ali) and Heping Zhibde Airport in Shigatse. These airports cater to 48 domestic and international air routes linking TAR with 33 cities in China and the rest of the world.[6] The four airports in Sichuan province of Tibetan plateau are Dartsedo (Chinese: Huatugou) Airport in Gartse Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Hongyuan Airport in Ngaba, Daocheng Yading airport in Karze(Chinese: Garzê) and Jiuzhai Huanglong Airport in Sungchu (Chinese: Songpan County. Four airports located in Qinghai province are Huatugou Airport and Delingha Airport in the Mongolian-Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Haixi, Golok Airport (under construction) and Yushul Bathang Airport. Two other airports on the Tibetan plateau are the Gannan Xiahe Airport in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Gansu Province and Dechen Shangri-La Airport in Dechen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan Province.
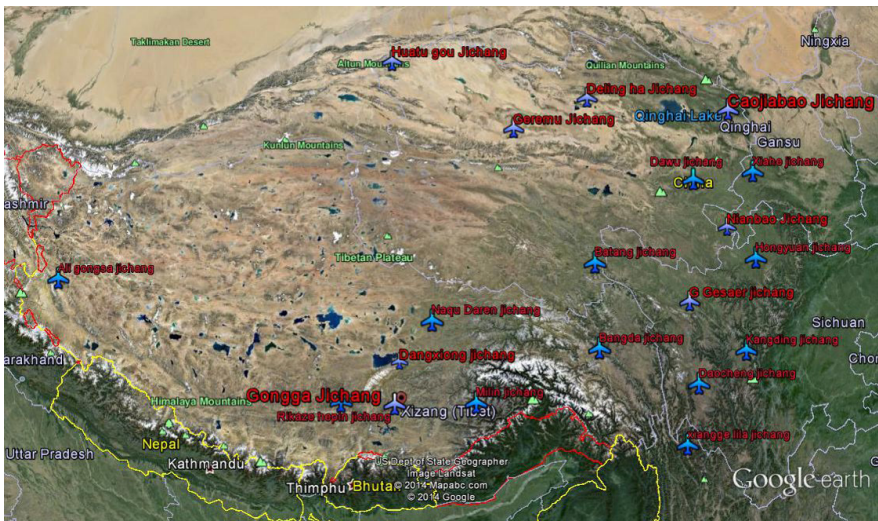
 Source: googleearth.com

Although military airfields in Tibet are not cited here due to insufficient reliable information, but most of the civilian airports in Tibet has operational facilities for both civilian and military use. The Minling Airport in Nyingtri is the most recent addition to the network of airports in Tibet.[7]

C) ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

According to official reports, by the end of 2014, the total length of roads open to traffic in TAR reached 75,000 kms out of which 8,891 kms have sub-high-grade surfaces or better, accounting for 12.6 percent of the total. 65 of all 74 counties in the TAR (88%) had access to asphalt roads. As many as 690 townships and 5,408 administrative villages could be reached by road, respectively accounting for 99.7 percent and 99.2 percent of the total.[8] Recently, the 45.22km long expressway linking Nyingtri City and Minling Airport was completed and opened to traffic. This expressway was built with a total investment of 2.845 billion Yuan, according to Nyingtri Tourism Agency.[9] However, roads in Tibet also have many strategic dimensions.

Following the ongoing spate of self-immolations in Tibetan areas against China's rule, Beijing is escalating its clamp down on monasteries, targeting them as major restive centres. The strategic network of roads and highways in Tibet with its emphasis on connecting all monasteries to the nearest town is aimed at controlling the movement of the residents.

IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Infrastructure build-up in Tibet should not be an end in itself, but rather a means for achieving better and more equitable living conditions for Tibetans. As mentioned at the beginning, Tibetans who are the owners of the land draw little benefit from these infrastructure build-up in Tibet. Primarily, the infrastructure build-up in Tibet is unilaterally decided and imposed by Beijing without the consent or consultation with the Tibetan people. As stated by Ben

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7   Gao Junxia Tibet's Nyingchi airport expressway opens to traffic, China Tibet News 2015-11-10
8   China's White Paper, Sept.2015
9   Gao Junxia, China Tibet News 2015 http://english.chinatibetnews.com/tt/201511/t20151110_910038.
html

Hillman, co-editor of the forthcoming report (2016) on ethnic unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang, the Chinese government is plastering railways and highways and sticking mobile phone towers all over the Tibetan plateau. But these have mainly encouraged and served hundreds of thousands of new migrants to come to Tibet from the far-flung areas of rural China. "It's a revolving door of Han Chinese migrants who come, make some money and leave."[10]

It is often said that infrastructure development can be considered the wheels if not the engine of economic growth. But infrastructure development must accentuate the benefits of growth, which makes the development process more inclusive. Empirical evidence have suggested that there is a positive relationship between infrastructure development index and per capita net domestic product to reduce the level of poverty and unemployment. In the case of Tibet, though the Chinese government has poured millions of Yuan for infrastructure development in Tibet but it has neither uplifted Tibetans from poverty nor has been able to increase per capita income of Tibetans which is lower than the national average. The growth that Tibet has attained in terms of GDP has been reduced to a mere figure with no actual improvement in the lives of millions of Tibetans. Professor Jin Wei, an expert at the Central Party School in Beijing, said that both the growth of investment in fixed assets and the growth of investment exceed the growth of GDP in Tibet. In the period 2012-2013, the amount of investment in

Province	Total production potential in 2000	Increase (billion kcal)	Decrease (billion kcal)	Net change (billion kcal)	Percentage change	Province	Total production potential in 2000	Increase (billion kcal)	Decrease (billion kcal)	Net change (billion kcal)	Percentage change
Beijing	3,306	3.4	280.8	−277.3	−8.39	Hunan	140,173	2.0	1,215.1	−1,213.0	−0.87
Tianjin	6,029	1.9	139.7	−137.8	−2.29	Guangdong	87,407	37.5	2,164.7	−2,127.2	−2.43
Hebei	7,1046	122.6	914.9	−792.3	−1.12	Guangxi	113,488	31.5	787.1	−755.7	−0.67
Shanxi	34,631	1.4	798.4	−797.0	−2.30	Hainan	15,939	23.0	131.1	−108.1	−0.68
Inner Mongolia	39,410	460.6	118.8	341.7	0.87	Chongqing	55,991	23.7	2,111.1	−2,087.3	−3.73
Liaoning	34,965	40.6	221.4	−180.9	−0.52	Sichuan	175,027	68.9	1,553.0	−1,484.1	−0.85
Jilin	32,929	71.9	155.8	−83.9	−0.25	Guizhou	63,814	27.6	1,103.9	−1,076.3	−1.69
Heilongjiang	58,986	1,380.2	802.8	577.4	0.98	Yunnan	67,706	94.4	981.6	−887.2	−1.31
Shanghai	8,160	0.0	1,993.9	−1,993.9	−24.43	Tibet	1,937	0.0	1.3	−1.3	−0.07
Jiangsu	109,240	28.0	8,319.2	−8,291.2	−7.59	Shaanxi	40,855	170.1	550.1	−380.1	−0.93
Zhejiang	66,373	15.7	1,673.6	−1,657.9	−2.50	Gansu	32,379	316.6	408.1	−91.5	−0.28
Anhui	135,361	535.9	3,594.5	−3,058.6	−2.26	Qinghai	2,854	4.6	21.6	−17.0	−0.59
Fujian	47,871	18.0	1,220.3	−1,202.3	−2.51	Ningxia	9,632	249.4	215.2	34.2	0.35
Jiangxi	105,507	633.2	1,060.9	−427.6	−0.41	Xinjiang	30,567	1,781.6	46.1	1,735.6	5.68
Shandong	96,332	166.4	2,967.0	−2,800.6	−2.91	Taiwan, China	13,437	69.0	181.8	−174.9	−1.30
Henan	111,160	99.3	1,243.1	−1,143.8	−1.03						
Hubei	147,401	31.9	2,371.1	−2,339.3	−1.59	Total	1,959,913	6,449	39,348	−32,899	−1.68

Table No 1: Change in Total Production Potential by Province 2000-08 in Total

fixed assets exceeded GDP by 100% thus implying that Beijing has invested millions of Yuan in fixed asset which has helped in sustaining the high GDP rate of Tibet.[11]

Table number 1 explicitly illustrates that the domestic production potential of Tibet is among the lowest in comparison to other provinces of China. However, China continues to justify its investment driven growth in Tibet. Lobsang Jamyang, chairman of TAR, has said that the large number of Tibetan people living in poverty and the poor infrastructure development have made the investment-driven growth a reasonable choice for Tibet.[12] Tibet's high growth rate piggy backing on China's investment is further exacerbated by high financial subsidies from Beijing. Professor Jin Wei notes that over 90% of expenditure supporting the functioning of Tibet's society and economy depends on the central government's fiscal transfer payment. Between 1952 and 2013, the central government's financial subsidies (a cumulative total 542.343 billion Yuan) accounted for 91.45% of Tibet's total financial revenues (a cumulative total 593.06 billion Yuan). For the same period, the central government's financial subsidies accounted for 92.36% of Tibet's total financial expenditures. In fact, the growth rate of the central government's financial subsidies is higher than the growth rate of Tibet's financial revenues.[13] This argument is further supported by findings of a study carried out by China Tibetology Research Centre in Beijing, which revealed that in recent years Tibet's economic growth has been driven by investment which comes from the central government's financial transfer payment and support of inland provinces and cities.[14]

Infrastructure build-up in Tibet is also accompanied by rapid urbanisation. China only took 30 years to accomplish the level of urbanisation that the western countries had managed to build in 200 years. In the next 20 years, there will be 13-15 million people every year entering China's expanding new cities. Infrastructure development and the advent of urbanisation in Tibet is expected to accelerate the population influx from China which is further

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11   Jin Wei, 2015, 2015: No 9 *Tibet as Recipient of Assistance and Its Sustainable Development*, China Policy Institute Policy Paper

12   *Tibet maintains ambitious growth target with strong investment,*http://www.china.org.cn/china/Off_the_ Wire/2015-01/18/content_34591447.htm

13   Wei op.cit.

14   China Tibetology Research Centre, 2009

facilitated by the reforms in the Hukou system.[15] Given the overwhelmingly rural character of Tibet, and the presence of sinicised towns already constructed throughout the region, many Tibetans infer that this aspect of the Western Development strategy (WDS) is intended to benefit migrants rather than the indigenous population. This frequently expressed opinion is supported by extensive development of new housing estates in Lhasa, Tsetang, Drakyab (Chinese: Bayi) and Shigatse, where the construction style reflects Chinese architectural style and the occupants and construction workers are so far primarily Han Chinese.[16] Recently, China's State Council, or cabinet, approved the application of Lhoka (Chinese: Shannan) in Tibet to become the fifth prefecture-level city in the region.[17] While urbanisation in Tibet has brought benefits to many migrant workers, the vast changes underway in Gyalthang (Chinese: Zhongdian) have had two negative social consequences. The first has been an increase in conflicts over urban expansion, which is a common consequence of urbanisation throughout rural China. The second is a stratification of local labour markets, which favour Han Chinese migrants at the expense of local Tibetans. This is an emerging problem in many parts of China's ethnically complex western regions.[18]

Cities in Tibet like Lhasa, due to the influx of Chinese migrant workers along with the rapid urbanisation are seeing a growing trend of intermarriage between Tibetans and Chinese. The number of ethnic-mixed households was reported to be 7,343 in the 2000 census, 2.78 times the number in 1990. Of them, 28 percent lived in urban Lhasa. These figures show that intermarriage in TAR not only increased from 1990 to 2000 but also spread from the urban to the rural areas. In 1990, there were 2,639 united households[19] of Han and ethnic minorities with 10,951 household members in TAR. About 37.7 percent of them lived in the Urban District of Lhasa, another 34.6 percent lived in six towns situated in prefectural capitals, and 7.5 percent lived in counties of Chamdo Prefecture (excluding Chamdo County).[20] Another aspect of urbanisation along with the large influx of migrant

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15   A hukou is a record in the system of household registration required by law in China. The CCP had made flexible hukuo system in Tibetan area which encourages more migrant workers to move into Tibet.

16   Susette Cooke, *Merging Tibetan Culture into the Chinese Economic Fast Lane*, China Perspectives (Nov- Dec, 2003)

17   http://lhasadaily.com/news/19-tibet/804-tibet-city-to-be-upgraded-to-prefecture-level

18   Boshi Lunwen (PhD Dissertation) Sichuan Daxue, 2003.

19   "United households" is the English term used in Chinese translation, referring to mixed marriage.

20   Rong Ma, 2011, *Population and Society in Contemporary Tibet*, Hong Kong University Press

workers can be looked as a strategy in the long run to assimilate Tibetan culture and identity. Many observers on infrastructure build-up in Tibet also view the trend as a geo-strategic "threat" to South Asia, implying Chinese expansionism in the region. This view is further expounded by the growing network of railway lines and roads in Tibet which fits into the larger picture of China's new international dream, One Road One Belt. The expansion of railway line from Shigatse to Nyingtri bordering Arunachal Pradesh state of India, a territory over which China has repeatedly laid claim, could act as a 'bargaining chip' during the border talks with India.[21] As a result of its long-standing territorial dispute with China, India faces 400,000 Chinese troops on its borders. India also must cope with additional threats from China's build-up of military infrastructure in Tibet and the Chinese administered Gwadar port on Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast.[22]

CONCLUSION

Tibet continues to be the soft underbelly of China's security interests. Beijing's strategy to deal with the Tibet issue is headlined by its rapid build-up of infrastructure (economic and military) in Tibet. This helps Beijing in two ways: firstly, it has created an extensive and modern infrastructure that enables the rapid deployment of its forces at strategic locations in any eventuality; secondly, all infrastructure build-up are naturally accompanied by urbanisation with the transfer of migrant workers. These migrants, moving in their millions to Tibet attracted by job and market opportunities not only ease rural China's unemployment and over-population burden but at the same time fulfil CCP's strategy of cultural assimilation of Tibetans. China hopes that through this strategy, accompanied by an iron fist rule over Tibet crushing all expressions of dissent, they will ultimately subdue and disintegrate the resistance of the Tibetans within and outside of Tibet.

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21   *China inaugurates new Tibet rail link close to Sikkim*, PTI Aug 15, 2014, http://articl;es.economictimes. indiatimes.com/2014-08-15/news/52845915_railway-line-xigaze-qinghai-tibet-railway

22   *India's Central Asian Strategic Paradoxes:The Impact of Strategic Autonomy in the Emerging Asian Regional Architecture*, Micha'el Tanchum p-419)

Dilemma of Development: Tibet's Development Project and Reductionist Reading

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INTRODUCTION:[1]

Before his journey through the fringes and heart of what is now China's colossal landmass, Indian author and essayist, Pankaj Mishra, made several trips to Dharamshala.

He considered the exiled Tibetans he found here in their "jeans and American college sweatshirts" unlikely "heirs to a traditional culture…………… not with karaoke bars and video game parlours standing next to Buddhist temples."

After struggling with "what to make of Tibetan refugees, in their oddly westernised way", Mishra surveyed data relating to economic indices, particularly those concerning 'Tibet', before stating that: "there is more religious freedom in Tibet than any time since Cultural revolution. It has also recorded higher GDP than any other province in China." (Mishra 2006)

However, the author later somewhat redeemed himself by adding: "Still economic development has not made for political passivity (as it has elsewhere in China)". Unlike him, many other intellectuals have failed to

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1   This paper has benefited enormously from Andrew Fischer's sustained work on development in Tibet. His close and critical reading of statistical publications on Tibet, corroborated by his insightful field experiences during his trips across Tibet has made invaluable contribution in the field of development studies in Tibet.

delve beyond this extraordinary yet misleading figure and succumbed to what I refer to as reductionist reading.

China has poured money and resources into Tibet and Tibetan areas. Development became one of the key policies to 'tame'[2] the restive Tibetan inhabited areas. A sense of dilemma and confusion gripped policy makers, academics, and observers in the wake of protests by a large number of Tibetans in 2008, which were followed by an unprecedented wave of self-immolations across Tibetan inhabited areas.[3]

In an effort to diagnose the causes of such protests and, in some cases, the complete rejection of China's rule over Tibet, it is essential to look beyond questionable published figures and avoid slipping into reductionist reading.

Reports and data compiled with the blessing of the Chinese government should be treated with caution.[4] Out of necessity, few researchers who have managed to carry-out field work in Tibet rely on government data. Comparing their field notes and observations with such data, it is assumed that these data are useful for studying trends and drawing fairly accurate conclusions.

REDUCTIONIST READING

In 2008, an unprecedented wave of protests swept across Tibet in the run-up to and during the time when China hosted the world's leading sporting event in its capital. (Shakya 2008 and Smith 2009). Scholars, pundits, and activists began scuttling through their papers, notebooks, and numerous internet pages to monitor and examine the protests. Many

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2   In her wonderful book, see Yeh (2013), in the introduction she writes: "Taming (' dul ba) is central to Tibetan conceptions of self as well as landscape, and is thus particularly resonant with territorialisation. In the Tibetan Buddhist view, the ego must be tamed in order to obtain liberation from cyclic existence...The remaking of Tibetan selves and landscapes by the PRC through territorialisation threatens to undo this earlier process of taming through a new project of civilisation, cultivation, and conversion."

3   For a comprehensive report and testimonial compilation on self-immolations in Tibet, see Kirti Monastery (2013).

4   Numerous economists and scholars have questioned the reliability of statistics published by the government, see Koch-Weser (2013) for an incisive thesis challenging the China's national output statistics against that of US and European countries. Also see Rawski (2001).

of their analyses were overwhelmingly aligned in order to assert their preconceived political ideas, as a result of which they slid, tumbled, and clumsily collided on their way down the slippery slope of reductionist reading.[5] One of the principal flaws of such analyses was the draining of Tibetan agency and failure to recognise that the protests couldn't be reduced to one single and ultimate factor.

In 2008, the eccentric Slovenian cultural theorist and avowed Marxist, Slavoj Zizek, who has a journal devoted to studying his ideas, wrote in a leading French daily:

The Chinese invested heavily in Tibetan economic development, as well as infrastructure, education and health services. Despite undeniable oppression, the average Tibetan has never enjoyed such a standard of living as today. Poverty is now worse in China's own undeveloped western rural provinces than in Tibet.

Zizek is joined by a chorus of other scholars whose line of argument sits comfortably within the realm of reductive analysis. For instance, Barry Sautman, who has written extensively about Tibet, stated that Tibetans protesting "in Lhasa and other Tibetan areas were organised to embarrass the Chinese government ahead of the Olympics." In his opinion "the large monasteries have long been centres of separatism, a stance cultivated by the TYC and other exile entities, many of which are financed by the US State Department or the US Congress' National Endowment for Democracy. Monks are self-selected to be especially devoted to the Dalai Lama."

There is a startling resemblance between the aforementioned analyses and reductive reading by various other scholars, and information provided by Chinese propaganda arms. The fundamental problem with these largely Marxist analyses is their complete disregard for Tibetan agency, where they conveniently assume that the Tibetans are incapable of acting independently and making their own free choices.

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5   See Yeh (2009). I echo an excellent critique of such reductionist reading in what she described as "radical reductionism." She writes: "Many Tibetans, differently positioned within society, vis-a-vis class, gender, religious status and sect, geographical and rural/urban location, took part in the protests, making wide range of claims and demands. In addition to acknowledging this sheer multiplicity within Tibetan society, we need to recognise Tibetans as capable of political subjects, who like all historical subjects, are inevitably complex and contradictory."

TIBET'S DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Since 1951, Chinese government involvement in Tibetan polity and economy has created an awkward financial dependency through fiscal transfer payment and financial subsidies. According to its own figures, financial subsidies made by Beijing to Tibet between 1952-2013 amounted to 542.343 billion Yuan, which constituted 91.45 per cent of the region's total financial revenue. In terms of expenditure, the central government doled out around 92.36 per cent of Tibet's total expenses in financial subsidies to support the functioning of society and regulate Tibetan affairs.[6]

It is therefore imperative to understand how such staggering amounts of money earmarked for the development of Tibet make their way from the board rooms of Beijing to individual Tibetan households.

It also raises a more pertinent intellectual and philosophical question regarding the validity of development - aided by hand-outs - as a means by which to bring about positive changes to the Tibetan peoples' quality of life. If our education through the recent global experience of the development of impoverished countries through aid from richer countries is any indication, the development project in Tibet should be understood in the light of such new understanding (Fischer 2009).

SHARE OF TIBETAN ECONOMY

Before China's intervention, Tibet's economy was based upon what a Marxist would describe as feudalism. Although this system was undoubtedly replete with flaws, the traditional, pre-industrialised Tibetan system functioned with remarkable efficiency, and the sudden economic transition imposed in Tibet against its geography, cultural disposition, and demography led to the unfolding of costly and sustained tragedy.

Tibet's traditional economy was largely dependent on pastoral activities and farming. In 1959, the primary sector (comprised chiefly of agricultural and pastoral activities) accounted for 73.6 per cent of the country's economy. By 2008 this figure had plummeted to just 15.3 per cent.

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6   Figures and data mentioned here are calculated by using Tibet Statistical Yearbooks and China Statistical Yearbooks; it is denoted otherwise if used from other sources.

As the primary sector's share of Tibet's cumulative economic output dropped, many Tibetans were compelled to abandon traditional ways of making a living. The share of employment in the primary sector (the number of people making their living by traditional means) had also sharply declined by 2008 - a trend not restricted to the Tibet Autonomous Region, but also evident within Tibetan inhabited areas in Gansu, Sichuan and Qinghai (see figure 1).[7]
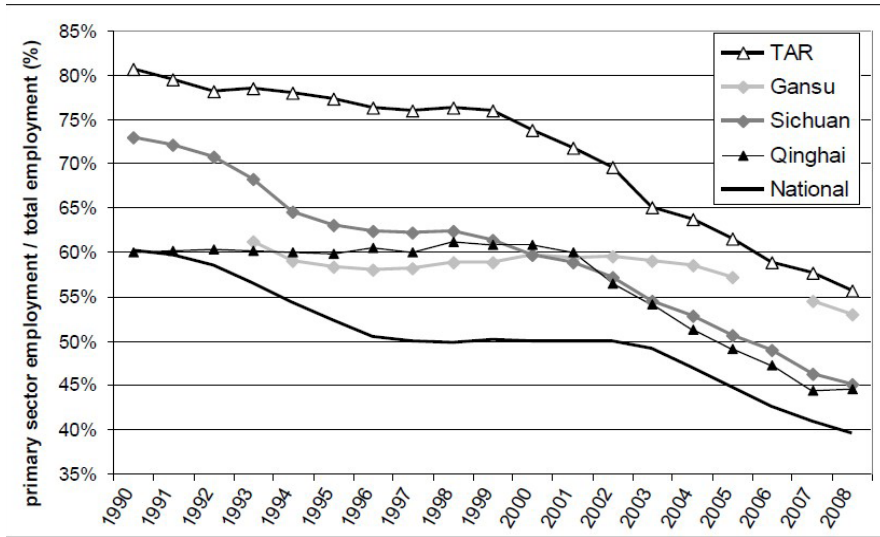

Figure 1. Source: *Tibet Statistical Yearbooks, 1990-2008*; China Statistical Yearbooks 1990-2008, (Fischer 2011)

However, whilst the primary sector's share of its economy has dramatically declined, Tibet has witnessed a dramatic rise in the number of people employed in the tertiary sector (comprising roles in which people offer their knowledge and time to improve productivity, performance and sustainability). In order to benefit from this sector, workers and employees require certain levels of skill, education, expertise, and know-how. Increasingly, huge chunks of money earmarked for Tibet's development are consumed by this sector. In Tibet, the increase in the tertiary sector's share of the economy has had a reverse relation to the decline of the primary sector, the former's share of Tibet's cumulative economic output having risen steadily from just 15.8 per cent in 1959 to 55.5 per cent in 2008.[8]

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7   The figure and data is adapted from Andrew Fischer's excellent paper on transformation in Tibet and Xinjiang, see Fischer (2011). He is also considered one of the foremost authority on development and economic policies in Tibet.

8   See Fischer (2001). In a detailed analysis Tibetan participation in each sectors. It is worthwhile looking

As more and more manpower was needed to run this new rising sector of the economy, employment figures rose, generating the tertiary sector's current employment share in the economy (see figure 2). A policy of China's cadre transfer was implemented to sustain this transition, carried out by providing lucrative incentives as well as administrative compulsion. In 2003, cadres employed in the Tibet Autonomous Region were paid an average annual wage of 26,931 Yuan, almost double the national average of 14,040, and surpassed only in the national commercial hub of Shanghai where the figure stood at 27,304.

The generous remuneration offered to cadres in Tibet is remarkable considering the stunted growth in other sectors of the economy. This cash-rich sector has also witnessed a sudden shift in the representation of Tibetans.
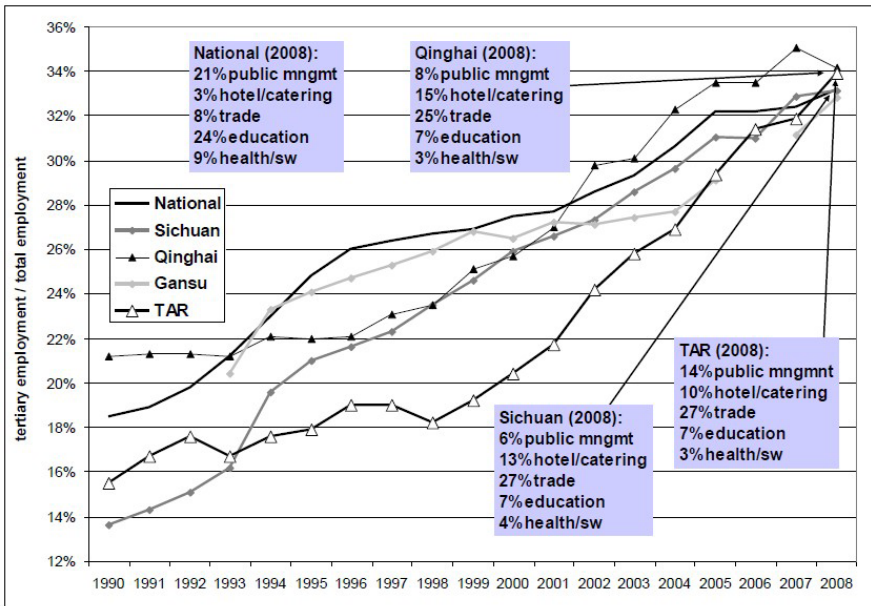

Figure 2. Source: *Tibet Statistical Yearbooks, 1990-2008*; China Statistical Yearbooks 1990-2008, (Fischer 2011).

The number of Tibetan staff and workers employed within state-owned units fell from 71.4 per cent to 64.6 per cent between 2001 and 2003, whereas the proportion of Chinese employees rose from 28.7 per cent to 35.4 per

into the same trend found in the secondary sector.

cent within the same period. Moreover, this trend is not restricted to state-owned enterprises, but is also in evidence concerning the appointment of Tibetans at cadre level.[9] Cadre level appointment accounted for two-thirds of permanent state-sector employment in 2003 - the number of available positions having increased to 88,734 from 69,927 in 2000. However, the number Tibetans employed at this level dropped from 50,039 (72 per cent of the total number) in 2000 to just 44,069 three years later (around 50 per cent) (TIN 2005).

The disaggregation of minzu (ethnic) into official staff and workers' data was rolled back in 2004 to be replaced by gender disaggregation in the following yearbooks (TSY 2004).

SUSTAINING DEVELOPMENT

Since the global economic meltdown, China has attempted to transition from an export driven economy to a consumer based one. This could be an attempt to shield it from economic turmoil on a global scale. As China steers its way into transition, can it continue to subsidise Tibet's economy? China is currently bracing itself for a "new normal" of slower yet safer and more sustainable growth, which involves giving the market a more decisive role in the economy (IMF 2015). Will Tibet's traditional way of life, as well as its economy, become casualties of this shift?

Amongst regions in western or central China, Tibet receives by far the largest proportion of subsidies from the government. If the subsidies were evenly spread to the population in Tibet, then on a per capita basis, each Tibetan would have received 17,105 Yuan annually in 2010, whereas per capita subsidy for all provincial government in the same year was 2,481 Yuan.

It has now reached a point wherein, the remarkably high cost of sustaining development in Tibet couldn't be carried on if strains on Chinese economy becomes exposed. If and when confronted with nervous jolts in the larger global and national economy, will the government pursue subsidising Tibetan economy?

9   See Huang (1995). Although, somewhat outdated, Yasheng Huang's revealing paper on China's cadre transfer policy towards Tibet in 1980s.

Since large portion of this money would be consumed in retaining the tertiary sector, which is to run Tibet efficiently, it is evident that the government is pouring all resources possible to balm the scarred wounds caused by other failed policies in Tibet.

CONCLUSION

To sustain and to improve Tibetan participation in the burgeoning tertiary and secondary sector, Tibetans would be required to acquire certain levels of education and skills.

After an invitation by the Chinese government in September 2003, Katarina Tomasevski, the UN expert on education, presented her report to the UN human rights forum and described the illiteracy in Tibet as "horrendous" and "lacking far behind in comparison with the situation in China."(ITC 2004)

In contradiction to the remarkably high expenditure in the tertiary sector, illiteracy among Tibetans remain discouragingly low. This might lead to discouragement of Tibetans in participating in various public sector opportunities.[10]

In China as a whole, the low-hanging fruits of development are plucked and further unconstrained development had shown strains on ecology and less impressive GDP figures. The unprecedented global consensus on climate change in Paris had turned the spotlight on energy-dependent development in a country like China. Under these constraints, China's global ambition adjusted to the new reality confronts challenges to its legitimacy to rule huge population and ethnic schism by citing development and GDP figures.

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10   See Fisher (2014 p.247-290) for a detailed analysis on 'education-employment nexus of exclusion in Tibet. He approaches 'exclusion' of Tibetans in public-funded enterprises and public sector job opportunities by firstly analysing literacy and schooling outcomes in the lower end of labour hierarchy. Secondly, the exclusion in 'upper end' of the labour hierarchy through various state policies.

How Internal are China's Internal Problems?

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INTRODUCTION

For centuries China was known for its vast population and its heterogeneity. It was during the Qing dynasty, due to the increase of agriculture production and other factors that China's population reached 400 million. However, the rising population exceeded its resources and the later increase of population became one of the important factors for the downfall of the Qing Dynasty. The fear of a population explosion and its impact continues to haunt China in modern period as well. Three decades after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Chinese government decided to control the rising population through coercive methods.

From 1800-1911, there were around eight major well known rebellions in China, covering different parts of the empire. One of the common reasons for the outbreak of all these rebellion was misgovernment and corruption. Within four decades of the establishment of the PRC, the Tiananmen Square protests broke out in China led by students and later joined by union labourers, and common Chinese people. Once again, the reasons for the protests were a decade of misgovernance and growing corruption. From 1993 to 2008, there were a total of 614,100 protests across China. These protests resulted from many factors including misgovernment and corruption at the centre as well as at the provincial level. Historically, Chinese people have mainly protested when their

rights are taken away from them by the government. When someone takes away what is dear to you, it is natural for people to protest. This paper is an attempt to throw light on the fact that the recurring protests in China are not a recent phenomenon but are embedded in Chinese history. In the following pages, an attempt has been made to reveal that there is a connection between past and present which has implications for future of China.

POOR GOVERNANCE, MORE REBELLIONS

A Century of Peasants Rebellions

In 1766, the French political economist Francois Quesnay remarked:

> No one can deny that this state is the most beautiful in the world, the most densely populated, and the most flourishing kingdom known. Such an empire as that of China is equal to what all Europe would be if the later were united under a single Sovereign.[1]

From the above observation by Francois Quesnay, it can be concluded that during that time, China was economically flourishing along with its growing population. But Quesnay's observation was about to gradually change. Lord George McCartney while visiting China on behalf of King George III in 1793 noted, "Scarcely a year now passes, without an insurrection in some of the provinces."[2] This highlighted the grassroots situation prevailing in China during his official visit. In 1797, a revolt broke out in China named the Miao Revolt by the imperial government. The revolt was the result of growing corruption and heavy taxation by the Qing government officials on Hunan peasants. When the revolt broke out, various ethnic factions, especially the Miao, Han, and Bouyei, cooperated as allies. The ethnic divisions which were often found throughout China were dispensed with by the peasants of this region as they attempted to throw off the yoke of the Qing Dynasty.[3] The above dramatic change of events signify the dynamic nature of China, where change is constant. In order to prevent future unrest and cooperation

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1   Henry Kissinger, *On China*, (Penguin Books Ltd: London, 2012) p.12.

2   Ibid., p.64.

3   Immanuel Ness (ed), *The International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest: 1500 to the Present, Vol. 1*, (Blackwell Publishing: West Sussex, 2009)p.715.

among the ethnic groups, Han civilians were brought in large number, to alter the demographics of the region, and large military structures were erected throughout western Hunan in order to maintain control over the populace.[4] This strategy is today adopted by China in their minority regions for the same reasons. For instance, in the case of the Tibetan Autonomous Region and as well as other Tibetan inhabited areas, the question about whether Tibetans are being overrun by the Chinese population is debated widely. However, the more important question is the increase of Han population in TAR as well as in other Tibetan habitats area. Yan Hao, (Institute of Economic Research, State Department of Planning Commission, Beijing) published an article titled, *"Tibetan Population in China: Myths and Facts Re-examined"* in Asian Ethnicity Journal, March 2000, where he stated, "As for the officially registered Han residents in the TAR, their number has actually dropped by nearly half from 122,400(sic, 122,356(Ma Rong, 2011) in 1980 to 64,890 in 1993. However, the figures began to change. From 1993 to 2008, the total number of registered Han residents in the TAR increased from 64,890 to 123,558 (Institute of Sociology and Anthropology, Peking University, Beijing, China MA Rong, 2011). Thus from the above findings it can be concluded that the number of registered Han residents has increased since Yan Hao's assertions, hence signifying the reality of the demographic invasion.

Qing officials were aware of the fact that the Ming dynasty was established in the 14th century as a result of peasant rebellion. In China, the nineteenth century would come to be defined in Chinese history as a particularly fervent period of rebellion.[5] From 1800-1911 there were around eight recorded major rebellions in China, covering different parts of the Qing empire. Among all the rebellions in China, the Taiping Rebellion stands out because of its intensity and number of casualties which was unprecedented in Chinese history. The Taiping rebellion was only the first, albeit the most dangerous, of a spate of insurrections against the ailing government of China in the mid-19th century.[6] There are still disagreement among western and Chinese scholars over the causes for the outbreak of the Taiping rebellion.

Western scholars often attribute its impetus to widespread poverty and Chinese scholars ascribe the force of the movement to its anti-Qing

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4   Loc. Cit.

5   Immanuel Ness (ed), *The International Encyclopaedia of Revolution and Protest: 1500 to the Present, Vol. 1*, (Blackwell Publishing: West Sussex, 2009)p.715.

6   Ian Health, Michael Perry, *The Taiping Rebellion 1851-1866*, Osprey Publishing Ltd: London, 1994 p.3

ideology.[7] However from this disagreement, one can deduce the fact that the Taiping Rebellion was in fact a peasant rebellion caused mainly by decades of misgovernment. The rebellion organised by peasants from 1851 to 1864, was so pervasive and successful that it lasted for over thirteen years. It is said that in 1856, the Taiping army numbered 1 million (which is equivalent to around 100 regiments (Shih)) thus signifying its popular support from the common Chinese people. Statistics relating to this conflict are unreliable, but there is no question that the Taiping Rebellion was war on the largest scale the world had ever seen. A total of about 10 million troops had been involved, and as many as 600 cities had changed hands time and time again during the 15 years of conflict.[8] The outcome remained uncertain for several years, with the rebellion finally being crushed by the raising of new armies by the Qing with the support of British and French troops.[9] However, the number of casualties from the outbreak of rebellion were much larger. It is estimated that the uprising resulted in the death of 20-40 million people.[10] Due to the series of insurrections in different provinces in the following years, the number of casualties were higher. While no official figures exist, it is estimated that during the Taiping, Muslim, and Nian upheavals, China's population declined from roughly 410 million in 1850 to roughly 350 million in 1873.[11] From the above developments, it becomes clear just how potent common Chinese people can become during a difficult phase, if guided and led b y a charismatic leader. Later in the 20th century civil war in China, Mao too depended on the strengths of peasants to fight back the Kuomintag led by Chiang-Kai-Shek, and eventually succeeded.

In the following years, there was increase in the involvement of foreign powers in the internal affairs of China. Due to the presence of foreigners on Chinese soil, and their rampant abuse of power in the form of sphere of influence, the Chinese people were angered. The Boxer Rebellion was one insurrection, which directly targeted anything foreign.

From the above series of insurrections in China, it is clear that whenever there was an ailing government unable to resist foreign aggression and

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7   Immanuel Ness (ed), *The International Encyclopaedia of Revolution and Protest: 1500 to the Present, Vol. 1,* (Blackwell Publishing: West Sussex, 2009)p.17.

8   Ian Health, Michael Perry, *The Taiping Rebellion 1851-1866*, Osprey Publishing Ltd: London, 1994p.7.

9   Martin Jacques, When China Rules the World, (Penguin Books Ltd: London, 2012) p.101.

10   Loc. cit.

11   Henry Kissinger, *On China,* (Penguin Books Ltd: London, 2012) p.65.

widespread corruption in the imperial court, Chinese people always rallied behind a leader who emerged out of an unstable situation. This happened again when Mao decided to lead China. China was not only invaded many times by nomadic people from outside its borders but was also turned upside down many more times by its own citizens, mainly the peasants. In all, there were 1,109 major military conflicts between the Chinese and the northern nomads from 215 BC to 1684 AD and as many as 225,887 recorded armed rebellions between 210 BC and 1900 AD. The impact of these conflicts and rebellions was not trivial in terms either of accounting costs and opportunity costs, as huge number of people and animals were killed, a vast area of cultivated land abandoned, and farming equipment and facilities destroyed.[12] The argument is further validated in the following figures.

POPULATION GROWTH IN CHINA FROM 0- 1998 A.D.

Table no. 1.   (000)

Year	Population Growth
0	59,600
1000	59,000
1300	100,000
1400	72,000
1500	103,000
1600	160,000
1700	138,000
1820	381,000
1850	412,000
1870	358,000
1998	1242700

(Adapted from Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective*, OECD: Paris, 2006) p.42.

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12   Kent G. Deng, *A Critical Survey of Recent Research in Chinese Economic History*, The Economic History Review, New Series, Vol.53, No. 1 (Feb., 2000), p.7.

From the above figure it is clear that the population growth in China witnessed a tremendous growth during the Qing Dynasty. However, due to rising internal rebellions and other factors there was a decline of population growth in the late 19th century. There were other major population losses in the Taiping and other anti–Qing rebellions in the 1850s and 1860s. As a result of these and associated famines and diseases, the Chinese population dropped by more than 50 million from 1850 to 1870.[13] The impact of the internal rebellion was also visible on the Chinese economy in terms of per capita income. China's per capita income declined from $600 in 1820 to $552 in 1913.[14]

From the above developments, it is clear that China in the 19th century witnessed a series of rebellions led by peasants, which were mostly violent in nature (armed rebellion). The most common reasons for the outbreak of rebellion in China were poor governance and rampant corruption by imperial officials. The recurring problems of corruption and poor governance later became a major cause for the mass protests launched by students in the 20th century.

SAME PROBLEM, DIFFERENT ERA

The Dawn of the Twentieth Century and the Emergence of Students' Movement

Asian students have a particularly long and active history of political involvement. India, China, Burma, Indonesia, Pakistan, and other nations have all seen nationalist upsurges in the 19th and 20th centuries in which university students and Western-oriented intellectuals have been active.[15] However, in China, Chinese students became more active after gaining exposure to western ideas through overseas education. Prior to the twentieth century, student protest was a relatively uncommon phenomenon in China.[16] However, the trend of Chinese students studying abroad was started by the

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13   Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective*, (OECD: Paris, 2006) p.41.

14   Meghnad Desai, *India and China: An Essay in Comparative Political Economy*, (Critical Quest: New Delhi, 2008) p.4.

15   Philip G. Altbach, *Student Movements in Historical Perspective: The Asian Case*, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March, 1970) p.74.

16   Immanuel Ness (ed), *The International Encyclopaedia of Revolution and Protest: 1500 to the Present, Vol. 1*, (Blackwell Publishing: West Sussex, 2009)p.718.

Qing government as early as in 1872. Between 1846 and 1949 about 150,000 Chinese students studied abroad. In the 1880s, the returned students from the United States and Europe became the main managerial forces in the new enterprises of the Self-Strengthening Movement (1862-1894).[17] By 1906, there were about 17,000 Chinese students studying overseas, with the largest number in Japan but with substantial groups in the United States, France, Germany, and England.[18]

There were number of factors which facilitated the emergence of the Chinese students' political involvement. These activist youths were, for the most part, inspired by nationalistic zeal and many of them wished to overthrow the Qing government so that China could be ruled by Chinese people, who might, they reasoned, take more care to build and defend the nation.[19] Manchus were not Chinese in origin. They were partially nomads and hence they were looked upon as outsiders by Chinese people. However, even after the overthrow of the Qing government, the problems still persisted. Because of inefficient government, foreign interference in the internal affairs of China was on the rise, similar to the situation which prevailed during the emergence of the peasant rebellion in China. To make the situation even tense, not every returnee received suitable employment in China. Most of the returned students from abroad were unable to find a suitable job and this created a situation where their problems became common and the source of all these problems was a weak Republican government which more or less failed to change the situation. According to Arnold P. Goldstein (*The Psychology of Group Aggression*, 2002) convergence theory holds that rather than a more-or-less random group of individuals becoming a collective through a contagious spread of emotion, mobs are formed by the coming together of people sharing conscious or unconscious needs. The weak state of the Chinese government during this period gave students ample reason to protest, and enabled them to do so with limited backlash from political authorities. At the same time, this was also a period during which China's educational system rapidly developed.[20] All the above circumstances created a situation where mass protest became imminent.

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17   He Li, *Returned Students and Political Change in China*, Asian Perspective, Vol. 30, No 2(2006) pp.8-9.

18   Op.cit., p.77.

19   Immanuel Ness (ed), *The International Encyclopaedia of Revolution and Protest: 1500 to the Present, Vol. 1*, (Blackwell Publishing: West Sussex, 2009)p.719.

20   Loc.cit.

The demonstrations which erupted on May 4, 1919 against continuing foreign influence in China marked the emergence of students as a major political force in the country, and also launched the nation on a period of radical intellectual ferment.[21] This demonstration was also launched because of weak Chinese government and its weak response to the Treaty of Versailles. Jaffrey N. Wasserstrom (*Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China*, 1991) remarked, "During the few short weeks between the May 4 march in Beijing and the end of the general strike in Shanghai, Chinese students proved that they were capable not only of organising themselves for disciplined political action, but also of bringing citizens of all classes together in a common cause to fight imperialist aggression and domestic misgovernment." The common reason for the student to protest against the Chinese government was its poor governance, because of which a number of problems emerged one after another. Foreign aggression, unemployment, and corruption are few of the problems which later became a source of student resentment against the Chinese government. Later when Mao came to power, this time he too depended on students to achieve his aims. During the Cultural Revolution, he employed the Chinese students to fulfil his aims. He even publicly declared that "…the workers, peasants, and soldiers should not interfere with the students' great Cultural Revolution. Let the students go into the street. What is wrong with their writing big-character posters or going into the street?[22] This clearly shows how shrewd a politician Mao was, who in order to fight back the Kuomintang, depended on the peasants and later in order to strengthen his legitimacy, depended on the strength of Chinese students. However later the situation in China got out of control and soon China was enveloped in a cloud of chaos. For more than two full years after the middle of 1966, the world's largest communist state was torn apart by mass protests and chaotic local rebellions that in some regions escalated into virtual civil war. Not until August 1968 were the flames of China's Cultural Revolution extinguished by the imposition of a harsh regime of martial law.[23] After the establishment of the People's Republic of China,

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21   Philip G. Altbach, *Student Movements in Historical Perspective: The Asian Case,* Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March, 1970) p.78.

22   Arup Kumar Sen, *1989 Student Movement in China*, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 32. No 29(July. 19-25), p.1833

23   Andrew G.Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement*, (Harvard University Press: Massachusetts, 2009) p.1.

it was the first time that People's Liberation Army was deployed to control the situation inside China. This clearly shows the intensity of the situation prevailing during that time and Mao's decision to deploy the army. However, this would be not the last time when the army was deployed to control the situation in China.

PRECURSOR TO CHINESE STUDENT MOVEMENT (TIANANMEN SQUARE PROTESTS)

The three-year famine of 1959-1961, (during which an estimated 30 million people died of hunger), and the Cultural Revolution are only the two most well-known events. At the time of Mao's death in 1976, the Chinese economy was on the verge of collapse. Chinese people were living in poverty, and grievances were mounting in the society. It was largely the widespread crises brought by the Cultural Revolution that pushed China's new leaders to start reforms in 1978.[24]

The various steps taken by Mao had driven China to the point of desperation, where reform was the only door left for the mitigation of the situation. Hence under the stewardship of Deng Xiaoping, various reforms were introduced in China. Economic modernisation became the principal goal of the state. A market economy was introduced which led to the emergence of private business, joint ventures and investment from foreign firms were also encouraged. The reforms also percolated down to intellectuals. State control over people became less. More freedom was given to intellectuals and there were an increased number of Chinese students studying abroad. With these reforms, there was tolerance for the exploration of western ideas in China, which is best validated by allowing the Chinese students to study abroad. Here in this paper, I have included the number of Chinese students as well as Chinese scholars who were issued visas for further studies as well as for academic visits to the United State of America.

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24 Dingxin Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement,* (University of Chicago Press: London, 2001) p.42.

Table no 1.2. The number of Chinese students and scholars who were issued visa to study in USA

Year	J-1 Visas	F-1 Visas	Total
1979	807	523	1,330
1980	1,986	2,338	4,324
1981	3,066	2,341	5,407
1982	3,327	1,153	4,480
1983	3,328	1,003	4,331
Total	12,514	7,358	19,872

Source: Consular Reports, U.S. Department of State, cited in *A Relationship Restored: Trends in U.S.-China Educational Exchanges*, 1978-1984, (National Academy Press: Washington, 1986) p.32.

Soon after the Sino-American rapprochement in July 1972, there were only 50 Chinese students and scholars who had come to the United States. However, with the passage of time, the number of Chinese students and scholars visiting America skyrocketed. The above figure clearly shows that the number of Chinese students and scholars studying in America has risen since the start of scholarly exchange between the two nations. The total number of J-1 visas and F-1visas issued in 1979 were 1,330. Gradually it increased to 4,331 in 1983. The total number of J-1 and F-1 visas from 1979 to 1983 were 19,872. The simple reason for the higher number of J-1 visas is because students were largely financially supported by the Chinese government, U.S. government, U.S. foundations, U.S. corporations and others. According to Dingxin Zhao (1997), it was mainly the decline of the political control over students during the process of reforms which made a significant contribution to the rise of the 1989 Chinese Student Movement. However there were other factors which also contributed to the escalation of the Chinese Student Movement. Because of the reformist period, many Chinese students and scholars received opportunities to study abroad.

According to official statistics, from 1978 to 2003, a total of 700,200 Chinese students studied in 108 countries and regions all over the world. The number of students from China in America is frequently larger than

the number of students from any other foreign country.[25] As mentioned previously, from 1979 to 1983 there were a total of 19,872 Chinese students and scholars who were issued visas by USA. Hence, exposure to western ideas from the "land of democracy"(America) itself gave them enough intellectual stimulation to protest. The installation of a statue of the Goddess of Democracy during the Tiananmen Square Protests is testimony to the impact of Western ideas, especially that of America. Another interesting fact is that the largest number of Chinese students and scholars who visited America during 1983 were from Beijing.

Percentage distribution of PRC F-1 and J-1 Visa holders by birthplace and residence, compared to 1982 PRC population distribution, 1983. Table no. 1.3.

Province or Municipality in China	% of PRC 1982 Population	Birthplace		Current Home	
		F-1	J-1	F-1	J-1
Beijing	7	19	10	25	37
Shanghai	1	37	19	33	14
Guangdong	6	15	5	17	5
Xinjiang	1	_	0	0	0
Xizang	_	0	0	0	0
Nei Mongol	2	_	1	0	1
Sichaun	10	3	7	1	5
Tianjin	1	1	2	2	3

Source (Adapted from *A Relationship Restored: Trends in U.S.-China Educational Exchanges*, 1978-1984, (National Academy Press: Washington, 1986) p.41.

The above figures reveal that most of the Chinese students and scholars were from Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangdong. Before the Tiananmen Square Protests, the first interuniversity ties among student activists were established on April 18 between Beida and Qinghua University, and first nationwide association was formed on April 21 linking students from Beijing, Tianjin,

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He Li, *Returned Students and Political Change in China*, Asian Perspective, Vol. 30, No 2(2006) p.6.

Shanghai, Nanjing and Guangzhou.[26] Not only that, out of the 21 student leaders on the most wanted list published by the Chinese government after the military crackdown (Guangming Daily 1989), Beijing University had seven, Qinghai University and Beijing Normal University each had three.[27] Han Dongfang, who later was to become the leader of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation, was born in Beijing and he even worked briefly at the library of Beijing Normal University. During the period of reform, Chinese intellectuals had opportunities to visit foreign countries for various academic activities. When they returned to China, they often gave visitor reports on Chinese campuses to convey their image of the West, generally depicting the West as a perfect society. They thus greatly aggravated the grievances that the uninitiated young students had towards Chinese realities.[28] Fang Lizhi, was one such intellectual, who visited many countries including the United State of America during the reformist period, and his speeches have inspired many Chinese students to rethink their country's destiny. Zhou Fengsuo, a student of Tsinghua University before the Tiananmen Square Protests, remembers listening to Fang Lizhi's speeches. Following are two excerpts from them:

> The youth of the West and of China are different; the West is a free society, and opportunities for young people are relatively great, and people who have tempered themselves are relatively many. Because opportunities are many and the competitive nature strong, you only have to go do something; there are none who cannot find opportunities. Therefore their students first temper their own independent, creative ability; you only need to have ability, then you can do anything.[29]

The above speech glorified the Western countries in general and America in particular, and the unlimited opportunities available in the western countries. Similar to that, Fang Lizhi gave numerous provocative speeches, thus generating much enthusiasm among the Chinese students and scholars alike. Following is another excerpt from one of his speeches:

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26   Corinna-Barbara Francis, *The Progress of Protest in China: The Spring of 1989*, Asian Survey, Vol. 29, No.9(Sep., 1989)p.904.

27   Dingxin Zhao, *Decline of Political Control in Chinese Universities and the Rise of the 1989 Chinese Student Movement, Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 40, No 2 (1997), p.172.

28   Dingxin Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement*, (University of Chicago Press: London, 2001) p.63.

29   Ibid.,p.64.

One reason for this situation is our social environment. Many of us who have been to foreign countries to study or work agree that we can perform much more efficiently and productively abroad than in China.... Foreigners are no more intelligent than we Chinese. Why, then, can't we produce first-rate work? The reasons for our inability to develop our potential lie within our social system.[30]

His criticism of the social system in China highlighted indirectly the need for reforms in China, lack of which had been impeding China's development. Fang Lizhi visited many colleges campus and gave a series of speeches including at Peking University, Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University, Jiaotong University, and Tongji University. All these facts reveal that exposure to western ideas, directly or indirectly, influenced the Chinese students and scholars.

THE RAMPANT POLITICAL CORRUPTION

The reforms however benefited those who had a good connection to the party officials and those who didn't were left to the mercy of their fate. One of the students recalled her gruelling life in China during the 1980s:

We students from the Beijing University Department of Economics had great difficulty finding suitable jobs. Some of my classmates became shop assistants in department stores after graduation; some went to construction companies; some went to very small research institutions. I felt very sad because good jobs in state ministries, trading companies, and banks were only given to those who had backdoor access. Thus, even if there was a good job, there would be several hundred people competing for it, and eventually only those who had the best backdoor access could get it.[31]

Despite graduating, thousands of Chinese students were unable to find a suitable job afterwards and were often engaged in menial jobs. The prospect of getting a good job was even more difficult. Only those who had the best

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30 http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/fang_lizhi_responsibility.pdf p.3. accessed on 15/10/2015

31 Dingxin Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement*, (University of Chicago Press: London, 2001) p.90.

political connection with officials usually ended up getting a job. Not only this, the students who returned from overseas study were also unable to get suitable jobs.

China has problems in putting the skill and training of returned students and scholars to best use despite the fact that Beijing is making an earnest effort to alleviate this difficulty. From November 23 to 29, 1984, China's State Council convened a national conference at which State Councillor Zhang Jingfu was reported to have "called for a change in work conditions for the 14,000 people who have returned from overseas study. Seventy percent of them were not being fully used because of a shortage of advanced facilities and unsuitable work assignments."[32] Roger W. Howard, who reached Jilin University (which is located in Changchun, a major industrial city in Northeast China and capital of Jilin province) on May 16, 1989, witnessed the progress of the protests during the Jilin University's annual sports meet. The slogans and banners reflected a cross section of student demands at that point: no distorted reporting of the movement in the press, elimination of corruption in the government, elimination of back door appointments for the children of high officials, the resignation of Li Peng, the removal of corrupt officials, selection of younger leaders, release of political prisoners, public reporting of the positions on issues taken by individual leaders, disclosure of the incomes of high officials and their relatives.[33]

Corinna-Barbara Francis visited Beijing University as a doctoral candidate from the Department of Political Science, Columbia University and spent two years (1986-1988) there. She argued that two characteristics were decisive in propelling Tiananmen Square Protests: the idea driving the movement, the idea that society has the right to an identity independent of the state and the right to organise and represent itself autonomously, which in fact has a similarity with the idea had promoted by Fang Lizhi. Another characteristic is its organisation and political strategy. She further added that protest against economic hardship, government corruption, and social injustice is not new in China's history, and these issues did play an important part in that year's protests.[34] A former PLA soldier, Han Dongfang who was

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32   A Relationship Restored: Trends in U.S.-China Educational Exchanges, 1978-1984, (National Academy Press: Washington, 1986) p.173.

33   Roger W. Howard, *The Student Democracy Movement in Changchun*, The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, No.24 (Jul., 1990), pp.238-239

34   Corinna-Barbara Francis, The Progress of Protest in China: The Spring of 1989, Asian Survey, Vol. 29,

27 and one of the leaders of Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation during the Tiananmen Square Protests, mentioned this in an interview in a New Left Review, July-Aug 2005: "I became disillusioned with the corruption of the officers, and began increasingly to question the orders I received. So I was passed over for promotion, and repeated applications to join the party were turned down." Thus, the rampant political corruption and China's deteriorating society and economy later became hotly debated topics in the following years.

A FEVER OF REFORMS

The fever of reforms in China led to the creation of many fevers. The intent of these reforms was to mobilise economic growth, but their unintended consequence was a gradual loosening of the party's control over society.[35] Hence the reforms began creating new pressures for change. The fever of reforms in China gave enough space and scope to the gradual development of many fevers. The following are a few, which later became major factors for the rise of the Tiananmen Square Protests.

THE RIVER ELEGY FEVER

River Elegy was a six part series shown on CCTV (China Central Television) in 1988, which depicted the reasons behind Chinese backwardness. The series essentially argues that China's inward looking, river and land based "yellow civilisation" has led to conservatism, ignorance, and backwardness. In order to survive, China has to learn from the maritime-based "azure civilisations" and to establish a market-based economy.[36] The film River Elegy epitomised the tendency in the 1980s for cultural criticism to lead to an all-round criticism of politics and social reality, and then to "complete Westernisation." This led to a "new dogmatism" of worshipping Western values.[37] Criticism of Chinese

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No.9 (Sep., 1989) p.898.

35   Immanuel Ness (ed), *The International Encyclopaedia of Revolution and Protest: 1500 to the Present, Vol. 1*, (Blackwell Publishing: West Sussex, 2009)p.3285.

36   Dingxin Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement*, (University of Chicago Press: London, 2001) p.p. 72-73.

37   Joseph Fewsmith, *China Since Tiananmen: From Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao,* (Cambridge University

culture for its backwardness gradually spread to criticism of politics and its social norms. The popularity of the series can be easily understood in the following excerpt:

The series captured the attention of millions of Chinese as soon as it was televised by the CCTV during prime time in June 1988. A "River Elegy fever" developed immediately. Students in universities discussed and debated various issues raised in the series. After watching the program many people wanted to have a copy of the script, leading to the rapid sale of over five million copies of it. Pushed by high demand, as well as supported by the then CCP general secretary Zhao Ziyang, the CCTV retelevised the whole program.[38]

Hence, the River Elegy series gave Chinese students enough stimulation to discuss and debate. The gradual discussion from dormitory to hall gave rise to another fever, a conference fever.

CONFERENCE FEVER

Reading makes a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. — Francis Bacon.

Conferences played a vital role in the student movement of Indonesia; it was students in Indonesia who played an instrumental role in the overthrow of the Sukarno regime in 1965. Prior to the Dutch administration, the islands which constituted the Dutch East Indies were never politically united and had no common language. As a sense of nationalism developed among students, particularly as a result of conferences, a sense of Indonesian national identity began to emerge. The basis of a national language, hitherto non-existent, was laid by the student movement, as well as other aspects of a national state.[39] Indonesian students, after getting higher education in the Netherlands and European countries, found exposure to western ideas that made them more aware, and it was there that the first student activism started germinating.

Press: New York, 2008)p.105.

38   Op.cit p. 73

39   Philip G. *Altbach, Student Movements in Historical Perspective: The Asian Case*, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March, 1970) p.77.

In China, the reformist period gave intellectual freedom like never before. The dormitory room became a venue for discussion. The deteriorating social-economic situation in China led to the questioning of the leadership incapability. In China, people's grievances tend to be state-centred because state policies are often the source of discontent.[40] Hence whatever happened in China, the only ones to be blamed for the cause is usually the Chinese government. By 1988, however, as China's economy declined, making speeches in universities became a major channel for intellectuals to spread their ideas. Consequently, a "conference fever" formed in China's major universities.[41] The situation reached a tipping point when in Beijing University, if speakers failed to criticise the Communist party, they were greeted by boos and jeers from the students. Speeches by non-conformist intellectuals such as Fang Lizhi and Liu Binyan gave them enough intellectual stimulation to raise questions. Frequent discussions on the hard-to-solve social problems made students more sensitive to these issues and gradually they came to a consensus on a few basic viewpoints as social problems became prolonged or even worsened. Therefore, during the late eighties more and more students came to believe that democracy and capitalism were solutions to China's problems.[42] Hence all the above factors together fanned the situation for the outbreak of the Tiananmen Square Protests.

FROM A SILENT SOCIETY TO A CIVIL SOCIETY

The World Bank adopted a definition of civil society which has been developed by a number of leading research centres. *"The term civil society refers to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organisations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, and foundations"*.

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40   Dingxin Zhao, *Decline of Political Control in Chinese Universities and the Rise of the 1989 Chinese Student Movement*, Sociological Perspectives, Vol. 40, No 2 (1997), p.161.
41   Dingxin Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement,* (University of Chicago Press: London, 2001) p.76.
42   Op. cit., p.170.

Here in this paper, I define civil society in China as members of society who become aware of their potential and responsibilities towards the society. They reach where Chinese government fails to reach and cooperate with the government for the betterment of the society. Most of them carry out politically uncontentious activities. On the other hand, there are those who openly protest against the local and central governments when they fail to get their rights. The following pages will be dealing with this issue.

After the Tiananmen Square Movement, China was diplomatically isolated. Most of the western countries froze high-level contacts with the Beijing authorities for two years. Some discreet visits took place in order to keep diplomatic channels open and to reassure the Chinese leadership that there was no western plan to destabilise the People's Republic of China.[43] After the Tiananmen Square massacre, the entire Chinese people were in the process of recovering from the shock of the outcome of the Tiananmen Square protests. The impact of the Tiananmen Square protest had reached every corner of the Chinese society. The Tiananmen Square incident slowed down the FDI growth rate to a single digit in 1989 and 1990, which ended the second stage of FDI development from 1984-1991.[44] Hence, the Tiananmen Square movement affected China to an extent that was unprecedented in nature. In the years following the Movement, the role of public opinion remained modest in China, but its significance has clearly grown. One aspect of this growing realm of public opinion has been the commercialisation of culture, a trend that has forced intellectuals to compete in or against a real marketplace.[45] The seminal phase began in the spring of 1992, when Deng Xiaoping toured China's southern coastal areas and Special Economic Zones (SEZs), which was accompanied by the declaration of the 14th Party Congress that China was to pursue a 'socialist market economy'.[46] Gradually, the role of intellectuals also grew in China. Wang Huning, a well-known political scientist at Shanghai's

43   Jean Phillippe Beja, *The Impact of China's 1989 Tiananmen Massacre* (Routledge Publications: New York, 2011) p.194.

44   Mohan Guruswamy, Zorawar Daulet Singh, *Chasing the Dragon, Will India Catch Up with China?* (Longman: Delhi, 2010)p.54.

45   Joseph Fewsmith, *China Since Tiananmen:From Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao,* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2008) p.14.

46   Loc. Cit.

Fudan University, was invited by Jiang Zemin to join the government in an important think-tank role. This clearly shows the efficacy of intellectuals for the Chinese government. After the 1989 protests in Tiananmen Square, and the subsequent bloody crackdown, the deal China's leaders offered their citizens changed: stay out of politics and you can do almost anything else you want. Most of this new quasi-freedom was economic, but social space expanded, too.[47] The expansion of social space was in fact inevitable in a large and populated country like China. The CCP is like a father in a huge joint-family, where the father cannot reach every child and fulfil their wishes. The emergence of NGOs and protests in China symbolise the failure of the father to fulfil his responsibilities towards his family.

The responsible children would take responsibilities and do their part in redressing the grievances of their father and family. One common reason for the growth of NGOs in China is the irrepressible rise of a new middle class buoyed by the country's economic growth. They by and large share the party's desire for stability with only a few who want new ways to participate in the society. Party leaders, now only vaguely constrained by Communist ideology, have a new sense that something is to be gained by co-opting such activist citizens rather than suppressing them. It may, they think, offer a way of providing some of the social support that the party can no longer supply on its own.[48] Thus, the party realised the importance of NGOs and their good works which helped the party in maintaining social stability in China. Because of that, the party relaxed the terms for the registration of NGOs and also started encouraging unregistered NGOs to become registered.

China has been undergoing an "association revolution" over the last 20 years, particularly since the second half of the 1990s. By the end of 2013, there were over 500,000 registered NGOs in China. Between 1988 and 2013, the number of registered NGOs had increased 100 fold, from just under 4,500 in 1988 to over 540,000 in 2013.[49] Hence NGOs in China are emerging as a powerful as well as responsible tool, which cannot be ignored

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47   The Economist, *Beneath the Glacier: Chinese Civil Society*, April 12TH-18TH 2014, Volume 411, Number 8882, p.21.

48   Op. cit., p.22

49   John W. Tai, *Building Civil Society in Authoritarian China, Importance of Leadership Connections for Establishing an Effective Non-Governmental Organizations in a Non- Democracy,*(Springer Publications: Washington, 2015) p.20.

if the party wants a stable China. However, these NGOs are always under the watchful eyes of the party. NGOs are not allowed to register branch office in different provinces, which may link up around the country, thus creating a network.[50] This implies that the party is adopting a very cautious approach towards the NGOs and their activities. On the other hand there are those who protest when their rights are taken away by the local as well as central governments. For several years, the number of protests have been increasing in leaps and bounds. Most of the mass incidents have been launched by disadvantaged social groups, such as laid-off workers and peasants, who are fighting for their right to subsistence. There were a couple of large-scale mass incidents that mainly saw the participation of the new middle class in the cities. Two were related to environmental protection (anti-Maglev protest in Shanghai and anti-PX plant protests in Xiamen) and another was the anti-dog killing gathering in Beijing.[51]

There are many reasons for social unrest or protests in China, such as land disputes, environmental degradation, labour conflicts, fiscal recentralisation, the cadre evaluation system and institutional failure to redress grievances, to name a few. Most of these problems emerge because of poor governance and rampant political corruption, problems which have been haunting China for a long time and was the cause for its dynastic falls.

From the following table one can easily find that the number of protests in China has been increasing.

Incidents of social unrests in China

1993	8,700
1994	10,000
1995	11,500
1996	12,500
1997	15,000
1998	24,500
1999	32,500

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50   The Economist, *Beneath the Glacier: Chinese Civil Society*, April 12TH-18TH 2014, Volume 411, Number 8882, p.24.

51   Tong Yanqi, Lei Shaoha, *Large Scale Mass Incidents in China*, East Asian Policy, p.30.

2000	40,000
2001	-------
2002	50,400
2003	58,000
2004	74,000
2005	87,000
2006	90,000
2007	---------
2008	127,000
2009	---------
2010	1,80,000

(Source: Adapted from George Katsiaficas, *Asia's Unknown Uprising Vol. 2.* 2013, Daniel Kubler, Lisheng Shong, *Urban Mobilization and New Media in Contemporary China* (2014), Alan Taylor, Rising Protests China, Atlantic. com, 2012.)

In 1993, the number of protests in China was 8700, which means that every day there were about 23 protests in China. In 1994, there were 10,000 protests in China, averaging 27 protests in a day and the number of protests in China increased through the years. In 1999, there was a threefold increase of public protests in China, which meant that in a day (on average) 87 public protests occurred. In 2003, there were 58,000 protests in China, which indicates that in a day there were 158 protests in China. In 2004, the number of protests reported in China was 74,000, thus in a day there were 202 protests. Mass incidents have become a major problem for social stability. The then Public Security Minister Zhou Yongkang said in July 2005, "Their number is on the increase and the scale is constantly expanding… the trend towards the greater organisation is clear."[52] This clearly showed that the Chinese leaders are realising the significance of these increasing protests throughout China, which if not checked in time, can in the future, sow the seeds of a mass uprising in China.

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52   Susan Shirk, *China Fragile Superpower: How An Internal Politics Could Derail its Peaceful Rise*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2007)p.56.

CONCLUSION

The internet which today has become a place for discussion and debate provides another means of communication for the Chinese people. Today, China has the largest number of netizens in the world with 564 million internet users at the end of 2012 and around 280.8 million micro bloggers in 2013. In the past few years, social media has provided a platform for organisation and mobilisation of public protests as seen in the Arab uprisings in Tunisia and mass protests in Egypt and Libya. Poor governance and corruption were among the important factors for the Arab uprising. In China, for centuries, weak governance has led to many problems including weak policy and corruption. The number of armed rebellions inside China was higher than the number of military conflicts with the neighbouring nomads. Hence, there is a good reason for the Party to spend more on internal security in China. The recent anti-corruption campaign championed by Xi Jinping is not something he necessarily wants, but needs to stay in power. As Xi remarked at the party's 2012 plenum, "The problems among our party members and cadres are corruption, taking bribes, and being out of touch with the people- which must be addressed with great effort. Only when corruption is minimised or eradicated if at all, then the smooth political and other reforms in China could be possible". Xi knows that it is corruption that has always driven Chinese people to act and react. If the Chinese government doesn't implement people-friendly political reforms with Chinese characteristics, then the internal problems may become external problems which could result in two possible impacts on the rest of the world. Presently, the total population of the world is 7.3 billion and China's population is 1.3 billion accounting for 19.24% of the world's population. China recently became the world's second largest economy and is increasingly playing an important and influential role in global economy.[53]

However, a major unrest in China, crippling its social stability and economy could have an adverse impact on the rest of the world. In China, the number of floating population of migrant workers who come from rural to urban areas for their livelihood exceeds 250 million people. In the event

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[53]   accessed on 9/12/2015 http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china/overview

of a major social unrest in China, there is a possibility that a large number of these millions of floating population would flee to neighbouring countries to seek better livelihood prospects.

History is a good place to look for lessons. The mass migration of millions of refugees from East Pakistan to India resulting from the military crackdown by General Yahya Khan later became one of the causes for India-Pakistan war of 1971. Another recent lesson to be learnt is from the Syrian crisis of 2011. More than 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives in four-and-half years of armed conflict, which began with anti-government protests before escalating into a full-scale civil war.[54] More than four million people have fled Syria since the start of the conflict, leading to a mass migration to European countries. Hence, social stability in China is in the interest of the rest of the world, because China's internal problems will not remain internal. If crisis in China escalates, it might become a problem for the rest of the world.

54   accessed on 8/12/2015 http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868

Encountering Modernity: Locating Cultural Identity of Tibetan Diaspora in India

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ABSTRACT:

The basic premise of this paper starts with a brief historical account of modernity in early Tibetan society. It includes geopolitical aspects of Tibet and its neighbours and the socio-cultural condition of early Tibetan society and Tibet's response towards modernity and the patronising attitude of Chinese occupation/liberation of Tibet.

This paper is an attempt to challenge the stereotypical representation and essentialised understanding of Tibetan culture and identity discourses in the knowledge production. It deals especially with the critical scrutiny of western representational politics of Tibetan culture and identity discourses from the social constructionist approach. It also critically examines the role of Tibetan diaspora as a discourse and its response towards western representation in the form of cultural (re)production. Moreover, the self-essentialised practices of cultural preservation among Tibetan diaspora constructed the cultural identity of Tibet without acknowledging the discontinuity or rupture in the experience of displacement and rapid forces of social change and transformation of modernity in the host society. Thus, this paper tries to look at the impact of modernity in the formation of cultural identity and its politics within Tibetan diaspora in India.

INTRODUCTION:

This paper is an attempt to understand the cultural identity of Tibetan diaspora amidst the highly influential forces of modernity in the host society. In other words, it is significant to study the impact of modernity in the formation of cultural identity in the Tibetan diaspora from an interdisciplinary perspective. This paper is also an attempt to challenge the western representation of Tibet, Tibetan society and its culture in the technique of essentialising and stereotyping practices.

The pre-communist Tibet (Tibet before the invasion of Communist China) often has been symbolically represented in western imagination as a completely traditional society (which holds the connotation of spiritual embodiment) alienated from the materialistic lifestyle crisis of modern society. Donald Lopez encapsulates that narration in this quote: "Tibet seemed not to belong to our earth, a society left on the shelf, set in amber, preserved in deep freeze, a land so close to the sky that the natural occupation of her people was to pray" (Lopez, 1998).

Furthermore, the Chinese invasion of Tibet was not seen as a colonial rule. Instead, the invasion and occupation of Tibet by the People's Liberation of Army in 1950's was reduced to the simplistic logic of binary oppositions which is often projected in the western representation as subjugation of heaven by evil (Godless Communist), good by bad, polluting the pure and so forth. However, the Tibetan diaspora accepted or even adopted such western representations of Tibetan culture without making an attempt to critically scrutinise and acknowledge their uprooted experience and the drastic forces of social change and transformation that the Tibetan community underwent in the process of displacement.

Thereby, this paper attempts to understand the Tibetan diaspora as a discourse and its engagement especially with that of western representations which tend to shape the social relations, imaginations, expression and subjectivities among Tibetan diaspora community. Moreover, the role of Tibetan diaspora as a discourse and its contributions in constructing cultural identity of Tibetans shall be discussed in detail. This paper also attempts to problematise the notion of Tibetan cultural identity as static and an essentialised product which is something given or continuous in nature. In order to go beyond the essentialised and romanticised understanding of western representation of Tibet, this study begins with a brief historical background which attempts to show the encounter of early Tibetan society with modernity.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF MODERNITY IN TIBET

Geography has played a significant role in designing the boundaries of human society. However, the advent of new social forces and radical transformation in the age of enlightenment brought the development of modern science, industry and technological innovation which in turn ushered in the erosion of physical boundaries. Tibet, situated on highest and largest plateau on earth, surrounded by some of the tallest mountain ranges, for centuries chose to remain isolated from the outside world. The major focus of this study delves into a historical account of pre-communist Tibet, its encounter with modernity and the attitude and reaction of early Tibetan society, its socio-political formation and religious and cultural practices.

During the nineteenth century only a few Europeans were known to have reached Tibet as Christian missionaries and adventurers. The social system of Tibet was theocratic and Buddhism was the practised religion. The Buddhist clergy strictly condemned any kind of foreign influence which they perceived as threat to their ecclesiastical authority. Religion played a role in determining every aspect of social, cultural and political life. Tibet was not a completely homogenous society. It also consisted of the indigenous religion Bon that had some similar characteristic with Buddhism and a small Muslim community. The differentiation between the state religion and others is clearly explained by John Bray: "The traditional Tibetan word for Buddhist is *nangpa* - 'insider'. Practitioners of Bon and Muslims-let alone Christians-were automatically considered to be *phyipa* - 'outsiders.'" (Mckay, 2003)

The growing oppression of imperial powers in Central Asia was followed by the aggressive expansion of the British Empire. The imperial government of India gained control in the Himalayan regions of Sikkim, Ladakh and Bhutan which shared politico-religious relations with Tibet (Anand, 2007). Soon Tibet was embroiled in the Great Game between the Russian and British empires for establishing dominance in the region and exercising influence and control over the vast Tibetan plateau. Both Russia and British India tried to make inroads into Tibet and its theocratic society sending students and pilgrims and also spies. In 1903-1904, British military invaded Tibet and marched to the capital city of Lhasa. The strategic geo-political military invasion under Sir Francis Young Husband established commercial and political relationship between Britain and Tibet (Anand, 2007).

However, the political status of Tibet was strongly determined by the self-interests of the two imperial powers. The British and Russian empires agreed to keep Tibet as a buffer zone in the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907. This move to keep Tibet in isolation meant that the whirlwinds of modernisation that was sweeping across the entire region didn't reach beyond the mighty Himalayas.

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama was a great visionary and made many efforts to modernise the Tibetan statehood and its social system. He sought to transform the Tibetan society, adopting the modern notion of state system. Tibet was lacking many essential elements of a modern nation-state including a poorly demarcated border and an unreliable system of practising control and jurisdiction over its citizens scattered across the vast plateau. Also, the border dispute in eastern Tibet with China was left unresolved. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's main priorities of modernisation included the expansion of army, fortifying Tibet's frontiers and the introduction of a working communications system. Moreover, he sought to completely eradicate Chinese presence and influence in Tibet. He expelled the Chinese Amban (representative of Qing dynasty) from Lhasa, reintegrated the Tibetan regions and made the historic Declaration of Independence of Tibet in 1911.

The British presence also encouraged reform in the Tibetan social system, giving importance to education as an essential force of modernisation. The education system in Tibet was overseen by the monastery which gave little space for the education of lay commoners. In 1923, Frank Ludlow, a Cambridge graduate, opened an English medium school in Gyangtse and served as its head master (McKay, 2010). The conservative faction of aristocratic families was reluctant to send their children to that school. After a couple of years in 1926, the school was eventually shut down. Among the various sports activities that were introduced in the school, football became popular among the pupil. The game, which was played between British officials of trade agencies and soldiers also gained popularity as a leisure activity for spectators in Lhasa.

However in 1944, football was prohibited citing bad omen and banned immediately by the government officials after a hailstorm struck during a match. Eventually, it was stated that kicking a football is 'as bad as kicking the head of Lord Buddha'. Meanwhile, the overpowering conservative elements of the monastic and aristocratic factions were hostile to any change in the Tibetan social structure and state system. In short, the pre-communist Tibetan society was very much driven by its indigenous cultural beliefs of superstitions and blind faith (McKay, 2001).

The British enthusiastically attempted to organise events that had larger implications such as generating Tibetan nationalism among the local population and a sense of "national" identity for the integration of a united Tibet. However, McKay rightly noted that "Tibetans therefore appear to have had a sense of cultural identity, of 'Tibetan-ness'. However, their political and social loyalties were to region, to sect, to family and to local leaders rather than to a 'nation'" (McKay, 2010).

After the Second World War and India's independence in 1947, the role of the British in South Asia weakened. Great Britain never encouraged or recognised complete independence of Tibet and considered it to be China's suzerainty (Norbu, 2001). Eventually, the Great Thirteenth Dalai Lama's vision of modernisation failed to overcome the strong opposition from the conservative elements in the monastic and aristocratic ruling class.

Thus, Tibet failed to cope with the changes of modern world. Consequently, Tibet was invaded by China in the name of political modernisation. China adroitly used the modern vocabulary to legitimise the invasion of Tibet while simultaneously expunging the ancient legacy of Sino-Tibet relations. Moreover, China justified the invasion of Tibet in the name of an emancipatory project of modernity. Without going further into the intricacies of Chinese invasion of Tibet, this study focuses on the cultural identity of Tibetans who were forced to flee from their homeland to safer havens in neighboring countries.

CULTURAL IDENTITY AMONG TIBETAN DIASPORA

Any kind of identity formation be it of individuals or social groups is possible only when it can be differentiated from other entities. The formation of Tibetan diaspora originated with the establishment of its own political administration, a government set-up in exile, separate settlements and setting up of a school system that follows 'limited acculturation' policy to preserve their distinct traditional culture and value system in the host country.

Moreover, it also adopted the notion of homogeneity by sidelining the regional and sectarian differences among Tibetan diaspora community in India. In other words, pan-Tibetan identity did not exist in pre-invaded Tibet, rather monasteries and local leaders of regional localities were dominant markers of cultural identity in Tibet. This meant a paradigm shift from

regional identities to a 'national' identity in the diaspora (Anand, 2003). Thus, the pre-dominant discourse of cultural identity in the Tibetan diaspora was built on and constructed in the practice of nationalist discourse of the 'Free Tibet Movement'. This nationalist discourse is based on advocating non-violent principles with the inter-relational features that often identifies with the universal discourses of democracy, green movement, global peace and harmony. In other words, Buddhist philosophy or Tibetan culture was significantly involved in the practice and significance of this (Trans)Nationalist discourse, where the role of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is centripetal in every aspect of Tibetan diaspora.

Especially, the role of Buddhist values and its principles are a dominant motif which prominently signify the Tibetan culture. Tibetan culture (Tibetan Buddhism) was excessively represented as an image of 'indigenous' culture of compassion and love often described as a 'precious asset' that could contribute to the wellbeing of humanity. Meanwhile, China's genocidal practices inside Tibet resulted in the destruction of Tibetan culture and the continuing suppression of religious and cultural freedom. Thus, the Tibetan diaspora is seen as the true custodians of preserving Tibet's unique traditional culture not only for its potential in fostering human values for achieving global peace and harmony but also for the larger population of Tibetans who reside in Tibet under the control of the oppressive Chinese regime lacking religious and cultural freedom.

Therefore, the dominant narrative of Tibetaness in the diaspora and its discourse constituted the sense of continuity in the production of Tibetan culture that comprises of re-configured and institutionalised practices of political administration, school and monastic system in the Tibetan exile community. Moreover, the discourse of Tibetan diaspora further consolidated and perpetuated its representational features of traditional Tibetan culture as authentic and pure. In other words, the Tibetan diaspora and its self-essentialised practices of their traditional culture served to perpetuate the fantasy of western imagination to both survive as an exile community and gain political support for the Tibetan issue in the international arena.

The master-narrative of Tibetan culture, its culture production and its identity formulation were broadly outlined in the domain of Tibetan diaspora. The constitutive elements of orientalised version of western representation and re-orientalisation of Tibetan culture were reinforced in the discourse of

Tibetan diaspora. Basu rightly said that "the presentations of exile Tibetan culture which is exclusively focused on Dharamshala (the headquarters of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in northern India) has the tendency to reify the "story" of exile primarily constructed by Tibetan administrators, intellectuals, lamas and "cultural performers" who are conversant with, and eager to engage in, debates about "the construction of Tibetan culture" on terms set by Western audiences" (Basu, 2008).

In order to problematise the conventional story of Tibetan diaspora as a homogeneous entity, this study would rather address the Tibetan diaspora as heterogeneous community, considering the result of displacement and discontinuity. The contemporary social formation of Tibetan diaspora community in India consists of two groups of people.

Firstly, it is the group of Tibetans who were exiled to India just after the occupation of Tibet and their younger generations who were born and brought up in India. During the decades from 1960s to 1980s, there was little interaction and communication between the Tibetan refugee community and Tibetans inside Tibet. Following the death of Mao Tse-tung and a short-lived relaxation policy, contacts and visits were allowed for the first time. This was followed by another wave of migration from Tibet which mostly included youngsters who escaped to receive education in the Tibetan schools in exile or enrol in monasteries. There were also a number of adults and young adults who escaped to exile through the following decades. This formed the second group of Tibetans in diaspora who were born and raised in Tibet and later escaped to India. Methfessel categorised this group of Tibetans as "'New arrivals' and they are estimated to constitute more than 10% of the total diasporic population" (Methfessel, 1997).

Since the Tibetan diaspora has been associated with western stereotypes, this has resulted in deep subjective implications in the dominant discourse of exile Tibetans. This effect could be seen in the everyday social relations among Tibetans in the diaspora community. Emily vividly notes that, "When exiles, particularly the younger generation, find themselves face to face with the new arrivals and with their unfamiliar and hence 'Chinese' habits, mannerisms, and clothes the image of their fellow Tibetans as pure and uncorrupted quickly gives way to a belief that they have been brainwashed by their upbringing under Chinese rule. The fact that Tibetan identity in exile has been constituted in opposition to China contributes to both the scorn and suspicion of the

`Chinese' appearance and behaviour of new arrivals who, because they are different, are seen as less than authentically Tibetan" (Emily T, 2007).

Furthermore, it has been observed that some new comers feel alienated and stigmatised as '*sarjor*' meaning "new arrival". Such connotations could be found even in the official discourse of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Professor Samdhong Rinpoche (the Prime Minister of CTA from 2001 to 2011) stated that "It's natural for small differences to crop up and the reason why more of this is happening now is that the old Tibetans who came in the 1960s were the true Tibetans, reared and imbued with genuine Tibetan cultural and social ethos. But the new arrivals, who began coming after 1988, are products of a harsh Chinese regime. They have known only violence and life under the red flag and are intolerant" (MacDonald, 2013).

The dominant discourse of Tibetan culture and its practices in the diaspora lacks sense of objectivity (place) and turns it immaterial or spiritual in the subjective self. In that sense, Tibetan culture is taken out of its context or decontextualised. However, the uprooting of one's linkages and bonds to specific place (Tibet) sets its identification into the spiritual realm of inner values of Buddhist philosophy (Brox, 2006).

Thus, the cultural identity of Tibetans essentially determines its 'authenticity' through the verification of their religion (Tibetan Buddhism). Thus, the hegemonic discourse of Tibetan Buddhism as a master signifier holds the meaning of Tibetan culture and tradition. In other words, the naturalised or static understanding of Tibetan culture in the diaspora has been preserved without acknowledging the diasporic condition of rupture and discontinuity in the reality of displacement. In Anand's words: "A particular space - time projection of "homeland" is another constitutive factor in fostering Tibetan identity in the diaspora. Diasporic longing for the homeland is reflected in material as well as artistic production among exile communities. Images of Tibet, such as the Potala Palace, are favourite motifs. This nostalgia for space is complemented by nostalgia for time. It is not contemporary Tibet but pre-1959 Tibet, frozen in time, which defines the longing" (Anand, 2007).

This paper tried to revisit the changes ushered-in by the highly influential forces of modernity in the social reality of the Tibetan diaspora community in India. This paper also attempted to deal with the cultural identity of the Tibetan diaspora in India in the on going process of social change and transformation in the globalised era.

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Chinese Censorship vs Tibetan Activism On Social Media

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary period has come to be invariably labelled as the age of 'information', 'cyber' age or 'networking' age. Human history is marked by events ranging from simple understandings to profound revelations, all of which have led to fundamental discoveries and path-breaking inventions. At the root of all these changes lies information, which is of course an indispensable facet of 'New Media' as well.[1]

In this social media obsessed age, we can create our identities and live vicariously through the lives we generate on social media platforms. There has been a tremendous rise in the growth of online social networks all over the world in recent times, and the development of the largest online networks like Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook, and the popular Chinese microblogging sites Weibo and WeChat, have been well documented. Facebook, for instance, celebrated its tenth anniversary with over one billion active users worldwide in 2014. The simple fact that almost one-seventh of humanity is connected through this single portal gives us reason enough to be objective and truthful, rather than be manipulative, with the information we create and share. In today's highly digitised world, the role of social media in our modern lives has become almost unavoidable.

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[1]   Kevel J. Kumar *Mass Communication in India* Jaico Publishing House PP 1-3

Keeping in view the subject matter of this paper, "Chinese Censorship versus Tibetan Activism on Social Media", we shall look into the changing roles media as well as social media has played during particular episodes of Tibetan activism. For instance, during the series of protests from 1987-89 in Lhasa, the ancient capital city of Tibet, the protesters were relatively isolated, and the demonstrations too were restricted to the city. In those days, though media as an instrument of information was not unknown to Tibetans, the government-controlled media barely reported on issues related to people's dissatisfaction with the regime. Moreover, digital media in the form of internet and mobile phones were yet to enter the lives of the common people. Today, in the age of social media, with a global network of online supporters at disposal, protests are no longer 'local' as evident from the 2008 uprisings and the ongoing self-immolation protests inside Tibet. This fast and unpredictable reach of the activists certainly has Beijing worried. Consequently, China has been cracking down hard on internet users who demonstrate sympathy and support for the Tibetan cause, blocking avenues for the spread of all relevant information.

Without an unrestricted and sound system of communication, a collaborative struggle with great efficacy and wider social interaction is a distant dream. Without the masses having access to different views and ideologies, a movement is handicapped. Therefore, the Tibetan society, motivated by the objective of nation-building, must adopt the vision of providing its people with the basic right to free and fair information while being equipped with a lively and transparent form of new media in order to unite its people in the common cause. That the future of revolutionary movements will involve social media is assured.

For the last several years, there has been a significant increase in the number of Tibetans, both in Tibet and in exile, embracing the social media world, not only for social interaction but also to voice their feelings on various developments be it over environmental destruction, militarisation, cultural genocide or for communicating information on social or political campaigns including the Tibetan general elections in 2011 and 2015. The sharing of crucial information through these communication channels allowed people to get a clearer view of the reality.

GLOBAL IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

With the explosion of digital communication technology in the late 20th century, the mode of conveying information has turned far more convenient, less time consuming and decentralised. Today, an individual with a few clicks on the mouse can address the global audience through the net. This rapid growth of instantaneous and decentralised communication has its bearing on the social structure of a community.

In October 2013, the Chinese State Council issued a notice requesting government institution at all levels to make use of new media like Weibo and WeChat in particular to disseminate information related to regulations, laws and issues of public interest. The notice also encouraged government institutions to make full use of the interactive features of new media.

Social media is also being increasingly used to police politicians and public figures who forget their responsibilities and start behaving with omnipotence, by openly calling them out for committing unethical or unlawful acts. Those who have committed mistakes are now held accountable in the conscience of people through social media.

In July 2011, following the train crash in Wenzhou, a southern Chinese city, authorities literally wanted to cover up the incident and bury the story which angered the Chinese netizens and prompted a huge backlash. In the first five days after the train crash there were millions of criticisms of the event posted on various social media sites - a first of its kind uncensored online discussion[2] which had never happened in Chinese history. Later, China's railway minister was sacked and sentenced to 10 years in jail.

One important question that arises out of the events following the tragic train crash is why the Chinese central government allowed the five days of freedom of speech online. One plausible explanation that has emerged is that the top Chinese leadership was fed up with the minster anyways and thus used public opinion as an excuse to punish him.

The 'Jasmine Revolution' in Tunisia and its impact on the rest of the Arab countries is the best and most recent example of how social media plays the role of propagating information and in turn, how its impact can potentially change

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2   www.ted.com/talks/michael_anti_behind_the_great_firewall_of_china/transcript?language=de accessed on 10/10/2015

the course of human history.[3] It is interesting to retrace the event stage by stage and see how this small personal tragedy sparked a worldwide movement against autocratic rule. Hussein Amin, Professor of Mass Communications at the American University in Cairo noted that, "It is important to understand that new platforms of social media didn't cause the Arab Spring but played a role in communication that aids revolutions in the long run".

In Beijing, Chinese citizens took cue from the revolution and started coming openly to Tiananmen Square with jasmine flowers in their hands. However, their actions were curbed at an early stage and the campaign failed to explode into a mass movement as it did in the Arab countries.

During the more recent Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong, a region officially ruled by China, much to Beijing's displeasure the protests exploded on social media. Hong Kong's fight for greater democratic freedom in the form of tweets and images unfolded in front of the world. From September 26 to 30, 2014 there were more than 1.3 million tweets about the protests, according to data provided by Twitter. China did (and continues to do) everything it can to keep a lid on the demonstrations. Beijing instructs the Chinese media not to report on the demonstrations while blocking all social network sites (including Instagram for the first time) and censored Weibo, a Chinese social network which is closely monitored by the state. All subversive contents perceived as a threat to the government's mandate is blocked from the site. However, the reach of information and images of the Jasmine and Umbrella revolutions inside China, which has one of the most sophisticated cyber control systems in the world, illustrates the power of social media in political protests.

Having gone through a brief history of the evolution of social media and its impact on world affairs, I will now give an outline of its contribution in the Tibetan freedom movement. In fact, it is suffice to say that the very cause of the current situation of Tibet is due to the lack of accessible media to present their case and plight during the early periods.[4]

The recent explosion of social media in exile has played a crucial role in enabling the Tibetan people to explore various social and political issues critically. This new media, with the help of the internet, has not only served the purpose of keeping people informed, but has also been a regular and vigorous forum of interaction among the general exile populous.

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3   Hamid Dabashi The Arab Spring: The end of Colonialism pp.18-20
4   (Edit) by Dagmar Bernstorff and Hubertus von Welck (2003) *Exile as Challenge. The Tibetan Diaspora*

In fact, internet and social media has shrunk time and space and turned the scattered Tibetan communities separated by oceans and mountains into a global village. This has meant that the Tibetans in Tibet and outside, although physically separated from each other, remain marginally informed of each other's activities and affairs. The link between Tibetans inside and outside Tibet allows them to enjoy an atmosphere of a limited transparency that leads them to work collaboratively towards a common goal.

SOCIAL MEDIA: WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES FOR THE TIBETAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT?

Social networking platforms may improve the communications channels in the Tibetan freedom struggle by disseminating information among different groups of activists in a more efficient manner, resulting in increased public participation. While it is not meant to be a complete list, here, I have outlined some of the possible advantages and disadvantages of social networking.

Possible advantages:

•   Facilitates open communication, leading to enhanced information discovery and delivery.

•   Allows Tibetan activists to discuss ideas, post news, ask questions and share links.

•   Provides an opportunity to widen outreach for activities.

•   Targets a wider audience, making it a useful and effective tool to mobilise and organise events

•   Improves political reputation and public support base with minimal use of petitions and announcements

•   Expands the reach of the Tibetan freedom struggle, implements new strategies, delivers communications quickly and directs interested people to where they need to go.

•   Social media encourages citizens' participation in civic and political life.

Possible disadvantages:

- Opens up the possibility for Chinese hackers to commit fraud and launch spam and virus attacks on (for example) official websites of the CTA and active nongovernmental organisations like Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), Tibet Action Institute (TAI), Students for Free Tibet (SFT) etc.

- Creates misunderstandings and suspicion leading to divisions in our movement by spreading lies and rumours through fake accounts

- Potentially results in lost productivity, especially if activists and politicians indulge primarily in updating their online profiles, etc.

- Biased and prejudiced social media contents and updates may create distortions and create divisions among our people

As a result of the many technological advancements and innovations that have revolutionised how individuals communicate, an abundance of information has become available to everyone. Not depending on where the information is found, its reliability can and must be questioned. With the growing number of NGOs such as SFT, TYC, Tibetan Women's Association (TWA), among others, much of the information provided by them is often political. Ultimately, public information supplied by these organisations through social networking websites are playing a significant role in modern-day activism. These groups use Facebook to update netizens about the Tibetan movement, Twitter to relay information, and YouTube to tell Tibetan stories to the world.

According to Dorjee Tseten, SFT's Asia Director, social media has "played a critical role in mobilising, empowering, shaping opinions and influencing changes."

Lhamo Tsering, Media Coordinator of TWA believes that the "mobilisation of ideas and people is a consistent requirement and clandestine communication can be enhanced with social media."

The role that technology plays in enhancing the distribution of information, as mentioned by the two activists, is an essential component of any movement for democracy and freedom.

BAN ON SOCIAL NETWORK SITES IN CHINA

In China many of the popular global social networking sites are blocked while their indigenous social media platforms are heavily censored. The world's most populous country is a part of the infamous SICK group of countries (Syria, Iran, China and North Korea) that has banned Facebook.[5]

According to Steven Millward, Tech blogger and China editor at TechInAsia.com, China's extensive internet surveillance system, the "Great Firewall of China," restricts access to popular foreign websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. China, which boasts of the world's largest online population as well, says its online censorship policies are aimed at maintaining social stability, and that it will help stop the spread of false rumours and inappropriate materials.[6]

However, Millward notes that there could be up to 700,000 Facebook users in China,[7] despite the official ban. Facebook has been blocked in China since 2009, when Uighur activists made a series of online posts on the site encouraging protests in the northwest region of Xinjiang.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has made several visits to China expressing interest in doing business there remarking "How can you connect the whole world if you leave out 1.6 billion people?" He even delivered a speech in Mandarin to woo the officials and the netizens but a compromise from the communist party at preset seems far fetched.

CHINA'S CRACKDOWN ON SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISM

In addition to the notorious firewall, the government can censor specific words to try and control the narrative of any given incident by pushing their own agenda and restricting citizens' freedom of expression. However, many Tibetan and Chinese netizen use images, and memes in particular, which can portray a serious topic in a light-hearted manner, further increasing the spread of information.

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5   accessed on www.ted.com/talks/michael_anti_behind_the_great_firewall_of_china/transcript?language=en

6   Guan, S. *Intercultural Communication* (in Chinese). Beijing: Beijing University Press.

7   "obfsproxy". Retrieved 27 May 2015.

Social media in China, which has nearly 600 million users,[8] has long been recognised as a political game-changer. In a country where the one-party regime maintains tight censorship over traditional media, the relative freedom of expression available via Chinese social media, particularly Weibo (the Chinese equivalent of Twitter), has made it a powerful platform for rallying public opinion. About half of the country's netizens use Weibo.

In the past few years, Weibo has been credited for exposing corrupt officials, mobilising the public against social injustice, and forcing local governments to abandon plans for building hazardous plants in densely populated areas.

However, judging by the recent violent crackdown launched by the Chinese government on social media, the writing on the wall is clear that the new leadership has implemented a comprehensive plan to eliminate the threat represented by China's social media.[9]

What makes these arrests notable and disturbing is that they were preceded by emphatic official announcements by China's top leadership that the party would tighten its ideological control which was followed by a strong endorsement from China's legal authorities on the validity of prosecuting individuals for online rumormongering and defamation.

On August 19, 2012, China's President Xi Jinping gave a speech at the party's conference on propaganda pledging that the party would never cede control over ideology. This was followed by China's Supreme Court and prosecutor's office issuing an unusual joint legal opinion that essentially affirmed that online rumormongering is a serious crime that local authorities can take up for prosecution.

The party's war on social media reveals many insights, most notably the political orientation of the new leadership. Before they assumed office in March 2013 there were hopes that the Communist Party's new leaders would be more tolerant and open. However, their actions suggest they are more conservative, insecure, and obsessed with preventing instability than their predecessors.

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8   2015 Chinese Social Media Statistic and Trends info graphic

9   fortune.com/2013/09/.../chinas-tragic-crackdown-on-social-media-activist

INTERNET CENSORSHIP IN CHINA

China has made great strides in its social and economic development and modernisation process, but it nevertheless continues to be an authoritarian one-party state determined to enforce sharp curbs on freedom of expressions, association and religion.[10] It openly rejects judicial independence and press freedom, and arbitrarily restricts and suppresses human rights defenders and organisations, often through extra judicial measures. The government also censors the internet and maintains highly repressive policies in areas where ethnic minorities live, like Tibet, Xinjang, and Inner Mongolia. Despite intensified government crackdowns and internet censorship, many Chinese netizens active on the internet in the absence of a free media are increasingly voicing solidarity with Tibetans. China has for long had one of the most pervasive online censorship systems in the world, the country's infamous "Great Firewall" which blocks access and censors numerous websites.

In February 2011, unnerved by the pro-democracy Arab Spring movements and a scheduled Chinese leadership transition in October 2012, the government launched the largest crackdown on human rights lawyers, activists, and critics in a decade. The authorities also strengthened internet and press censorship, put the activities of many dissidents and critics under surveillance and restricted their activities, followed by the unprecedented move of rounding up of the most outspoken critics and 'disappearing' them. Despite domestic and international legal guarantees of freedom of the press and expression, bloggers, journalists and an estimated more than 600 million Internet users have been affected in the ongoing repression.

Although the government continues to block websites run by human rights groups, foreign news outlets, the Google search engine and social media sites such as Facebook, the rise of Chinese online social media, in particular Sina Weibo, and WeChat, has created a new platform for citizens to express opinions and to challenge official limitations of freedom of speech despite intense scrutiny by China's censors.

According to an anonymous Chinese technology blogger, the government web censorship filtering system blocks access to particular

10   World Report 2015 (Human Right Watch)accessed on Watch www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/wr2015_web.pdf

articles on the internet that could be related to the Tibetan issue using a highly sophisticated keyword filtering mechanism.

Web users in China are not able to access news reports if they contain keywords such as "Tibet", "riot", "violence" and "Lhasa". According to a study, out of more than 1.3 million (or more than 16 percent) of messages screened by the authorities on Wiebo, 212,583[11] were deleted. Messages containing certain phrases, like "Tibet," "freedom" and Dalai Lama" were more likely to be flagged by the Chinese government.

More importantly, the research suggests that China's censors are dynamic, often deleting messages as they appear in real time. Messages originating from restive Tibetan area, for example, face much higher levels of censorship than those from the rest of China, with up to 53 percent of all messages being deleted. In 2012, Weibo[12] started requiring users to register with their real names, under orders from the government, which has led to a lot more self-censorship.

Despite the censorship, Tibetan netizens continue to employ new and clever methods to penetrate the Great Firewall. They often use slang or homophones instead of directly spelling or addressing a word or an issue. Also, they use Romanized letters (like English), which are not flagged by the search engines. Most cleverly of all, they sometimes use images of text instead of the text itself.

However, Chinese authorities argue that they are simply 'regulating' and not censoring online content. Lu Wei, Chinese politician and the senior executive official in charge of cyber security and Internet policy in China said that the country doesn't censor online content, but like most countries, regulates it. He argues, "If we really censor the Internet, how come our Internet user population and their reliance on the Internet keep growing?"

"Let me tell you, China has four million websites, nearly 700 million Internet users, 1.2 billion mobile phone users as well as 600 million WeChat and Weibo users. Every day they post 30 billion messages. It's simply impossible for any country or organisation to censor 30 billion messages," Wei notes.[13]

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11   *Censorship and Deletion Practices in Chinese Social Media*

12   Karthrin Hille: Real Name rule to add Sina Weibo's Woe.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e995b7aa-6201-11e1-807f-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3uTUJCWZs

13   edition.cnn.com/2015/12/09/asia/china-internet-lu-wei-facebook/index.htm

RUNDOWN OF THE TOP FOUR DOMESTIC SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN CHINA

Over the past five years, one of the most dramatic changes in China has been the rise of social media. The two major Chinese social media players are Sina Weibo, and WeChat a mobile messaging application. Weibo is a public platform where people can follow anyone freely, while WeChat is a private virtual space for friends or families. In less than five years, both Weibo and WeChat have grown exponentially. By the middle of 2015, WeChat had over one billion registered users and 600 million monthly active users (MAU).

These figures indicate that although Internet in China is heavily censored, the Chinese Internet community is really blooming.

With China's national media lacking plurality and regularly failing to report on incidents that they fear may damage the government's image, combined with internet censoring and heavy-handed tactics being employed against state opposition, freedom of expression has always been limited. But there is hope for change. Weibo and Wechat are allowing a democratic spread of information that has never previously been a phenomena in China.

With the world's largest population, a whopping 1.401 billion individuals, China represents the largest market on the face of the earth when it comes to the social media industry. As its usage continues to grow across the world, China is no exception. Although censorship laws prohibit Chinese consumers from participating in popular international e-commerce and social networking sites, China has successfully created its own platforms. Boasting around 700 million Internet users, in 2014, the volume of social sharing in China went up by 65%.

Tencent QQ

Tencent QQ is an instant messaging software service offering online social games, music, shopping, microblogging and group and voice chat.

QQ was first released in China in 1999 by Tencent and currently has 830 million users. As a messaging platform similar to Skype, it offers comprehensive Web communication functions such as text messaging, video chat, voice chat and features that allows users to send files on and offline.

By June 2014, QQ's MAU hit 829 million. Despite its reach and new features, QQ is rarely used for marketing, as its users are predominantly young students in rural areas who don't have a lot of spending power.

There is also a large number of QQ account holders in Tibet. Prior to the emergence of WeChat, QQ was the only medium which digitally connected Tibetans within and outside Tibet.

Qzone

Qzone, a social networking website launched by Tencent in 2005 offers similar services to QQ such as blogging, photo sending, music, and videos. Tencent's 2014 first-quarter figures put Qzone's monthly active users at 644 million. Although Qzone is primarily a blogging platform, it also has similarities to Facebook, as brands can promote their products via fan pages. For example, according to the Nanjing Marketing Group, Chinese smartphone company Xiaomi sold its Redmi device on Qzone in March of 2014 and scooped up 15.18 million pre-orders in just one week.

WeChat

Wechat called Weixin in China is China's version of WhatsApp and has one of the largest user bases among the ever growing number of apps. In just three years since Tencent debuted it, WeChat has become one of the largest social networking platforms in China and Tibet.

WeChat has 1.1 billion registered accounts and 650 million monthly active users (August 2015). The average number of daily active users is 570 million and the daily growth in numbers of WeChat public accounts is 8000. Available in 20 different languages and equipped with seemingly endless features including voice and group chat, video call, and walkie-talkie, WeChat has emerged as a formidable force in the Chinese social networking space.

Although WeChat offers many benefits for connecting, bonding and bridging the communication gap between Tibetans it also creates significant obstacles. The growing popularity of sites like WeChat among Tibetans reflects upon the continued wish of the people to remain connected and interact socially on various private and public issues, helping in dismantling the boundaries between Tibetans inside and outside Tibet. In this regard, pragmatic questions about the future of social media networking sites (for instance WeChat and Facebook) are inevitably tied to the ways in which they impact all levels of our social existence, and thus becomes a concern for everyone.

According to Lobsang Gyatso Sither, Digital Security Program Manager at Tibet Action Institute, with the development of technology in Tibet and in exile, WeChat has become an easy mode of communication. However, he quickly added that the technology comes with its own risks including arrests of many Tibetans for sharing information.

Tibet continues to witness a severe clampdown on social media networks and microblogs. Internet users face threats of imprisonment if they are found responsible for "online rumours" that are either forwarded 500 times or viewed 5,000 times.

Historically, Chinese internet firms have found it difficult to expand beyond the country. But WeChat is being tipped as the first Chinese social media application with the potential to go global. However, as WeChat grows, activists have expressed legitimate fear that the app is susceptible to the real time monitoring of its users' movements by security officials. In Tibet, some fear this could potentially make targeted users vulnerable to surveillance via an amalgamation of social media tools similar to Twitter, Facebook and Skype.

In June 2014, officials shut down 20 million WeChat accounts citing links to prostitution while another 30,000 were closed in the same month because of fake ID's.

Adam Segal, a cyber-security expert at the Council on Foreign Relations notes that WeChat is not alone in offering potential security loopholes. "Information technology services and software are all fundamentally insecure," he said. "WeChat shouldn't be singled out in this instance. Many technologies have some type of vulnerability, and a directed adversary can figure out vulnerabilities to exploit and gather intelligence." He further adds that users worldwide should remember that though an app may have been created in the US, it is not immune to cyber-attack. "Vulnerability runs deeper than the app, it's in the device itself," he says, noting that HTC handsets and iPhones are likely to have been made in China.

Sina Weibo

Sina Weibo is a Chinese microblogging website built as a hybrid of Twitter and Facebook. It has an active presence in the Chinese online market especially among the younger population. Weibo's sway has a lot to do with its influential users such as business tycoons, global celebrities, and media figures. Sina Weibo

has 600 million active daily users and more than 600 million registered users as of September 2015.

Despite being called China's "Twitter clone," Weibo has the power to shape public opinion[14] and its potential for social organising has attracted the most attention. Like Twitter, Weibo has a 140 character limit while hashtags are popular and posts are public.[15] It is known to allow more criticism of the government than other sites.

CASE STUDIES OF TIBETAN AND CHINESE NETIZENS ACHIEVING VARIOUS SUCCESS USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Intense social media criticism in Tibet regarding the use of Tibetan Buddhist temples as settings for graphic violence in a video game is a prime example of constructive use of social media in Tibet. Following strong complaints by Tibetan and Chinese netizens, NetEase, the Chinese video game developer of Crisis 2015 was coerced into apologising for using Tibetan Buddhist monasteries as a setting for the violent video game. The issue went viral in Chinese domestic social media and attracted attention from a Tibetan Olympic medalist Choeyang Kyi and well-known film-maker Pema Tseden. Tibetans expressed deep hurt and shock about Tibetan monasteries being used as a setting for "a game of killing people". Later the company removed a number of scenes featuring Tibetan religious imagery and religion.[16]

A statement issued on December 19, 2014 by NetEase expressed its "deepest regret to our honourable Tibetan compatriots". They promised to be more prudent and rigorous when selecting aspects of game design and content, giving as much consideration to the impact on culture and religion in order to avoid the occurrence of similar incidents.

In other postings on Chinese social media, before the apology was made, some netizens urged a boycott,[17] while someone published the

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14   *In China, microblogging sites become free speech platforms* by Keith B.Richburg, Washington Post

15   http://gadgets.ndtv.com/social-networking/features/five-things-to-know-about-chinas-social-network-weibo-688513

16   Cyber Tibet

17   www.savetibet.org/apology-after-outcry-goes-viral-over-insulting-chinese-video-game-set-in-tibetan-monasteries/

phone numbers of the game company and encouraged people to call them. Amongst the game's locations is the Jokhang temple in Lhasa, considered by Tibetans to be the most sacred religious building in Tibet. Social media comments by Tibetans included comments such as this: "Tibetan temple culture has been vilified, Tibetan religious beliefs have been demonised, hoping that all my friends will move their fingers and take action" This direct online campaign is a reminder of the sensitivity and the willingness of Tibetans to defend their culture wherever they see it under attack.

The power and role of social media and its effect on the Tibetan struggle can be gauged from a Facebook post written by Brandon Stanton of the *Humans of New York* fame. His Facebook page alone has 16,079,638 followers. When Brandon visited Dharamshala, he posted this: "India is where the exiled government of Tibet resides. The long arduous journey [was made] from Tibet to India to cross through [the] Himalayan mountains. Many of the Tibetan refugees make this trek as children, sent by their parents in hopes of studying their language and religion in freedom." The post became widely popular, reaching a far wider audience and drawing a greater number of '*likes*' and '*shares*' than a news report probably could have garnered. His coverage of Tibetans in the exile diaspora has been read by millions and shared by thousands.

Tibetan National Congress' (TNC) online campaign to relocate the World Summit of Nobel Laureates from Cape Town to Rome

> *"The Nobel peace summit scheduled to be held in South Africa to honour the legacy of our fellow laureate, the late Nelson Mandela, has been cancelled as the South African government wouldn't allow me to attend it…This is sort of bullying a simple person."*

> *The Dalai Lama, October 2014*

In 2014, the South African government refused to give the Dalai Lama visa to attend the World Summit of Nobel Laureates fearing that the trip would jeopardise trade ties with China. Following the snub by South Africa, TNC, a political party in exile ran an intense "Boycott and Relocate" campaign for over two months demanding cancellation of the summit in Cape Town and its relocation.[18]

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18   Accessed on 10/10/2015 Tibetan Political Review

In a petition addressed to Nobel peace laureates, the TNC underlined the Dalai Lama's role as an advocate for peace and his constant effort at bringing "humanity to a new age of cooperation and coexistence based on mutual respect and love."

The online petition, which was signed by 10,000 people pleaded the leaders to be guided by courage and stand in solidarity with a fellow Laureate and boycott the summit. Following the campaign and the South African government's failure to issue the Dalai Lama a visa, the organisers "suspended" the event in September and relocated it to Rome.

TNC president Jigme Ugen later acknowledged that Tibetans using various online tools including social media have been successful in defeating the Chinese government's attempt to bar the Dalai Lama from attending the summit.

Petition delivered to Facebook to let Tibetan voices be heard

Facebook was accused of curbing the freedom of speech of one of Tibet's most well-known bloggers and award-winning writer Woeser when her post on the self-immolation protest by Kalsang Yeshi, a 38-year old Tibetan monk against Chinese rule in Tibet, was deleted. The post by the Beijing-based writer included a link to a video of Yeshi's death.

The controversy came shortly after the creator of the social media giant, Mark Zuckerberg, made a heavily publicised visit to China and met with the Chinese internet czar Luwei. A Facebook message initially claimed the post had been deleted because it failed to meet community standards.

Matteo Mecacci, President and Joe Baker, Vice President of the Washington DC based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) visited the headquarters of Facebook in Menlo Park, CA, on January 27, 2015 and delivered a petition signed by 20,449 people demanding for the rights of Tibetan voices to be heard on the social network forum without any censorship.[19] The petition noted that Woeser's freedom of expression has been violated and the basic human rights of millions of Tibetans to expose China's brutal rule in Tibet had been compromised. "Censoring the truth about China's oppression of Tibetans being so severe and persuasive that some see setting themselves on fire as their only way to be heard is wrong and shameful," the petition read.

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19   accessed on 09/10/2015 https://www.savetibet.org/petition-delivered-to-facebook-to-let-tibetan-voices-be-heard

"The petition was endorsed by more than 20,000 people from over 130 countries and we were able to share with Facebook their feeling that such actions to silence Tibetan voice cannot be tolerated," said Matteo. Later when Woeser reposted the previous story and link, it was not deleted.

GROWING VOICES OF SOLIDARITY WITH TIBETANS AMONG CHINESE NETIZENS

In a refreshing change of attitude, Chinese netizens are beginning to question their government's singular narration of Tibet being an inalienable part of China, which prior to the Party's rule was "a barbaric feudal hell on earth." Some Chinese netizens are even accusing Beijing of intentionally avoiding the problem in Tibet. Therefore, the role of social media becomes even more important in creating awareness and making both Tibetans and Chinese equal shareholders in the change they seek.

"I have been amazed to see the reaction from Chinese (mainly inside China) on social media whenever I report on Tibet (in Chinese language)", says Dawa Tsering, president of the Dharamshala based Contact Association.

The association is a networking group that interacts with netizens from mainland China using popular Chinese social media network sites and aims at creating awareness on a number of issues including Tibetan Buddhism and the official Middle-Way Policy. Since its inception in 2006, the group has reached out to more than 144,434 Chinese netizens and shared around 3,800 short video clips and 12,000 books.

"Our staff always get response from the Chinese within minutes. It's essential for Tibetans to be in touch with ordinary Chinese people and such connections can be done through all available channels and platforms, not necessarily organised by the CTA," Tsering adds.

Websites such as High Peaks Pure Earth which provides insightful commentary on Tibet-related news and issues and translations of writings including blogs and poems by Tibetans inside Tibet have been an important interface for understanding the real situation inside Tibet.

Dechen Pemba, editor of High Peaks Pure Earth, blogger Tsering Woeser and Tsering Kyi, a US based Tibetan journalist have become new-age social

media champions giving voice for the voiceless inside Tibet by writing about, translating and sharing stories and expressions of Tibetans inside Tibet. With their popularity and online following they are capable of commenting on and sharing numerous aspects of the Tibetan issues with global audiences including Chinese through Facebook, Twitter and blogs.

Increasingly, Chinese citizens who defy official policing are voicing solidarity with the Tibetans who are setting themselves on fire protesting China's rule and demanding the return of the Dalai Lama.

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the elected head of the Tibetan people, blamed China's "continued occupation of Tibet, its failed policies, including economic marginalisation, environmental destruction, cultural assimilation, and denial of religious freedom" as causes of the self-immolation protests.

Chinese netizens have helped spread reports of self-immolations by Tibetans online and expressed their concern by posting comments on social media websites. Chinese human rights lawyer Jiang Tianyong tweeted after a self-immolation protest: "Why is the world numb toward self-immolations?"

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has 12,453,661 million fans and supporters following him in cyberspace as of Oct 16, 2015. The Dalai Lama has a powerful and far reaching presence on Twitter and Facebook. His private office, based in the northern Indian town of Dharamshala, believes that His Holiness' phenomenal fan following is all the more significant as it helps in reaching out to netizens worldwide. The official handlers frequently tweet inspirational quotes and messages from his teachings, discourses and writings. The office notes that scholars from Taiwan and mainland China regularly interact with the spiritual leader via Facebook thus providing a platform for the better understanding of his Middle-Way Policy for Tibet.

The importance of working together in order to maximise the impact on social media cannot be over emphasised. For example, Dechen Pemba translates her blogs into Chinese language which are read by prominent Chinese activists and open-minded mainland netizens. Although Facebook and Twitter are blocked by the Great Fire Wall but there are more and more Chinese users who bypass the system. Social media provides seamless opportunities for Tibetans who can speak and write Chinese language (Tsering Woeser is a great example) to tell the Chinese people the truth about Tibet.

CONCLUSION

The 21st century has become the era of social networking with people from all walks of life using the internet regularly to check their mails, share information and broadcast their views. If the Tibetans, scattered into active pockets of communities all over the world, could connect with each other and plan and organise activities in an effective and co-ordinated manner this could greatly increase awareness about Tibet and further raise the number of participants and supporters for the cause in general and certain campaigns in particular. Right from the beginning of human civilisation, every world-changing movement or social upheaval has been connected to information.

This research paper explains the significance of social media and its impact on the Tibetan issue, specifically through the last decade when social media has played a predominant role in creating awareness about the Tibetan cause and shaped people's perceptions toward the issue across the globe. Social networking sites such as Facebook, blogs, YouTube and WeChat are increasingly replacing media outlets such as newspaper, radio and television as the go to place for news, information and interaction.

In exile, the usage of social media by Tibetans has dramatically increased as has their energetic involvement in various political and social issues. This vibrant community of individuals as well as activists has to a large extent helped draw international public attention in their favour thus rendering useless the Chinese propaganda juggernaut. Whenever there have been issues, be it political activism, social and philanthropic movements or environmental concerns, Tibetan people have used social media to raise their voice, circulating information among netizens to gain support, sympathy and increase awareness. The important role of social media in influencing public opinion and international support, in the rapid dissemination of news and widespread messaging, and in the ability of the individual to spread information globally are relatively new phenomena during large-scale political and social revolutions.

Various interactions on social media can easily symbolise a collective voice, creating a temporary virtual community of people sharing their anger or expressing their support for a particular cause or event.

In recent years, millions of Tibetan and Chinese internet users have expressed their indignation toward the stringent surveillance, screening

and blocking of information by the Chinese government. More and more Tibetans are realising the value of freedom of expression and having access to uncensored information.

The connectivity that internet and social media has throughout the globalised world has assisted Tibetans in Tibet to break the psychological barrier of fear by helping many to connect and share information. It has given people in Tibet the knowledge and understanding that they are not alone in their struggle against occupation and injustice.

Social networks have for the first time provided individuals and activists alike an opportunity to quickly disseminate information in the form of pictures and videos while understanding the imminent threats attached to their actions. Today, social media has become a powerful unifying factor for the diverse Tibetan diaspora.