

*IDSAs Task Force Report*

May 2012

**TIBET AND INDIA'S SECURITY:  
HIMALAYAN REGION, REFUGEES AND  
SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS**



Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses  
New Delhi

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ISBN: 81-86019-99-5

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First Published: May 2012

Price: Rs. 375/-

Published by: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses  
No.1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg,  
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi - 110 010  
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Website: <http://www.idsa.in>

Layout &  
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Printed at: M/s A. M. Offsetters  
A-57, Sector-10, Noida-201 301 (U.P.)  
Mob.: 09810888667  
E-mail : [amoffsetters@gmail.com](mailto:amoffsetters@gmail.com)

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# PREFACE

## INTRODUCTION

In April 2007 on a field visit to study the inflow of Siang river (Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet) into India, I stayed at border town Tuting and village Gelling in Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh peopled by the Membas and the Khambas. The peacefulness of this Buddhist border region of the Himalayas was striking. This harsh region is peopled by Indians of Mongoloid ethnicity. They are adherents of Mahayana Buddhism, which is practised in Tibet and Bhutan as well. They are also sincere nationalists and have never indulged in insurgency. Their culture and ethnicity is either Tibetan or is influenced by it.

Later that year while visiting the region of Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh in the border town of Pooh to study the inflow of the Sutlej from Tibet, I experienced the same Buddhist culture and peaceful ethos as in Ladakh where I had the good fortune to serve for two years in the 1980s. In my feedback presentation at IDSA, I concluded that it was apparent that all along the border with Tibet, Indians practice Buddhism. Hence, it is important to understand the strong influence of Buddhism near the Himalayan border. It was also clear that Buddhism needs to be nurtured. Tibetan refugees in India also practice Buddhism and regard India as the land of gurus and the birthplace of Buddhism. This soft power inherent in India needs further research. The idea

was thus born. A Task Force was formed with Dr Jagannath Panda and Dr Zakir Hussain volunteering as members.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Nine research questions were identified:

- (a) What is the influence of Tibetan Buddhism on the Indian Himalayan belt?
- (b) What is the status of Tibetan refugees in India in terms of religion and political affiliations?
- (c) What would be the post-Dalai Lama scenario?
- (d) How much influence do Tibetan refugees wield in the Indian socio-political environment?
- (e) How do Tibetan refugees factor in Sino-Indian relations?
- (f) How much influence do the monastic organizations, including the Dalai Lama, have on the Sino-Indian border question including Tawang?
- (g) Are the Tibetan refugees a threat to Indian security?
- (h) What is the Chinese approach to the Tibet question as well as to the post-Dalai Lama scenario?
- (i) What is the role and influence of religion, especially Buddhism, in today's China?

## METHODOLOGY

This study is based on interviews,

fieldwork, survey of literature and theoretical insights. Dharamsala (Himachal Pradesh), Dehradun (Uttarakhand), Mundgod (Karnataka), Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir), Tawang and Kameng (Arunachal Pradesh), Gangtok (Sikkim), Bodh Gaya, Rajgir and Nalanda (Bihar) and Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh) were visited. Dr Panda conducted a field-study, survey and interview while in China. During his visit many experts in premier Chinese research institutions in Shanghai, Beijing, Sichuan and Guangzhou were consulted. Their views have been included in relevant portions.

### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Assessment of this work is based on field work and open access. No inputs from Research and Analysis Wing (R and AW), Intelligence Bureau (IB), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the like were sought. The research was bottom up by field visits, interaction with some Tibetans, survey of literature and interactions with scholars at the IDSA and international scholars. (Yet during research and meetings, many Tibetans thought I was from the R and AW due to the title "Analyses" in the visiting card of IDSA).

### **IMPORTANCE AND POLICY RELEVANCE OF THE SUBJECT**

The following factors were considered as being policy relevant:

- (a) The Tibetan factor is inextricably linked with the Sino-Indian border dispute. With the ongoing Sino-Indian border negotiations coupled with the various scenarios in Tibet and the institution of the Dalai Lama, there is a need to study the impact of Tibetans in exile on our national security.
- (b) The Tawang region of Arunachal Pradesh, to which China lays claim as its territory raises crucial questions on the security of India's territories in the Himalayan border region. There is a need for an intensive study of the identity of the locals residing in Tawang.
- (c) India has about 120,000 Tibetans-in-exile spread across 35 settlements. Refugees residing along the Himalayan border region practice various shades of Tibetan Buddhism. Some of the exiled Tibetans aim to free Tibet from Chinese rule. The political affiliations and objectives of Tibetan refugees have significant ramifications for Indian security.
- (d) Indian Buddhists practicing Tibetan Buddhism outnumber the Tibetan refugees. There is a need to study their linkages with and impact on the post-Dalai Lama scenario.
- (e) There needs to be focused investigation of links between Tibetan exiles and Indian citizens who practice Tibetan Buddhism: religious, philosophical, spiritual and social.
- (f) There are some writings on 'Tibetization'- of the Indian Himalayan belt. They point out that a large number of Tibetan refugees, most of them followers of Buddhism, have settled all along the Himalayan belt of India. These groups privately lay claim to territories extending from Bhutan to Ladakh. It has also been said that Tibetan monks have taken control

over almost all Indian monasteries from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh. These assertions need to be studied.

- (g) The role of the Karmapa in the Tibetan community also needs study, particularly in the post-Dalai Lama context.

### TITLE AND LAYOUT OF THE BOOK

The initial title of the task force was "Tibetan Refugees in India: Implications for Indian Security". Later as work progressed it was realised that cultural and religious issues of the Himalayan region and Sino-Indian relations were also central to the research. The title was changed with that logic. After an in-house presentation of the findings in September 2009, the report titled "Tibet and India's Security: Himalayan Region, Refugees and Sino-India Relations" was submitted to policy makers in July 2010. The present work is based on reorganising that report in a book form, though in parts, the work still has the flavour of a report, such as field trips, in some chapters.

Chapter One introduces the subject. Chapter Two covers the influence and importance of Buddhism in the Himalayan belt and Appendices which include Buddhism in China today based on field work and interviews in China in July 2009 by Jagannath P. Panda. It also includes 'The History of the Institute of World Religions: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences'. An earlier version of this chapter was published in the *Bulletin of Tibetology*

Vol. 44, No.1 and 2, 2008 by P.K. Gautam which included two boxes and "Buddhism in China" and "Ethnicity and Literature survey of the Indian Himalayan Belt and its relationship with Tibet". We thank the editor for granting permission of print the article. Chapter Three covers the status of Tibetan refugees. Chapter Four is about the post-Dalai Lama contingencies. Chapter Five covers the influence of Tibetan refugees in the Indian socio-political environment. Chapter Five-A is the outcome of a field visit to Dharamsala and Dehradun where Tibetans-in-exile were interviewed by Dr Jagannath P. Panda and Dr Zakir Hussian. Chapter Five-B pertains to visits to refugee establishments and events done by me. Chapter Six is about the Chinese approach to the Tibet question. Chapter Seven dwells on how much influence the monastic organizations, including the Dalai Lama's institution, wield on the Sino-Indian border question, including Tawang. The question of Tibetan refugees and India's security is covered in Chapter Eight. Chapter Nine concludes with policy suggestions. An epilogue has been added to cater for two important events that happened before the report was offered for publication - these were embarrassing event in connection with the Karmapa and his organization in January 2011 which then died down and the process of democratization by means of election in the exile community for the Kalon Tripa (Prime Minister) in March 2011 followed by devolution of political authority.

May 2012  
New Delhi

P. K. Gautam



## INTRODUCTION

Current scholarship based on documents now available in China since the 1990s spells out two reasons why China's leaders decided for war with India in 1962. They were:

- (a) A perceived need to punish and end Indian efforts to undermine Chinese control of Tibet, which were seen as aimed at restoring the pre-1949 status quo ante there.
- (b) A perceived need to punish and end Indian aggression against Chinese territory along the border.<sup>1</sup>

The first was based on the fact that India gave refuge to the Tibetans. China's distrust of India initially arose with asylum given by India to the Dalai Lama.<sup>2</sup> The second is the unresolved boundary question which is also linked

to Tibet. Both matters still remain contentious.

As regards Sino-Tibetan relations, the status of Tibet is at the core of the dispute. China maintains that Tibet is an inalienable part of China. Tibetans maintain that Tibet has historically been an independent country. In reality, the conflict over Tibet's status has been a conflict over history.<sup>3</sup> One widely regarded Tibetan scholar writing in the *Strategic Analysis* in 1988 showed that the primary reason for the Communist takeover of Tibet was strategic rather than for historical claims or ideological motives.<sup>4</sup> He elaborated later that "the crux of the strategic rivalry between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and India is this: if the Chinese elites consider Tibet strategically important

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in Twentieth Century*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2001; "China's Decision for War with India in 1962", in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (eds.), *New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, pp. 86–130; Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, Surrey, Curzon Press, 2001, Chapter 16, "The Tibet Factor in Sino- Indian Relations: The Centrality of Marginality", pp. 283–97.

<sup>2</sup> Arundhati Ghose, "Emerging India: Strategic Challenges and Opportunities", K. Subrahmanyam Memorial Lecture, Bangalore, National Institute of Advanced Studies, 2011, pp.16-17.

<sup>3</sup> Elliot Sperling, *The Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics*, Policy Studies 7, Washington DC, East-West Center, 2004. Another related book being Thomas Laird, *The Story of Tibet: Conversations with the Dalai Lama*, London, Atlantic Books, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Dawa Norbu, "Chinese Strategic Thinking on Tibet and the Himalayan Region", *Strategic Analysis*, 12(4), July 1988, pp. 371–95, reproduced in *Strategic Analysis*, 32(4), July 2008, pp. 685–702.

to China, the Indian elites think that it is equally vital to Indian national security."<sup>5</sup> The greatest threat to Sino-Indian relations arise from widely differing views of the history and ultimate destiny of Tibet. For China, India's recognition of Tibet as part of China seems grudging and conditional. India's role as host of the Dalai Lama and his 'splittist clique' could appear to some Chinese as a threat to their country's cohesion. For India, Chinese repression in Tibet is painful and many Indians hope it will ultimately prove futile.<sup>6</sup>

### GEOGRAPHY AND BOUNDARIES

The Qinghai-Tibet plateau, home to approximately six million ethnic Tibetans, was historically divided into three provinces: U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. Today U-Tsang – the central part of the plateau, in which the Tibetan capital Lhasa lies – has been designated as the

Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) by the PRC and may also be referred to as Xizang (XAR) in Mandarin.<sup>7</sup> Kham and Amdo are considered separate jurisdictional units encompassed within four distinct Chinese provinces: Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan (See map). Tibet Data Sheet including Traditions of Mahayana Buddhism is at Appendix.



Not to scale

Map 1.1. Map of TAR

<sup>5</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, Surrey, Curzon Press, 2001, p. 360.

<sup>6</sup> David M. Malone and Rohan Mukherjee, "India and China: Conflict and Cooperation", *Survival*, Vol.52, No.1, February – March 2010, pp.137-158. Also see Rajiv Sikri, "The Tibet Factor in India – China Relations", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.64, No.2, Spring/Summer 2011, pp.55-71.

<sup>7</sup> P. Christiaan Klieger, "The People of Tibet", in Barbara A. Brower and Barbara Rose Johnston (eds.), *Disappearing People?: Indigenous Groups and Ethnic Minorities in South and Central Asia*, California, Left Coast Press, 2007, pp. 221–41. According to the Chinese, Tibet's historical status is a closed book. Tibet, according to the official narrative, has been a part of China since the Mongol Empire of Kublai Khan in the thirteenth century. This is proved by the official titles and seals bestowed by the rulers of China since then. Only in the nineteenth century, when China was weakened and dismembered by European encroachment, did Tibet, egged on by the British, who invaded in 1904, begin to foster the historical fantasy of independence. When China was finally able to "stand up" after the victory of the Communists in 1949, Tibet was "reunited with the motherland" and accorded support and special treatment ("autonomy") by the central government in recognition of its unique and distinct cultural life.

## INDIAN POLICY

The threat from China was one reason India gave to the world for conducting its nuclear tests in 1998. Their spheres of influence overlap and they compete with each other for anything related to Tibet. India hosts the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGIE) and the Dalai Lama. According to Abanti Bhattacharya:

India has the largest concentration of diasporic Tibetans. Its attitude towards Tibet is significantly determined by the dynamics of its relations with China. Therefore, while it grants asylum to the Tibetan refugees, its policies since 1954 are not geared towards an independent Tibet. India's policy is an outcome of its own concerns about its northern frontiers in the 1950s. In recognising Tibet as a part of China, New Delhi in 1954 had hoped to gain Beijing's recognition of India's border with Tibet and build peaceful and stable ties with China. It also hoped that its posture would facilitate Tibetan autonomy within China. This of course did not happen. But the Indian policy has not changed.<sup>8</sup>

## FACTORS IMPORTANT FOR INDIA

Two factors make Tibet important for India. First is the religious and cultural factor. Tibet has an important place in the Indian imagination. Unlike contacts with Han China via a trickle of scholars such as Hiuen Tsang or Fa Hien, non-Han Tibet hugged the Himalayas. Tibetans and Bhotias were traditional traders in the border region. The Hindu-cum-Buddhist holy land of Kailash Mansarovar is in Tibet and there is a deep religious-cultural linkage of Indians with Tibet. Indians have always considered Tibet a nation or an autonomous region. Post independence, though India facilitated recognition of the PRC as a country, it also attempted to balance its position on Tibet, which China had claimed as its own. Since 1949 the Chinese used military force to integrate Tibet with the PRC. Insurgency commenced in the 1950s. This led to further application of military force by the PRC. In 1959 the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal head of the Tibetans, fled to India with thousands of refugees. India gave them refuge and permitted setting up of the Tibetan Government

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See Anne-Marie Blondue and Katia Buffetrille (eds.), *Authenticating Tibet: Answers to China's 100 Questions*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2008 and George Fitzherbert's review essay, "Lands of Cloud", *Times Literary Supplement*, June 2008, p. 7. This Chinese interpretation is not universally accepted. Tibet has a recorded history of over 2,000 years as an independent nation and possesses all conditions of statehood. See *Understanding the Issue of Tibet* New Delhi, Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, 2007, p. 3 and Thomas Lang, *The Story of Tibet: Conversations with the Dalai Lama*, London, Atlantic Books, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Abanti Bhattacharya, "Chinese Nationalism and the Fate of Tibet: Implications for India and Future Scenarios", *Strategic Analysis*, 31(2), March 2007, pp. 237–66. The author quotes Charles Heimsath and Surjit Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of India*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971, pp. 198–203.

in Exile at Dharamsala. Though officially India considers the TAR to be a part of China, the reality is that the Tibet question is not settled. Rather, ever since the occupation of Tibet by the PRC, Tibet and Buddhism have entered the consciousness of the world. According to Sudarshan Bhutani:

If China and India were both losers, there was one winner – Tibetan Buddhism. Shorn of its feudal moorings, it has gained a following in the world at large.... The result is a global interest in protecting the Tibetan identity which has been inseparable from its religion far longer than Peking has controlled Tibet.<sup>9</sup>

According to Jean-Francois Mayer:

The arrival of refugees contributes to bring new components into the religious landscape of the host countries; for example it is not certain that Tibetan Buddhism would have become as popular and respected as it is in some parts of the Western world without the influx of Tibetan refugees.<sup>10</sup>

India is seen by the international

community with great respect for having looked after the Dalai Lama and the refugees and in facilitating the preservation of their culture and religion.<sup>11</sup> This is obviously at the cost of good relations with China. What India has done is just and proper as a civilisational entity. This in a world of realpolitik provides India with a challenge in diplomacy which needs to be converted into an opportunity. But the journey will be long. There is a need for consolidated strategic thinking on the subject.

The second factor is ecological.<sup>12</sup> The strategic importance of Tibet as an ecological buffer as it relates to ecological security is now well established. Scientific knowledge is now challenging the earlier (and wrong) assumption that traditional lifestyles as practised by Tibetans are backward, irrational and unsustainable.<sup>13</sup> The Qinghai–Tibet plateau is a global ecosystem – like the Amazon rainforest or the two Poles. Its land use impacts India in particular and the region and the world in general. Besides fresh water sources of rivers, its

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<sup>9</sup> Sudarshan Bhutani, *A Clash of Political Cultures: Sino-India Relations (1957–62)*, New Delhi, Roli Books, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Jean-François Mayer, Introduction, "In God Have I Put My Trust: Refugees and Religion", United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Vol.26, No.2, 2007, pp. 6–11.

<sup>11</sup> Thubten Samphel, "Maintaining Vitality in Exile", *Harvard International Review*, XXXI(3), Fall 2009, pp. 60–3 and Tenzin Geyche Tethong, "A Tale of Tibetans by One of Them", *Border Affairs*, April–June 2009, pp. 15–24.

<sup>12</sup> P.K. Gautam, "Climate Change and Environmental Degradation in Tibet: Implications for Environmental Security in South Asia", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.34, No.5, September 2010, pp.744-755.

<sup>13</sup> Katherine Morton, "Climate Change and Security at the Third Pole", *Contemporary International Relations*, Vol.21, No.3, May/June 2011, pp.34-55.

sustainable management is vital for climate security. No single nation based on the claim of sovereignty can be allowed to continue with economic and land use policies which have negative consequences. The Hanisation of Tibet and the resultant population growth, the infrastructure development and economic policies go against the limited carrying capacity and fragility of the region. Autonomous also implies that the model of development is congruent with 'Nature', according to the Buddhist tradition as obtained in Tibet. One need not be a Buddhist to understand this. In the present situation this does not seem to be happening. As Wang Shiyong explains, Tibetans are poorly equipped to respond to, and to take advantage of opportunities.<sup>14</sup> This is due to a complex set of factors such as political, social, cultural and environmental. In Tibetan-majority areas only 20 per cent of business is controlled by Tibetans. Buddhist society is monastery-centred and agriculture cum animal-husbandry based. The emphasis is on karma, which shuns material gains. In China's Western Development Programme in Tibet since 1999, though living standards have improved, this has happened more in urban than rural areas. Non-Tibetans, who are numerous, are attracted to urban Tibet. Besides, fluency in Chinese language is a passport for success. The net result is that the locals continue to be marginalised.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, it is in India's interest to have policies for the preservation of Tibetan culture and its Buddhist character of living with Nature in the harsh terrain. This is possible if the Tibet question is reassessed. The first priority is to assess our policies on the Tibetans residing in India, which is a live, day-to-day, direct problem.

### UNDERSTANDING OF SECURITY

The Tibet question is a traditional security issue. The PRC wants its periphery integrated into China. It distrusts the Dalai Lama. It is ready to use ruthless coercive power to subdue the Tibetans and is unlikely to tolerate any large-scale covert action for secession. But events such as the mass uprising of March 2008 are indicative of the latent power of the people of Tibet. It is doubtful whether China has succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of the Tibetans, except a few who are already indoctrinated in the TAR to side with China. For India, as Chapter-2 shows, Buddhism practised both in the Indian Himalayan belt and Tibet is a binding factor. It is a soft power, which some scholars allude to as spiritual diplomacy. However, nurturing this soft power is possible only in the long term. As the first generation of Tibetan refugees fade away, the second and the third (born in India) are unlikely to have the same passion, zeal and idealism as the first

<sup>14</sup> Wang Shiyong, "Policy Impact on Tibetan market participation", *Asian Ethnicity*, 10(1), February 2009, pp. 1-18.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

generation. This is understandable and natural. After the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, it is possible that the movement will fizzle out or splinter. It may lack the charismatic leadership of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, but Buddhism will certainly survive. This suggests that instead of treating it as a leadership issue, we need to reinforce the institutionalisation of the faith. A Tibet with its indigenous people provides greater security to India than Hanised Tibet.

Ever since the problem arose, India has been seen giving all required assistance to Tibetans, barring allowance to engage in political activities from Indian soil for secession. As pointed out by Dawa Norbu,<sup>16</sup> the refugees as a security issue came into prominence when some intellectuals resented the control of monasteries in Ladakh by Tibetans. Their not knowing the

Ladakhi language added to the resentment.<sup>17</sup> Tanka B. Subba objected to some Tibetans' remarks that Nepali language and culture have invaded Tibetan tongues and homes in Darjeeling and Sikkim.<sup>18</sup> Reaching an opposite conclusion, Rajesh Kharat observes that in Sikkim, Darjeeling and Kalimpong, Tibetans have been acculturated to such an extent that local Nepalese and Lepchas are accommodative and often intermarry. Overall, the relations in West Bengal and Sikkim are harmonious and reciprocal, but show decline in Arunachal Pradesh.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps this has to do with perceptions. As Chapter Two shows, Ladakh was Tibetanised way back in history and it is not a new phenomenon. Rather, going by the food habits of the young generation, Ladakh has got Punjabised.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, according to Lobsang Yeshe, Vice-President of the

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<sup>16</sup> Dawa Norbu, "Tibetan Refugees in South Asia: A Case of Peaceful Adjustment", in S.D. Muni and Lok Raj Baral (eds.), *Refugees and Regional Security*, New Delhi: Konark, 1996, pp. 78–98.

<sup>17</sup> P. Stobdan, "Tibet and the Himalayas", *Strategic Analysis*, September 1991, pp. 687–702; "India's Concerns over Tibet – I and II", *Defence & Technology*, June 2006 and July 2006, pp. 36–41 and pp. 38–43 respectively; "Tibet and the Security of Indian Himalayan Belt", in K. Warikoo (ed.), *Himalayan Frontiers of India: Historical, Geopolitical and Strategic Perspective*, London: Routledge, 2009, pp. 102–21.

<sup>18</sup> Dawa Norbu, note 16, mentions Dr Tanka B Subba's *Flight and Adaptation: Tibetan Refugees in the Darjeeling Himalayas* (1990). For Subba's rejoinder and clarifications to Norbu see T.B. Subba, "One or Many Paths: Coping with the Tibetan Refugees in India", in C. Joshua Thomas (ed), *Dimensions of Displaced People in North-East India*, New Delhi, Regency Publications, 2002, pp. 131–58. Here Subba advocates identification of issues and debate to build healthier refugee-host relations and cites the help rendered by Tibetans after the Gujarat earthquake in 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Rajesh Kharat, "Gainers of a Stalemate: The Tibetans in India", in Ranbir Samaddar (ed.), *Refugees and the State: Practices of Asylum and Care in India; 1947–2000*, New Delhi, Sage, 2003, pp. 281–93.

<sup>20</sup> Interaction by P.K. Gautam with Dr Tsering Phuntsog, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, Leh in September 2008.

TYC: “Everyone always says China is trying to Sinicise us, but in fact, we are ourselves being Indianised.”<sup>21</sup>

Strategic literature classifies three types of security problems that refugees may pose to the receiving country:

- (a) Strategic security may be threatened if they get armed.
- (b) Structural security may be threatened if they compete for scarce resources.
- (c) Regime security may be threatened if they vote in domestic politics.<sup>22</sup>

None of this applies to the Tibetans.

Dehradun has a Tibetan establishment hugging the cantonment of Clementtown. It is out of bounds for all ranks. This is understandable as troops must not be allowed to mingle freely with the population and also unauthorised liquor may be exchanged. These are all matters of standard security practices of military units. Declaring the area out of bounds for all ranks does not in any way mean that the area is a security threat in the sense of being a threat to national security.

Some scholars compare Tibetan refugees (of just over 0.1 million) of

possessing the potential of creating trouble for India like the demand for Gorkhaland by Nepalis. Surely, such a comparison of a population spread out in over 30 refugee establishments (as dots in a map) and not even one per cent the size of Nepalis, needs to be questioned.<sup>23</sup> Comparing the Tibetan’s struggle in exile with a Gorkhaland type of movement in India is more of a rhetoric. Asymmetrical comparisons may only help in reinforcing the Chinese perceptions and strategy on Tibet.

Nevertheless, with refugees residing for long durations, there are bound to be problems, especially in high population density locations such as Dharamsala or when economic progress has given rise to a stronger sense of regional identity which wants to shake out the historic baggage of a hegemonic Tibetan influence.

Local tensions do exist. In 2007, some Tibetans managed to obtain Scheduled Tribe certificates in Arunachal Pradesh. Some local clashes have also occurred in the past. In Dharamsala in 1994 a local Gaddi was stabbed to death by a Tibetan.<sup>24</sup> A local Himachali taxi driver in Dharamsala opined that there is no

<sup>21</sup> Pico Iyer, *The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 2008, p. 202.

<sup>22</sup> Mahendra P. Lama, “Refugees in South Asia”, *World Focus*, 20(1), January 1999.

<sup>23</sup> Abanti Bhattacharya, “As China prepares for post-Dalai Lama Tibet, what is India to do with the Tibetan Exiles?”, March 25, 2010, at [http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/AsChinapreparesforpost-DalaiLamaTibetwhatisIndiatodowiththeTibetanExiles\\_abhattacharya\\_250310](http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/AsChinapreparesforpost-DalaiLamaTibetwhatisIndiatodowiththeTibetanExiles_abhattacharya_250310) (accessed April 24, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Bibhu Prasad Routray, “Tibetan Refugees in India: Religious Identity and the Forces of Modernity”, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Vol.26, No.2, 2007, pp. 79–90. Table 3.1 notes incidents of conflicts, which have been resolved.

local tension and the entire tourist income and industry is thriving due to the Dalai Lama and his exiled community in the area. (He also noted that the rowdiest were Israeli tourists who had a propensity to be quarrelsome.)<sup>25</sup>

Yet another issue is how the refugee communities from other countries in India compare themselves with the Tibetans in a sort of relative deprivation theory. A step-motherly treatment has been reported for Chakma and Hajong refugees.<sup>26</sup> This is more to do with the fact that India lacks a clear refugee

policy and how various lobbies in democratic India have entirely different views.<sup>27</sup> According to Ella Rolfe, there is a lot of difference in the welcoming attitude exhibited for the Dalai Lama in 1959 and that for the Karmapa in 2000. The treatment of ordinary citizens has changed since 1986. (The Indian government aid now only stretches to transport to settlement areas.<sup>28</sup>) Official and popular suspicion regarding Tibetan refugees is also increasing. Lok Sabha debates now refer to Tibetan "political activities" and most Tibetans now entering India are not granted legal residence.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> As observed by P.K. Gautam on a visit to Dharamsala in September 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Ratna Bharali Talukdar, "State of denial", *Frontline*, 25(17), August 16–29, 2008, pp. 49–53.

<sup>27</sup> Publications by the Hindu Group, *The Hindu* newspaper and the fortnightly newsmagazine *Frontline*, deny Hanisation and are not sympathetic to the Tibetans; see, for example, A.G. Noorani, "Tibet: A Case for Quiet Diplomacy", *Frontline*, May 8, 2009, pp. 83–8. For an opposite view, see Ramchandra Guha, "Big Brother Fascination", *The Telegraph*, September 8, 2000. Guha refers to Vikram Seth's travelogue, *From Heaven Lake: Travels through Sinkiang and Tibet* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1983), which shows disparities including Hanisation of Lhasa. In the light of books by Jairam Ramesh of the Congress Party advocating the idea of "Chindia", one wonders why within India, attitudes on this subject among political luminaries vary. After the March 2008 uprising, Indian authorities took stringent steps against the Tibetans when the Olympic torch reached New Delhi. Honey Oberoi wonders about the reasons for the "apathy and outright aversion of the egalitarian Left" towards the Tibetan movement; according to an academic dealing with China, the Chinese fund the Communist Party in India; interestingly, the trend may be changing among the Leftists. See Honey Oberoi, "Rethinking Tibet", *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 10, 2008, pp. 80–3. Politicians such as Arun Shourie of the right-leaning Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and author Claude Arpi on the other hand want a more proactive policy in relation to Tibet and are very sympathetic to the Tibetan freedom movement. See Arun Shourie, "Roof of the World: The Tibetan Government in Exile has completed fifty years in India, but what has India done in Tibet?", *Defence and Security of India*, 1(5), pp. 22–7; Claude Arpi, "Past vs Future", *Defence and Security of India*, 1(5), pp. 28–34; anonymous, "India's Tibet Card", *Indian Defence Yearbook*, 2009, pp. 193–206 and B.K.P. Singh, *China's Tibet Policy*, New Delhi, Sumit Enterprises, 2009.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs's *Annual Report 2010–2011* mentions expenditure of Rs 18.72 crores on their resettlement in a housing scheme in Uttarakhand.

<sup>29</sup> Ella Rolfe, "Refugee, Minority, Citizen, Threat: Tibetans and the India Refugee Script", *South Asia Research*, 28(3), November 2008, pp. 253–83.

## REFUGEES AS PRO-CHINA AND CHINESE AGENTS

Another impression linked to security is that of refugees being pro-China and Chinese agents in India. T.B. Subba describes this phenomenon as ideological cleavages: those Tibetans who do not agree with the views of their own Government in Exile at Dharamsala are often alleged to be agents of China, who have infiltrated their society to weaken their fight for independence.<sup>30</sup> According to P. Stobdan, the Dalai Lama's security department suspected at least 12 Tibetans to be Chinese agents. Besides, these suspicions are fuelled by the fact that the movement of people between Tibet and India is poorly regulated in India, and agents can infiltrate.<sup>31</sup> Both Shugden and Karmapa controversies have had a potentially destabilising

impact in India.<sup>32</sup> A hypothesis regarding the Karmapa and other refugees being Chinese agents also exists.<sup>33</sup> This suspicion was part of a parliamentary question in 1967 (see Chapter 3 Appendix D).

Surely, if the professional intelligence agencies had evidence, action would need to have been taken. Good counter-intelligence is also a principle of security. The Chinese have an advantage that they can pass themselves off as Indians (from the North East or other Himalayan regions) or Bhutanese or Nepali. Imperial British India could not even enter China as surveyors and the Survey of India had to train and disguise Nain Singh and party from Garhwal and Kumaon as lamas for a clandestine survey of Tibet during the heyday of the Great Game.

<sup>30</sup> Subba, "One or Many Paths ...", n. 18.

<sup>31</sup> P. Stobdan, "Tibet and the Security of Indian Himalayan Belt", n.17.

<sup>32</sup> P. Stobdan, "India's Concerns over Tibet – II", n. 17, p. 43.

<sup>33</sup> A. Maheshwari, *The Buddha Cries! Karmapa Conundrum*, Mumbai, Preface Books, 2002. On the changing nature of refugee treatment, an article which captures the debate in an academic manner, see Ella Rolfe, "Refugee, Minority, Citizen, Threat: Tibetans and the India Refugee Script", *South Asia Research*, 28(3), November 2008, pp. 253–83.

## TIBET DATA SHEET INCLUDING TRADITIONS OF MAHAYANA BUDDHISM

### **GEOGRAPHY**

The cold Tibetan plateau (also called the Tibet–Qinghai plateau) is still in formation and is especially prone to earthquakes. Its mean elevation is 3600 metres (12,000 feet) and it has an area of 2.5 million square kilometres, roughly one-fourth of China’s landmass. The Tibetan Autonomous Region is one-eighth of China’s landmass. Only one per cent of the plateau sustains regular agricultural activity. Nomadism in grasslands is practised extensively. Tibetans are categorised into Yulva (farmers), Drokpa (nomads) and Sama-drok (those engaged in agriculture/animal husbandry). Tibetan culture is unique and is comparable to other great civilisations.

### **PEOPLE AND REGIONS**

The division of Tibet into Inner and Outer Tibet has some colonial history behind it (“Colonial” is in two senses: The Chinese’ gradual colonisation of Amdo and Kham since the nineteenth century; the British colonial policy of dividing Tibet into “Inner Tibet” (Amdo and Kham) which they recognised as being part of the Chinese

spheres of influence and “Outer Tibet” as an autonomous buffer state). This division is controversial not only between China and Tibet but also among the Tibetans themselves. The Chinese have carved out the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) which does not include all areas claimed by Tibetans. Tibetan areas outside TAR are identified as Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and Tibetan Autonomous Counties. In areas outside TAR, a sizeable Tibetan population resides in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan. These areas are also called ethnographic Tibet (see Map 1.1). The Khampas and Amdos are the dominant Buddhist people of these areas. Within China, the 1990 census reported 4.6 million ethnic Tibetans divided between two regions – 46 per cent in the TAR and the rest outside the TAR. The Tibetan Government in Exile maintains that six million Tibetans are in Tibet and 140,000 are exiles – out of whom over 100,000 are in India. The region of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo is also called Cholka-Sum by Tibetans. Historically, Tibetans have distinguished between three major regions of Tibet: U-Tsang (U is central Tibet and Tsang is the region west of

U, with the town of Shigaste as its main centre and the western part of the TAR), Amdo (the Tibetan area of Qinghai and Gansu and the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan), and Kham (Diqing, Ganzi, the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, and the Eastern part of the TAR). For some Tibetans these regional identities are mutually exclusive, similar to ethnic categories. Visitors from eastern Tibet are called Khampa and not Tibetan. The Tibetan language is of the Tibeto-Burmese language family.

Tibetans possess a range of physiological, biochemical, and molecular adaptation to high altitude that are based on genes and heredity. Tibetans possess full spectrum of adaptation, most notably in terms of respiratory, cardiovascular, and nervous adaptation to high altitude, which makes their efficiency, tolerance, quality of life, and all manner of day to day functioning superior to Chinese at the same altitude. Tibetans also do not get altitude related diseases such as acute and chronic mountain sickness or intrauterine growth restrictions of pregnancy.<sup>34</sup>

## **BUDDHISM**

Bon is an ancient religion of Tibet. Now Mahayana Buddhism is predominant, though Bon also exists. Tibetan

Buddhism is also called Vajrayana or Lamaism. As a civilisation Tibetans could also be called Mahayana Tantric Buddhists. Till the mid-twentieth century Tibet was isolated from the Western world because of its difficult terrain.

Broadly, the schools or traditions (some see them as sects) are the Nyigma, Kagyu, Sakyas and Gelugpa. Sects like the Shugden deity have been historically banned. Tsong Kha Pa created the Gelug school in the fifteenth century. Gelugpa, the youngest sect, is also called yellow hat and others as red hat, though only nuanced differences exist. Nyigma and Kagyu schools incline more towards meditation and mysticism, but Gelug school is firmly rooted in debate and scholarship. Kagyu has four main branches – Babrom, Pagdru, Tsalpa and Karma and eight sub branches – Taglung, Trophu, Drukpa, Marstang, Yerpa, Yazang, Shugesh, and Drikung

Tibetans believe in the concept of reincarnation (tulku) for lamas at the top of the hierarchy and for the teachers (rinpoche). The idea of Boddhisatva explains the concept of tulku or reincarnation. It began with Kagyu (Karma sect). It was later followed by Gelugpa and others. The spiritual head reincarnates after dying by leaving clues behind. Some teachers called

<sup>34</sup> Robert Thurman, *Why the Dalai Lama Matters: His Act of Truth as the Solution for China, Tibet, and the World*, New York, Atrai Books, 2008, p.91 and Note 5, p.96

rinpoches (gurus) also reincarnate.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the Karmapa, neither the Dalai nor the Panchen Lamas had the custom of leaving written instructions.<sup>36</sup> Another unique feature from history is that the Seventh Dalai Lama was born before death of the Sixth Dalai Lama. In other words premature and belated birth of reincarnation is possible in Buddhism.<sup>37</sup> This concept of emanation or *madey tulku* has been referred to by the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama as an option.<sup>38</sup>

There are centuries old divisions between traditions, which the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has attempted to remove. Within Gelugpa, there were attempts for geographic division under the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. It was unsuccessfully proposed to separate Tibet into "Back" and "Front", the former incorporating Tsang, which the Panchen Lama would rule, and the latter the area of U, to be ruled by the Dalai Lama. Before the Chinese takeover in the mid-twentieth century, the Gelugpa tradition since the seventeenth century under the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was in power. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama was both the temporal (political) and the spiritual

head, though the areas of Khampas were more independent. Tibetans believe that he is the incarnation of the patron deity of Tibet, Chenrezig (Avalokteshvara).

In terms of hierarchy, the first is the Dalai Lama, followed by the Panchen Lama. Both belong to the Gelugpa tradition. The third is the Karmapa, the head of the Kagyu lineage. Its monastery in exile has been established at Rumtek in Gangtok. This tradition has the black hat.

The Tibetan monastic system had about 10 to 20 per cent of lifelong male celibate monks before the Chinese takeover. In 1951 there were about 25,000 monasteries in Tibet. The largest around Lhasa (Drepung, Serra and Ganden) contained 20,000 monks. Most were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution; some have been rebuilt. Currently there could be over 47,500 officially registered monks and nuns in the TAR.

## BUDDHISM AND PACIFISM

Hindu nationalist ideologues of the early twentieth century may have been

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<sup>35</sup> China asserts it has veto power over all Tibetan Buddhist reincarnation, including the Dalai Lama. In mid- 2007, the State Administration for Religious Affairs announced vide Order Number 5, that it held the sole power to approve any reincarnation. See Tim Johnson, *Tragedy in Crimson: How the Dalai Lama Conquered the World but Lost the Battle with China*, New York, Nation Books, 2011, p.148 and Didi Kirsten Tatlow, " Dalai Lama Keeps Firm Grip on Reins of Succession, *The New York Times* reproduced in *The Asian Age* (Mumbai), October 7, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Isabel Hilton, *The Search for the Panchen Lama*, London, Penguin Books, 2000, p.204.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid p.282.

<sup>38</sup> Tim Johnson, *Tragedy in Crimson: How the Dalai Lama Conquered the World but Lost the Battle with China*, New York, Nation Books, 2011, p.7

responsible for the notion that Buddhism is akin to pacifism.<sup>39</sup> Tibet had been a nation of warriors, even after the spread of Buddhism. Till the seventeenth century there was an intense armed struggle till the Gelugpa became the dominant tradition. There have been times in history when Tibetans conquered China. Trisong Detsen seized Changon (now Xian) and in 1647, the Fifth Dalai Lama sallied forth to Peking to demand that the Ming emperor recognise Tibet's sovereignty and independence, which he did.<sup>40</sup> In 1841 the Chinese-Tibetan forces defeated the Dogras.<sup>41</sup>

The martial prowess of the Khampas is well known.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps this paradox of Buddhism has more to do with the self. Professor K.T.S Saraon, Head of Delhi University's Department of Buddhist Studies has reflected on how collectively Buddhist nations have waged wars and taken to coercion (Japan, Cambodia, Myanmar, etc.), yet among individuals there is the central

concept of Ahinsa and peace.<sup>43</sup> In Sri Lanka, the Buddhist Sinhala defeated the Tamil rebels of LTTE in conventional combat; the monks there had urged the society and state to militarise to solve the problem. There is therefore no evidence of a clear-cut relationship between pacifism and Buddhism.

### INDO-TIBETAN CULTURAL RELATIONS

The harmonious relations between Tibet and India is often described as a Guru-Sisya (teacher-pupil) relationship. Around the seventh and eighth century, the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo sent the scholar Thonmi Sambhota with others to study in India. Based on the *Sharada* script (from Kashmir), with the help of Indian teachers, they created the Tibetan writing system. The Tibetan language basically belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese branch of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic group or family. The spoken language is very diverse in its

<sup>39</sup> Authors such as Savarkar, Golwakar and Bhai Parmanand consider development of Buddhism as the first cause of India's decline because of the sociological implications of Buddhism. Savarkar in *Hinduota* considers the promotion of *ahinsa* (non-violence) and spiritual brotherhood as a major factor for the invasion by the Huns and Shakas, not only because the Hindus lost their martial values but also because they had been taught to consider their enemies as part of the same humanity from a universal point of view. See Christophe Jaffrelot, "The Idea of the Hindu Race in Writings of Hindu Nationalistic Ideologue in the 1920s and 1930s: A Concept between Two Cultures", Chapter 11 in Peter Robb (ed), *Concept of Race in South Asia*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995.

<sup>40</sup> Mohan Guruswamy and Zorawar Daulat Singh, *India-China Relations: The Border Issue*, New Delhi, Viva Books/Observer Research Foundation, 2009, p. 40.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>42</sup> Michel Peissel, *Cavaliers of Kham: The Secret War in Tibet*, London, Heinemann, 1972.

<sup>43</sup> Remarks of Professor K.T.S. Sarao, chairperson of session on "Globalization and Buddhism" at Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature, international seminar on "Buddhism as Peacemakers in Post Modern SAARC", India International Centre, New Delhi, March 5, 2009.

dialects. There is, however, one single written script which gives immense unity to Tibet's literary culture. It is written in a phonetic alphabet that is *Devanagri* derived from the *Brahmi* and *Gupta* scripts of India. In other words, Tibetan grammar originated and developed on the basis of *Sarad lipi*, a Kashmiri script together with the *Devanagri* script of the Hindi alphabet. The Tibetan script therefore has amazing similarities with the *Brahmi* and *Gupta* scripts.

Norbu (2009) shows two extant and powerful myths on the entwined relation with India. First is that Nyatri Tsenpo, who was believed to be an Indian prince, landed on the Lhari Gyangdo Mountain and was found later by a group of villagers in Yurlung. As he spoke no Tibetan, when asked from where had he come from, he pointed to the sky in the direction of India. The meaning of this myth is that the Buddhist revolution was to begin in Tibet and the legitimacy of the king was derived from holy India. The second myth is based on the first encounters with Buddhism that took place in the fourth century AD when two Buddhist texts fell from the skies in the royal palace. The texts were not understood by the king. In the seventh century, evidence indicated that these

texts were *Chintamani Dharni* and *Pang-Koneyama* brought by an Indian Pandit and a Tibetan translator. In both the myths, sky is important in Bonpo and Shamanistic cultures. This shows that besides legitimacy derived from India, Buddhist culture also came to terms with pre-Buddhist culture in Tibet. In classic texts translated into Tibetan, the first line in Tibetan mentions, *Gyakar Kadu* which means "in the language of India" followed by the Sanskrit title in Tibetan alphabet followed by Tibetan translation. In the huge body of literature of religious history called *Choejung*, India has been mentioned first, followed by China and Mongolia. There is a popular prayer in Tibetan: *rgya-gar panchem Bodola fka drin che* (we the people of Tibet owe an immense debt and gratitude to the Maha Pandits of India).<sup>44</sup>

After the Muslim conquest, the cultural relations between India and Tibet came to a halt. By the time the Islamic takeover in India was complete, Mahayana Buddhism was safe in Tibet and Theravada in Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand. During the period of India's freedom movement, there was a belief among Indian intellectuals that Tibet was the repository of lost Indian cultural treasures. Raja Ram Mohun Roy attempted to go to Tibet. In the 1930s

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<sup>44</sup> It must be acknowledged that Indian spiritual masters also owe much to the environment of Tibet for deep meditation and spiritual retreat such as in the regions of Kailash Mansarovar. It has been observed that life of Tibetan peasants was harder than the lives of farmers, herders, tribal people, and nomads in India and Nepal. They lacked anything but the barest necessities, but they were blessed with the wealth that contentment brings. See Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, *At the Eleventh Hour: The Biography of Swami Ram*, Pennsylvania, The Himalayan Institute Press, 2001, p.9 and p.147.

Rahul Sankritayan searched for Sanskrit texts in Tibet. He discovered about 500 Sanskrit Buddhist texts. All the collections are now housed in K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute in Patna.

### INDIAN AYURVEDA AND TIBETAN MEDICINE

Atisa carried with him important medical work *The Heart of Life*. Thus as Mahayana and Tantric Buddhism were transplanted to Tibet so was Indian Ayurvedic medicine. Vijay and Belha (a woman) were the first Indian Buddhists to bring Ayurveda to Tibet in fifth century AD.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Terry Clifford, *The Tibetan Buddhist Medicine and Psychiatry: The Diamond Healing*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1984, reprint 1994, pp.44-52.

# BUDDHISM IN THE HIMALAYAN BELT AND BEYOND

### INTRODUCTION

What is the importance and influence of Buddhism on the Indian Himalayan belt? We can answer this question from many perspectives. As far as influence is concerned, Buddhism as practiced in the region has roots in India. It is practiced in the Indian Himalayan belt in Ladakh, and in border regions of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.<sup>1</sup> In neighbouring countries it is practiced

in Tibet,<sup>2</sup> mountainous regions of Nepal and most of Bhutan.<sup>3</sup> This vast and linear region of harsh terrain, limited resources and carrying capacity has found an ideal location for its practice. As far as importance is concerned it informs India's border relations with its neighbours such as China and the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), other ethnic Chinese region outside the TAR, Nepal and Bhutan. The Tibetan spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> According to 2001 census figures on Buddhism, proportion of Buddhist are 1.1 % in Jammu and Kashmir (1.13 lakhs), 1.2% in Himachal Pradesh (75, 859), 28.1% in Sikkim (1.52 lakhs), 13% in Arunachal Pradesh (1.43 lakhs) and 0.1% in Uttarakhand (12,434). However, the land area is much larger. Ladakh is one third of Jammu and Kashmir. Buddhist border region of Arunachal Pradesh likewise stretches all along the Sino-India border. All are residing in strategic and sensitive border regions.

<sup>2</sup> According to Ministry of Home Affairs *Annual Report 2008-2009*, population of Tibetan refugees in India is 1,10,095. Figures for Tibetans in TAR and other regions of China with Tibetan population in the 2000 Chinese census data is 2.41 lakhs in TAR and 4.5 lakhs in all China. See *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Chinese Culture*, Edward L. Davis (ed.), London/New York, Routledge, 2005. According to exiled Tibetan website, there are 6.1 million Tibetans worldwide which includes 20,000 in Nepal, 1,500 in Bhutan, 3,500 in the USA and Canada, 2000 in Switzerland and a few elsewhere. See <http://www.tibet.com/index.htm> accessed in October 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Nepal has 11% Buddhists in a population of 2.9 crores which is about 29 lakhs, consisting of Gurungs, Tamangs, Sherpas, Newars, and Bhots. Bhutan has a population of 6.8 lakhs with 75% practicing Lamaism Buddhism. See "Socio Economic Indicators" in Ashok K. Behuria (ed.) *Changing Political Context in South Asia: Implications for Regional Security*, New Delhi, IDSA, November 2008, pp.237-272 and Pitambar Sharma, *Unraveling The Mosaic: Spatial Aspects of Ethnicity in Nepal*, Lalitpur, 2008. Bhutan has enduring friendly relations with India including Buddhist connections. See Maj Gen Y.K.Gera (Retd), "Developments in Bhutan," *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India*, Vol.CXXXVII, No.573, July-September 2008, pp.342-350.

leadership in-exile is now lodged in India. In Sino-India relations the Tibet factor, of which Buddhism is an important part, has and will remain crucial. It is important to look at a religion which has for India, all the ingredients of what some political scientists call 'soft power'.

Historically, Indian Buddhist institutions such as Nalanda and Vikramasila were the centres of excellence for propagation of Buddhist ideas. Indian influence and role was pivotal in the establishment of Mahayana Buddhism in Tibet. As an extant spiritual and soft power, this link is too important to be ignored. According to Ladakhi scholar and the former Principal of Central Institute for Buddhist Studies Dr Nawang Tsering:

Students and pilgrims kept rushing to Tibet in quest of learning Buddhist culture and language. They came from all corners of its ethnic regions of Mongolia, Bhutan, Nepal and the Indian Himalayan states for higher studies until middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when Tibet lost its independence in 1959. The upheaval in Tibet proved cultural setback not only for the Tibetans but also among its traditional cultural satellite regions and ethnic groups. Fortunately, the Tibetans received whole edifice of the Indian culture in general and Buddhism in particular before Buddhism disappeared from India in

12<sup>th</sup> century. In the same manner, the people of Indian Himalayan states received complete culture from Tibet before the Chinese Red Guards' destructive Cultural Revolution in 1960s.<sup>4</sup>

Two events lead to near extinction of Buddhism from the plains of India. One account as given by Hiuen Tsang (Xuanzang) showed Buddhist crusades of Kumarila and Sankaracharya in the eighth century were potent factors in rendering Buddhism unpopular. The final blow was delivered by Muslim invaders. Muhammad Bakhtiar Khalji at the end of the twelfth century, destroyed Buddhist religious infrastructure such as Nalanda. According to author Shashi Tharoor, Nalanda was destroyed three times by invaders, but only rebuilt twice. The first time was when the Huns under Mihirakula laid waste to the campus during the reign of Skandagupta (455-67CE), when Nalanda was only a few decades old. Skanda's successors rebuilt it. The second destruction came a century and a half later, with an assault by the Gaudas in early seventh century. This time the great Hindu king Harshavardhana (606-48) restored the Buddhist university. Nearly 800 years after its founding, Nalanda was destroyed a third time and burned by Turkish Muslim invaders under Bakhtiar Khilji in 1197. This time there was no reconstruction.

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<sup>4</sup> Dr Nawang Tsering, "Why Bhoti Should be in the Eighth Schedule", *Border Affairs*, April-June 2007, p16.

However, the knowledge and literature of Buddhism, rather than being available in India, was preserved or we may even say, got ingrained and further developed in Tibet before it got eliminated in India.<sup>5</sup>

The pendulum so to speak swung back. In mid-twentieth century, when the People's Republic of China (PRC) took over Tibet, that very knowledge pool came back to India with the Tibetan exiles. There is a need to revisit the aspect of how religious wisdom originating from India is now virtually lodged back in India with the Tibetans in exile.

Besides, in recent times, a new trend is emerging with international dimensions: more and more Westerners and people across continents are also getting attracted to Tibetan Buddhism. It is getting truly globalised. What is unique is that India is now at the stage where it can facilitate the consolidation of this great religion. That which was born in India, and its Mahayana version in the Himalayan belt including Tibet, was the result of the hard work and influence of Indian monks, philosophers and travelers in the past such as Nagarjuna, Santaraksita, Padmasambhava, Kamalsila, Atisha Dipankara, Tilopa, Naropa and others. It must be acknowledged that the Indian state in the present times has given all the

possible support to preserve Buddhism. There is a new momentum. Institutes as centres of learning and preservation of the Buddhist culture exist in the Himalayas like the The Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Ladakh, in the west, the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok and Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies in Arunachal Pradesh in the east. In mainland India in the plains, many universities have departments of Buddhist studies. The Varanasi based Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS) envisioned by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in consultation with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, was established in 1967 with a view to educate the youth of Tibet and Himalayan border students of India. It is now an autonomous body under the Department of Culture, Ministry of Education, Government of India. The institute is achieving its goal of excellence in the field of Tibetology, Buddhology and Himalayan Studies. Another university of repute is the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University at Varanasi. A synergy exists with other seats of learning set up or under consideration by the Tibetans in India. The new Nalanda university planned will also provide momentum.

It may be admitted that unlike the PRC which according to some accounts is "fast assuming the leadership role of the Buddhist world"<sup>6</sup> no long-term

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<sup>5</sup> Suniti Kumar Pathak, *The Indian Nitisastras in Tibet*, Delhi, Motilal Banarasidas, 1974. Likewise, after expulsion from India, like Mahayana Buddhism in Tibet, in Sri Lanka Theravada Buddhism has flourished.

<sup>6</sup> P. Stobdam, "Chinese Checkers", IDSA web commentary of June 13, 2008.

strategic thought has been given to India nurturing and then using this spiritual and cultural power to its advantage. In the Indian context both the state and society have to play a mutually supportive role. The state needs to facilitate the religious practices and make institutions that benefit the minority community besides suitable economic development. At the same time the people in the so-called periphery have to be willing partners in nation building. This willingness is contingent on both top down policies by the state and bottom up people's participation.

With capitalism, it is possible that there may be a strong revival of religion in China. Tibetan Buddhism already exists in the region. Will the PRC encourage spread of Buddhism and religious freedom? It is very unlikely. Thus to recapitulate the roots of this religion, seeing how it is being practised in present times, both by Tibetans and Indians as well as other nationalities in the strategic Himalayan borderlands, may give us fresh insights on a soft power which we need to nurture.

Four regions have been covered as a sample case for study—Ladakh, Gangtok, Siang region of Arunachal Pradesh and Kameng and Tawang. Seats of Learning at Dehradun in Uttarakhand and Dharamsala in

Himachal Pradesh are two samples covered.

## **PART I: LADAKH**

### **General Information on Ladakh.**

Ladakh has an area of 97,000 kms with an approximate population of 2,22,000. Languages spoken are Ladakhi, Balti, Shina, Brokskat, Changsktat. Written languages are Tibetan (Bodhi) and Urdu. People of Tibeto-Mongol, Dard, and Tibetan- Drad (Aryan) ethnicity reside here.

It needs to be noted that Buddhism first came to Ladakh via Kashmir in the first century AD well before it had reached Tibet. Later with conversion of Kashmir to Islam and expulsion of Buddhism from India it spread to Tibet. Tibet in turn under the influence of Indian monks, sages and the university system of Nalanda and the like, adopted Buddhism. Tibet became the centre of the faith. In a survey in 2004, in seven monasteries in Ladakh there were 96 elderly monks who had been to various monasteries in Tibet before the take over by the Chinese.<sup>7</sup>

### **Monasteries**

Ladakh has about 37 monasteries of different sects spread out in the Leh Valley along the Indus from the international border till short of Kargil, Zaskar region, Nubra valley and

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<sup>7</sup> Sonam Joldan, "Traditional ties between Ladakh and Buddhist Tibet: Monastic organization and monastic education as a sustaining factor", *The Tibetan Journal*, Vol.XXXI, No.2, Summer 2006.

Chushul region. In Leh valley and Durbok, broadly speaking, there are four sects with representative monasteries as under<sup>8</sup>:

- (a) **Nyingma.** The oldest sect started by Padmasambhava. Thak Thog monastery is the only type in Ladakh in Shakti Village between Karu to Changla.
- (b) **Kagyupa.** In Ladakh it has two prominent sub-sects. The Changpa nomads of Durbok follow the Dri-Gungpa sect and those of Nyoma block follow Drug-pa sect. In Ladakh, the monasteries under the sub-sects are:
  - (i) **Dri-Gungpa.** Lamayaru, Phiyang, Shachukul.
  - (ii) **Drug-Pa.** Hanle, Hemis, Chemrey, Stakna.
- (c) **Saskya-Pa.** Matho monastery.
- (d) **Gelupka.** Spituk, Thikse, Likir.

Besides monasteries at Alchi, Lamayrau, Wanle, Mong-gyu and Sumda which have originated due to the influence of the great translator Rinchen Zangpo have now come under the influence of the Gelukpa order.

It must be appreciated that with the influx of foreign tourists and devotees, the ambience is of a very high spiritual order. What was striking was that the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's photograph was found

in all traditions. He had also inaugurated new additions in some monasteries and had visited nearly all of them.

### **Hierarchy and Organisation of Monasteries**

#### **History of Rivalry between Sects.**

During the times of the Fifth Dalai Lama the yellow hat of the Gelukpa monastic sect (the youngest) sect had been on the ascent in Tibet. On the other hand its rival Drug Pa sect was receiving royal patronage in Ladakh and Bhutan. This created tension between Tibet on the one hand and Ladakh and Bhutan on the other. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Tibet attacked Bhutan, and was beaten back. The king of Leh protested. The Dalai Lama sent his army (of Mongols troops) to subdue Ladakh in 1679 and 1680 leading to the siege of Basgo for three years, even forcing the Ladakhis to invite the Kashmir based Mughals. Later Tibet sent a high ranking Drug-Pa monk for talks. This resulted in the treaty of Tingmosgang of 1684. It was this treaty that drew borders between Ladakh and Tibet (and between India and China). Guge was wrested from Ladakh and Pangong Lake got partitioned between Ladakh and Tibet. The Drug Pa lama also extracted an assurance from the king that the rival Ge Lugs Pa sect would receive more or less equal treatment in Ladakh.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Zaskar and Nubra are not included here as they could not be visited by the authors.

<sup>9</sup> Parvez Dewan, IAS, *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh*, New Delhi, Manas Publications, 2004, pp.72-73. The author was Commissioner of Ladakh and has good knowledge of the area having served in the region including Zaskar.

This piece of history in no case shows any rivalry or animosity today. We have not found in our research any divide between the traditions. This is important, as in religious affairs, one has seen how societies, nations and people get divided as in Islam (Shia-Sunni), or in Christianity (Roman Catholics- Protestants and other variations).

### **Hemis, Stakna and Chemrey (Kagyud Drugpa Sect)**

**Hemis.** Hemis Monastery situated about 50 kms from Leh is the biggest monastery of the Drukpa Kargyu School of the Great Mahayana Culture. The Kargyu Order was founded by Gampopa in the twelfth century. His master was the singing yogi Milarepa. The monastery was founded by H.H. Tagtshang Respa Ngawang Gytso (Head of Ladakh) in 1630 under the patronage of King Sengye Namgyal. The monastery has about 350 monks. It has branch monasteries in over 50 villages all over Ladakh. His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa Rinpoche, The Twelfth Gyalawang Drukpa is the supreme head of this gumpa. He was born at Rewalsar in north India in 1963. A few years earlier in 1960, the Eleventh Gyalwang Drukpa had passed away at the age of 30 in a refugee camp in Buxa, West Bengal, after an arduous escape from Tibet on foot. Six years of search for the grand lama's reincarnation, aided by rites and rituals performed at the suggestion of Their Holiness the Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Karmapa, Dudjom Rinpoche and Sakya Trichen, the four year old Drukpa was found in Dalhousie, India. He was formally

enthroned by HH the Dalai Lama in 1966 in Dharamsala, India and then in 1967 at his own sect's Dotsok Monastery in Darjeeling, West Bengal. In 1974 the people of Ladakh invited Gyalwang Drukpa to come to Ladakh and bless Hemis monastery and its branches. He later went to Ladakh every summer. In 1980 he performed special rites before a gathering of 23,000 people. He spent seven years in Ladakh including one year in solitary meditation retreat. HH, the Twelfth Gyalwang Drukpa is now responsible for numerous Drukpa Kargyu monasteries in the Himalayan region as well as Dharma centres around the world, most notably in France, England, Taiwan, America and Australia. Principal monastic seat in Darjeeling, West Bengal called Sangngak Choling was founded by the late Venerable Thuksya Rinpoche, the teacher.

### **The Teacher Tradition**

Drukpa Thuksay Rinpoche, the teacher of the Twelfth Gyalwang Drukpa was born in 1916. He died in 1983. His tulku (reincarnation) was born in March 10, 1986 in Ladakh. In July 1987 HH the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the Twelfth Gyalwang Drukpa went together to Gyalwa Gotsangpa's cave near Hemis in Ladakh and authenticated the reincarnation.

**Stakna-** This monastery which is 25 kms from Leh traces its lineage to one of the eight minor branches of Buddhism in Tibet named Lingres Kagyud. It was possibly built by Chos-rje-rMug-nZin (*pronounced* Choje Mugzin) in 1590. During the reign of Chosgyal Sengay Namgyal, the then king of Ladakh and

Lama Zabs, Drung Ngawang Namgyal, who was spiritual and political Lama of Bhutan, became the patron priest. Stakna monastery holds the doctrine of Bhutan. Many Lamas came to Stakna as Seat-Holders and regents since 1590. The Twentyfirst who is listed in the handbook is His Eminence Ngawang Dhonyod Jigdel Dorjey. The monastery has a newly built museum and excellent paintings done by a local artist of national repute from Nimu who was awarded the Padma Shri.<sup>10</sup> The brochure has a message from Rev. Kushok Thiksey (Nawang Chamba Stanzin) Ex- MP Rajya Sabha in which he has noted the need to preserve and promote the valued ancient Tibetan cultural heritage and tradition. He further mentions that under the patronage of H.E. Stanka Rinpoche, the Stakna museum's preservation of Buddhist Thanka and religious artifacts will enable better understanding of Buddha Dharma and the Himalayan cultural values to foreign visitors and those seeking deeper comprehension of the Drukpa lineage.

**Chemrey** - This is also a monastery of splendid grandeur in Shakti village. This is the most important branch of Hemis monastery across the Indus. What is striking is the photo of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in the location.

### **Phyang and Shachukul (Kagyupa, Drigung- Pa Sect)**

**Phyang (Gang-ngon Tashi Choszung)**  
-The Drikung Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism started with Buddha

Vajradhara, the India scholar Tilopa and Naropa. Marpa, Naropa's disciple, translated the Kagyu teaching into Tibetan and transmitted then to Milarepa (1079- 1153), who transmitted them to Gampopa (1079- 1170), whose lineage was continued by Phagmodrupa (1111-1170). Phagmodrupa's intimate disciple, Lord Jigten Sumgon (1143-1217), the reincarnation of Nagarjuna, founded Drikung Thil Monastery in 1179. It became the main seat of the Drikung Kagyu order. From Jigten Sumgon, the lineage of Drikung Kagyu has been unbrokenly transmitted.

Currently, the continuation of the Drikung Kagu lineage is jointly headed by their Holiness the Thirty sixth Drikung Kyabgon Chungtsang Rinpoche (1942-) in Tibet, and the Thirtyseventh Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche (1946-) in India. 500 years ago, Phyang monastery was founded by Chole Denma Kunga Drakpa from Mount Kailash area in Tibet, during the reign of Ladakhi king Tashi Namgyal. Its monastic community is headed by His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche and is overseen by His Eminence Choje Tokden Rinpoche and other officials. Phyang monastery is registered under the Jammu and Kashmir Society Registration Act-VI of 1998. It holds ancient holy Buddhist images and murals. It is home to a 100 resident monks. The monastery undertakes

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<sup>10</sup> Shri Tsering Wangdu. See *The Hindu, Metroplus*, September 10, 2009.

world tours (Europe, Asia and the US) of Vajra Mask Dances in cooperation with Swedish Tibetan Society for School and Culture in Europe with the aim of uplifting the monastery's trust to build its temple and hostels for the 100 monks. A Ratnashri School has also been founded to provide the younger monks with Buddhist and modern education. Monks study Tibetan, English, Hindi, mathematics and the monastery's ritualistic prayers. Prominent signposting has been done in a vast area next to the monastery for an upcoming Drikung Institute under aegis of Drikung Dharma.

**Shachukul Monastery-** In 1217, H.H. Chenga Sherup Jumney Rinpoche arrived from Tibet with monks of the Kagyupa sect. They concentrated at Shichukul Gonpa. During the previous incarnation of HH Tokden Rinpoche who was born in the royal family of Ladakh at Tog village, Shichukul Gompa further developed. It also got separated from Leh monasteries and all annual religious functions have been regularly held at the present location independently. In the present incarnation HH Togden Rinpoche at Durbok got further support and in 1996 the new building was constructed. To further bring the Gompa into prominence, HH The Dalai Lama graced Shichukul in 2001 with his auspicious presence. He inaugurated the new campus. Photographs of the Dalai Lama are displayed there.

**Matho (Saskya-Pa)-** This is the only establishment in Ladakh which follows the Saskya-pa order, one of the Red Hat sects to be found in Tibet. The monastery is situated on a hill in a

lateral ravine of Stok-Kangri range across the Indus, some 26 kms east of Leh. Matho monastery was established in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century by the Tibetan Sakya scholar Dorje Palsang who decided to build a monastery for the benefit of the local community. The land was given by the king of Ladakh, Dragpa Bumde, who recognized his meditative ability and saintliness and donated a large amount of land. In the sixteenth century, invading Muslims almost destroyed the monastery and imprisoned the king. Later, the king was released and another Sakya Lama, Chokyi Lodo, took charge of the monastery, renovating and restoring its activities. Previously, all monks of Matho monastery would travel to Sakya and Ngor in Tibet to study Buddhist scriptures and tradition, thereafter returning to Ladakh to practice. In this way, rituals and prayers which are conducted at the monastery have preserved an unbroken link with old Tibetan religious tradition. It now contains an old and new temple, a special shrine housing the entire Buddhist canon, a shrine in honour of the Lamdre lineage of Lamas and two shrines which house the Protectors of the Dharma. It has a Sakya Pandita library with Kanjur and Thangjur scriptures.

**Thak Thog (Nyimgma)-** This is the only Nyigma sect monastery in Ladakh in village Sakti, about 45 kms from Leh, founded in the late sixteenth century. The sect was founded by Padmasambhava, the Indian sage from Swat. It has an old cave and a new complex nearby. It has treasures such as the "The Five Pegs Advanced Course

Of the Northern Treasure : A Northern Treasure Preliminary Practice" discovered by Rigdzin Godden. It mentions that without the unsurpassed kindness and generosity of his Holiness Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche the project could not have taken shape. It further mentions that "As the throneholder of Dorje Drak monastery in Tibet, His Holiness is the head of the Northern Treasure Nyigma lineage. Born 1926 in Central Tibet, he received his first ordination at Taklung Tse Monastery together with the title and enthronement of tulku at five years of age. After escaping to India in 1959, HH found the new Dorje Drak monastic seat in Simla, to preserve, foster and expand the teaching of the Jang Ter lineage". A lay person has to be conscious and sensitive to realize that the teachings are highly evolved and esoteric. Only the initiated may be able to understand it.

### **Thikse, Likir and Alchi (Gelugpa)**

**Thikse-** On the main axis on the road from Leh to Karu , this is probably the most visited monastery both by foreigners and increasingly Indian visitors. It was founded about 550 years ago on the site of an earlier Kadma-pa establishment. Today it is major Geluks-pa monastery with about 100 lamas. The information official Tenzing Dhondup at "Thiksey Cultural and Welfare Society" is a Tibetan. It has now added a museum, a tea shop and medical facilities looked after by a doctor (amchi).

**Likir-** It has a new massive statue of the Buddha in the open. It is the first of its kind in Ladakh.

**Alchi-** Though founded by Rinchen Zangpo (whose walking stick is still preserved there) , it was taken over by Gelukpa order. It has the Sumrstek/Alchi Chhoskhor Temple, Lotsa temple and Manushri temple. It has both Ladakhi and Buddhist artifacts being displayed for the Ladakh festival including archery competition.

**Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre, Choglamsar-** This is a new centre set up by a former Ladakh Scout soldier Bhuikku Sangasena in 1986 who chose monkhood. It has an impressive campus with most of the young employees from Ladakh. It is an NGO called Devachan. It has a resident school that conducts meditation courses. Its community is of about 400 children, senior citizens, monks, nuns, visually impaired children and has visitors from all over the world. It also has Ladakhi cultural programmes.

This centre is a new variation in Thervada Buddhist practice in Ladakh and has opened up the religion to the common man as an NGO of charity, inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue. It has great potential to strengthen the religious practices of the people of Ladakh. Like ashrams at Pondicherry or Vipasana centres in India, it may better serve the rich and the rapidly urbanizing Ladakh and India which may look towards Buddhism for solace. However, it, like others has charity also included.

### **Interaction with Dr Nawang Tsering, Principal Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Choglamsar**

The Central Institute of Buddhist

Studies (CIBS), Choglamsar is now in its new sprawling campus. The Principal Dr Nawang Tsering<sup>11</sup> is a regular contributor to the journal *Border Affairs* on issues of Bhoti language and the trans Himalayan nature of Buddhism. The institute is impressive and is propagating Buddhist religion, art and culture in a good way. The institute is under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. In January 2009 an exhibition was held at the National Museum at Delhi which also was held at Mumbai later. Overall there may be about 1400 lamas in schools in Ladakh. At the CIBS, out of 600 student population 50% are lamas. There is a post graduate course for two years and under graduate course for three years. Languages taught are Hindi, Sanskrit, and Bhot. There are five vidyas viz., Vinaya Vidya, Apidharam Vidya, Pramara Vidya, Prakshparimit Vidya and Madhaymika Vidya. The difference of Nalanda School with that of Pali Buddhism as practiced in Sri Lanka (Thervada) is that the last three Vidayas are not included in Thervada. First two are common.

The gist of points and his views that emerged are:

- (a) There is no impact on Ladakhi society of politics related to Karmapa.
- (b) Inter-marriage between Tibetans and Ladakhis have not been successful and has led to divorces. However, nomads like Changpas of

Changthang who live both in Ladakh and Tibet have marriage relations with nomads of Ladakh.

- (c) It is unlikely that Tibetan refugees will be a security threat. In life things take their own course.
- (d) The selection of the Dalai lama is also in a way a democratic process. As regards post- Dalai Lama scenario, there is lot of flexibility. We must remember Buddhism has survived since the ancient times of Kushans and will do so in the future.
- (e) Tibetan language is Bhoti.
- (f) The Dalai Lama is right when he says Ladakh looked up to Tibet, Tibet looked up to India. It's a full circle. One has to see the relationship in that context. Tibet, let there be no doubt, was the repository of all knowledge. India lost it all. That knowledge went to Tibet and got further improved.
- (g) As regards the "craze" of this religion by foreigners, all I have to say is this trend is not encouraged at CIBS. They have their own waves of fads. A few years ago it was Zen Buddhism. Then was Pali and now it is Tibetan Buddhism. This is shallow. Roots are important.
- (h) Historically we need to understand that it is the "Nalanda System of Religion" that informs Buddhism in these parts. Though former

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<sup>11</sup> Since retired. This interaction is of 2008.

President Abdul Kalam is in the top echelons of the management of the forthcoming university he has no deep knowledge about Buddhism and its nuances. The climate, terrain and environment has to be conducive for Buddhism. People must be living and practising it. In the plains the impact and influence gets diluted. The best place for a centre of this knowledge is Ladakh. Further, we need to have practitioners to have Nalanda school fully operational. Though both faith and academic knowledge have their roles, absence of practitioners is a key issue.

- (i) The Principal gave a copy of their latest journal which had an article on how they had received from Baltistan a Tibetan primer which traces the old glorious traditions of the Tibetan language. The dialect used by the Baltis and Ladakhis is closer to Tibetan classic texts rather than the dialect used by the Tibetans in Tibet. When a Ladakhi meets a Balti, they converse comfortably. When a Ladakhi meets a Tibetan, he needs an interpreter. Cultural fluctuations (Islamisation of Baltistan) must not come in the way of learning a Tibetan script/language.

### **Future**

It is with the tolerant and evolved Buddhist practices that the people of

Ladakh are prospering. Unlike the unresolved land reform issues in mainland plains of India, Buddhist practices of people encourage them to willingly contribute to monasteries. This is fundamental in understanding the influence of Buddhism. After partition, while getting rid of the zamindari system, the powers that be, also thought fit to implement it in Ladakh. The people agitated. The Wazir Committee was formed which underlined the role of monasteries and how people willingly contribute their produce.<sup>12</sup> Such lessons should not be forgotten and one-fits-all solutions by policy makers may create more problems. Now there is a need to be sensitive to the changes being brought about by economic growth. Changes are bound to impact also the way Buddhist practices relate to nature.

Economic prosperity has also led to greater awareness and modern education. The new set of Ladakhi intellectuals are now helping Ladakh to develop and realize its potential. One can sense the emergence of a Ladakhi identity which may no longer consider the past Hindu Dogra rule or the dominance of Tibetan Buddhism as central.

## **PART II - SIKKIM**

### **General Information on Gangtok (Sikkim)**

Sikkim became the twenty second state of India in 1975. The 2001 census placed

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<sup>12</sup> R.S. Mann, *Ladakh Then and Now*, New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2002, p.294.

its population at 5.40 lakhs. It has now been made one of the eight states of North East India. It has a majority of Indians of Nepalese descent (70% mostly Hindus) with Bhutia (mostly in north Sikkim – Lachenpas and Lachungpas 16%) and Lepchas (14% who are followers of the Nyingma tradition) making up the balance.<sup>13</sup>

Though Sikkim may not be a Buddhist majority state, its culture and ethos, more so in the border regions, is closely integrated with Mahayana Buddhism.

### **Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (NIT)**

The importance of Buddhism in Gangtok gets further fortified by institutes such as the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. The NIT is envisioned as a storehouse of collective wisdom of all sects of Mahayana Buddhism. It was established during the reign of Chogyal Tashi Namgyal. Its foundation stone was laid by HH the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in 1957. It brings out *The Bulletin of Tibetology* bi-annually. Nearby are the Do-Drul Chorten, built in 1948, and the Sikkim Institute of Higher Nyigma Studies (affiliated to Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi), where young men imbibe teaching of the

Nyingmapa tradition of Buddhism and acquire various degrees like Madhyamika, Shastri and Acharya.

The Golden Jubilee Conference of the NIT, Gangtok, Sikkim was held from 1 to 5 October 2008 with the title *Buddhist Himalayas: Studies in Religion, History and Culture*. Undoubtedly, the NIT is emerging as an international nodal point on Tibetology and related studies. This will be in consonance with the *North Eastern Vision Document*<sup>14</sup> which suggests that Sikkim can be developed as a hub linking other Buddhist destinations in Nepal, Bhutan, TAR, and Tawang to a pan-regional Buddhist circuit.

### **Absence of Indian Experts**

What is apparent is, more than Indian scholars, we found European/Western scholars who had devoted their life to the study of religion and culture of this region. An authority in Lepcha script is not a Sikkimese or from any other part of India but the Danish Dr Heleen Plaisier of Leiden University, who leads in this surge in Lepcha studies.<sup>15</sup> Likewise New Zealander Prof Tony Huber, Professor of Tibetan Studies of Humboldt University, Berlin is an authority on the language group of

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<sup>13</sup> P.N. Chopra, *Sikkim*, New Delhi, S. Chand and Co. Ltd, 1972, Reprint 1985, p.45. According to late Tashi Topden extant colonial data of gazetteer on Sikkim is inaccurate. See Tashi Topden, "History and the Loss of Sikkimese Culture" paper presented in the Golden Jubilee Conference of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology in October 2008, Gangtok, Sikkim on *Buddhist Himalayas: Studies in Religion, History and Culture* (forthcoming).

<sup>14</sup> *North Eastern Region: Vision 2020*, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, May 2008, pp.131-132.

<sup>15</sup> See "Contribution to Lepcha Studies", *Bulletin of Tibetology*, Volume 43, No.1 and 2, 2007.

Kameng region.<sup>16</sup> Alex McKay is an Indo-Tibetan Historian of repute.

It is clear that the human resource to undertake studies of the region is not available, barring a few. This has been elaborated further at Appendix C on the upcoming Nalanda International University.

### **Division Within and Among Traditions**

Without a mention of Rumtek, the survey is incomplete. This monastery of Tibetans-in-exile near Gangtok was in the media highlights when the teenaged Seventeenth Karmapa Ogyun Thrinley Dorje fled to India from China in 2000.<sup>17</sup> He was endorsed as a reincarnation (tulku) by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama after the death of the sixteenth Karmapa in Chicago in 1981 and also by the PRC. Regents looked after the baby boy till he was grown up. Thus by 2000 or so the problem came to public scrutiny. India gave formal permission to him to be registered as a Tibetan refugee. There is also a rival

candidate. The rival camp within the sect had installed their own Seventeenth Karmapa named Thrinley Thaye Dorje. When interacting with the monastery information office, it was mentioned that there is even a third claimant. The Dalai Lama's endorsement, however, is generally final.<sup>18</sup>

Rumtek monastery is the repository of precious gold, ashes of the famous and respected sixteenth Karmapa with his distinctive black hat. As regards the Karmapa and his tradition, most analysts who wrote in the New Delhi-based media when the Karmapa escaped to India in 2000 considered that this controversy involves a security risk, as people of Sikkim will be affected because they follow this sect. However, most Sikkimese are followers of the Nyingma tradition. What security impact the Karmapa struggle will have thus may not be that serious for the locals. Interaction with Principal of the CIBS at Ladakh also revealed that in Ladakh there is no impact on the society

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<sup>16</sup> Tony Huber in 2008 was getting ready with one year research permit to work in the Subansi region of Arunachal Pradesh. On being asked by the audience as to why foreigners lead in regional studies by field work such as in the Himalayas, he wittily replied that Indian academics are "Brahmanical" and do not relish to rub shoulders in the wild with tribals.

<sup>17</sup> Anil Mahaeshwari, *The Buddha Cries!: Karmapa Conundrum*, New Delhi, UBS Publishers, Second Reprint, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> The rival candidate is being supported by Shamar Rinpoche. This rivalry has a history. When the Sixth Panchen Lama died in China of small pox there was a dispute over the treasure given by the Qing emperor. Panchen Lama's brother, Chumba refused to share it with his other brother, the Kagyu Lama called Shamar. Shamar was enraged and fled to Nepal, where he incited the Gurkhas to invade Tibet. See Isabel Hilton, *The Search for the Panchen Lama*, London, Penguin Books, 2000, p.60.

in Ladakh of politics related to the Karmapa.<sup>19</sup>

In the larger study of Buddhism in the Indian Himalayan belt, perhaps one answer which lays to rest concerns for the extant continuation and resilience of Buddhism was provided by the Principal, CIBS when posed this question. He answered that it needs to be remembered that Buddhism has survived since ancient times of Kushan and will continue to do so.

### **PART III- SIANG REGION OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH<sup>20</sup>**

#### **Peopling of the Region**

Arunachal Pradesh is home to 26 major tribes scattered in 3,649 villages. Population of the state in 2001 census was about one million with population of upper Siang over 33 thousand (the ratio of scheduled tribe to general category is 78% : 22%). Broadly, the entire population in the Siang region (consisting of three districts of East, West and Upper Siang) bordering Bhutan could be divided in two groups based on their socio-political-religious affinities.

The first are the Adis who reside in the middle belt. They worship and

recognize Donyi (Sun) and Polo (Moon) or Donyi-poloism. The second group is that of the Buddhists like the Khambas and Membas who like other Buddhist communities of the Indian Himalayas live near the border with Tibet. To maintain their Buddhist connections, children from these regions get educated in schools and institutes of Mahayana Buddhism all over India.

### **PART IV- WEST KAMENG AND TAWANG DISTRICTS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

In this region if the second half of the twentieth century was a period of military build up and war with China in 1962, early twenty-first century history is centered around the consolidation of Buddhism with an Indian touch. This is borne out by the institutions, and cultural and religious infrastructure.

#### **Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies (CIHCS)**

The CIHCS at Dahung was established in 2003 under the Ministry of Culture and is affiliated to Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (SSU), Varanasi. It has about 130 students from all over India. It starts from class 9 onwards. It

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<sup>19</sup> According to media reports of 2008, the Indian government had not allowed the Seventeenth Karmapa Ogyun Thrinley Dorje to visit Tibetan-Buddhist dominated areas close to the border of TAR due to the sensitive nature of the issue. However, in September 2008 he did visit Leh (Ladakh) and due to heavy snowfall was even rescued by military helicopters on the Upshi Manali axis beyond Barlachla pass. He is presently in his temporary abode at his monastery at Sidhbari near Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh. Recent events (2011) regarding the Karmapa are included in the epilogue.

<sup>20</sup> Entry to the state by Indian nationals is governed by the Inner line Regulations. Other states having the inner line regulation are Nagaland and Mizoram. Foreigners have to obtain restricted area permits.

is a landmark institute and has a bright future. What is important is that it has highly motivated and dedicated Indian teachers hailing from all over the Himalayan belt including Tibetans as well as teachers from the Indo-Gangetic plains of the Hindi belt. Its dynamic principal Shri Geshe Ngawang Tashi Bapu (Lama Tashi), was born in Kameng District and had his Buddhist education in Karnataka in the Tibetan establishment located at Drepung Loseling Monastery at Mundgod, Karnataka (Photo-1). He is also former Principal Chant Master of the Dalai Lama's Drepung Loseling Monastery in India—one of the largest Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in the world, with over 3,000 monks. He has traveled extensively throughout the world, teaching, performing, and recording with monks from his Monastery. He was nominated for a Grammy Award for his path-breaking Tibetan chants in 2006 (available in CD, Tibetan Master Chants, Lama Tashi, P&C Spirit Music, Inc, 2004).

The CIHCS is an appropriate institution for preserving the culture. With a high level of leadership and devotion, the experiment has lots of potential. Rapid changes in society need to be balanced with both scientific and religious education. Institutes such as these are the future of the region. Unlike public schools for the rich and the elite where boys and girls are prepared to serve the urban world of service, industry, business and commerce—this Institute

will serve the poorer sections of the Buddhist Himalayas. In doing so, it will also have to chart a difficult course which now lies before us due to urbanization, modernization and all sorts of raised expectations. How much of negatives it rejects and how much of positives of progress it absorbs is now the new challenge.

### **Monasteries**

Upper Bomdila monastery (Photo-2) was earlier in Tsona (now in Tibet) and has an Indian citizen as its head. The present head, HE the Thirteenth Tsona Gontse Rinpoche, a former Congress MLA, who is leading the issue of granting the region 'Monyul', an autonomous status as in Ladakh. He has followers spanning India and Tibet. Unlike the general impression that only Tibetans are at the top of the hierarchy, Indian citizens from Kameng region are the top clergy. Today gompas in Upper Bomdila and Tawang are headed by Indians.

### **Civil – Military Relations in Tawang Region**

Tawang Maitreya Diwas is organised by the Indian Army, District Administration and YUVA (NGO) at Tawang on a regular annual basis (Photo-3). It is an important annual event in fostering a good rapport and is much liked by the locals. It is also very useful for the military who can understand better the local culture and Buddhism. This event is followed by Buddha Mahotsav around November.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The eighth Festival was held in early November 2008 which was attended by the Indian External Affairs Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee. See [http://www.outlookindia.com/pti\\_print.asp?id=631281](http://www.outlookindia.com/pti_print.asp?id=631281) accessed on 13 November 2008.

### **Tawang War Memorial**

This 1962 war memorial is impressive and a tourist attraction. The memorial is built as a traditional chorten on Buddhist lines. It was personally anointed by HH the Dalai Lama in 1998. This bonding of the Indian Military with the Dalai Lama has a great significance for the people of Tawang, Buddhism and the military. The military needs to be complimented in being sensitive to the culture. A number of war memorials have come up in the former NEFA battle zone and are aesthetically based on the Buddhist concept of chorten.<sup>22</sup>

### **Part V - A New Seat of Learning at Dehradun, in the State of Uttarakhand<sup>23</sup>**

Songsten Library, Centre for Tibetan & Himalayan Studies, has been opened since 2003 at Sehestradhara, Dehradun, in the State of Uttarkhand (Photo-4). It is headed by Dr Tashi Samphel from Ladakh, Director of the Library. The institute is recognized by Garhwal University, Srinagar as a Research and Resource Centre. It has courses in Tibetan language, traditional medicinal training and will soon have Department of Buddhist Studies. The library collection has rare Tibetan and Himalayan manuscripts including

collections of publications on the Dun Huang documents of Central Asian culture, history, literature, law, astrology and medicine. The library has multi-lingual Buddhist Kagyur and Tengyur, the Bon Kagyur and many commentaries of the four major sects of Tibetan Buddhism. The institute is bound to grow and prosper. The management hopes that it will also attract foreign scholars. Nearby is Drikung Kagyu Institute which under the Ladakhi Abbot and Principal Khenpo K. Rangdal imparts rigorous monk training to young boys (Photo-5).

### **Part VI - College for Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarah, Dharamsala<sup>24</sup>**

The Institute of Buddhist Dialects was founded in 1973. Besides Gelugpa it also includes other traditions such as Nyigma, Kagyud and Skaya Schools. With the initial aim to train Tibetan language teachers, in 1991 the College for Higher Tibetan Studies (CHTS) was established. It is now located about 7 km away at a lower altitude than Dharamsala and beyond a tea estate near the village of Sarah. Inaugurated in 1998, the college is a branch institute of Buddhist Dialectics at Dharamsala. It was founded to promote the broadest

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<sup>22</sup> 28 Infantry Division of the Indian Army has the Buddhist symbol of Vajra as its formation sign.

<sup>23</sup> The institute was visited by P.K. Gautam in December 2010.

<sup>24</sup> P.K. Gautam thanks Prof Garbiel Lafittle from Australia and Ms Jampa Chenzon of Environment and Development Desk in suggesting a visit to Sarah in November 2010. The Tibetans have established centres and institutes to preserve various aspects of their culture in Dharamsala. The Norbulingka Institute preserves and continues to teach ancient Tibetan art. Tibetan Institute of Performing Art (TIPA) preserves song, dance, drama and such activities. The Tibetan Medicinal & Astrological Institute of His Highness, the Dalai Lama (*Men-Tse- Khnag*) preserves Tibetan medicine and has become a centre of international excellence.

intellectual culture in harmony with Tibetan democratic institutions and imbued with the principles and influence of Buddhist religion. The set up is the initiative and labour of the exile community. The Department of Education of the Tibetan government formally recognized the college in 2001 with the degrees and diplomas being recognized at par with those granted by Indian universities. It has partnership with Emory University in Atlanta, USA besides attracting students from Miami University, USA. A number of students are also enrolled from the Indian Himalayan belt. Unlike the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics (IBD) the CHTS gives greater emphasis to secular subjects such as language, grammar, literature, poetry, religion, political history through courses on Buddhism. To broaden the outlook, the institute invites guest speakers to talk on contemporary subjects including those from the local army establishment.<sup>25</sup>

### **Demand of Union Territory Status to Ladakh, Mon Autonomous Region and Gorkhaland**

One positive result of the Buddhist belt in the Himalayas which is of considerable importance to India both

in terms of economics and security is that there has never been any insurgency in the region. All political demands have been resolved by peaceful means. However, what is of concern is the clash between the Ladakh Buddhist Association and Islam which began in the 1980s. It is unfortunate that Ladakh, which includes Muslim Kargil, now appears to be divided. Kargil district has a Muslim identity and Ladakh Buddhist. To preserve their identity the people of Ladakh in the late 1980s had agitated for Schedule Tribe Status and formation of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council. Now some demand a Union Territory status.<sup>26</sup> Resolving this issue is difficult but essential.

Since 2004, there is a demand for the creation of the Mon Autonomous Council for West Kameng and Tawang. This is led by Tsona Gontse Rinpoche.<sup>27</sup> From a purely Buddhist point of view it appears that the demand is to ensure a cultural and religious identity. Like in Ladakh, the perceived threat may be of the spread of other religions like Christianity or even Islam or reassertion of Hinduism in some form.

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<sup>25</sup> Mr Passang Tsering, General Secretary of the college in arranged an interaction with students (as shown in photo 6) with P.K. Gautam on the topic of Buddhism in the Himalayan belt in November 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Thupstan Chhewang, "Vindication of Leh Agitation for UT", *Border Affairs*, July-September 2008, pp.23-25 and "2008 a Crucial Year for us in Ladakh", *Border Affairs*, April-June 2008, pp.5-10, Sonam Wangchuk Shaksपो, "Ladakh and New Delhi Made for Each Other", *Border Affairs*, July-September 2008, pp.26-28 and Tsering Samphel, "Ladakh's Stirring Saga of Valour and Patriotism", *Border Affairs*, April-June 2008, pp.11-14.

<sup>27</sup> *The Hindu* (New Delhi), October 20, 2008. In the Patkai region the demand for an autonomous council is for Changlang and Tirap districts, probably due to the threat they perceive due to spread of Christianity with the political demands of Nagalim.

There is an ongoing agitation for Gorkhaland in the Siliguri region of Darjeeling district of West Bengal and neighbouring areas. The context of these demands are different and it will be incorrect to compare them. It appears that granting Mon Autonomous Region Status will benefit both the people and ensure the so-called nurturing of Buddhism in this belt on the Sino-India border. Similarly Ladakh's case for a Union Territory is driven by a desire to preserve religious identity and must be accommodated in some form. As regards Gorkhaland, if it includes Sikkim, then even the existing Buddhist identity of Sikkim may get overwhelmed. This will have many disadvantages as it is important to retain the Buddhist identity of Sikkim.<sup>28</sup>

### **Buddhism and Ecology**

Another important influence of Buddhism is in ecological matters. We know how the fragile nature of the Buddhist Himalayan region has a complex relationship with respect to nature. Buddhist values, lifestyles and expectations also preserve ecology. Though the PRC claims it to be

harmonious, economic development which is being carried out in Tibet, it is not in tune with the wisdom of the religion. Tibetan nomads who are now sidelined as far as their lifestyle or development is concerned are reported to have been the first ones to notice changes in the land and weather around them.<sup>29</sup> Scientific knowledge is now challenging the earlier (and wrong) assumption that traditional lifestyles as practiced by Tibetans as backward, irrational and unsustainable.<sup>30</sup>

Climatic warming will spell disaster and so much is dependent on sustainable land use and respect for the environment. Desertification of open grassland and pastures, loss of biodiversity and over exploitation by way of resource extraction like water, deforestation, mineral extraction, etc., are appearing to be the new challenges. The Tibetans have pleaded for a Chinese Government rethink on development and environmental policies, be it settling of nomads, fencing of grasslands, reforestation, infrastructure development, and urbanization.<sup>31</sup> There is an urgent need for environmental degradation to be

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<sup>28</sup> It needs to be appreciated that some scholars have opposite views. A.C. Sinha has argued for a Nepalmul majority 'Sukhim' (united Darjeeling and Sikkim) for such reasons: 1) it will be free of Bhutia heritage and will save New Delhi the embarrassment of creating a tiny state (Darjeeling) 2) it may appeal to emotions of West Bengal 3) it will have a viable state for Nepalmul Indians which will take care of language, culture and identity 4) it will be strategically located between Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and Bangladesh with strong links to the north-eastern region and 5) it will be 'Indianised', free from the legacy of the Namgyal Sikkim. See A.C. Sinha, *Sikkim: Feudal and Democratic*, New Delhi, Indus Publishing Company, 2008, p.311.

<sup>29</sup> Michel Zhao and Orville Schell, "Tibet: Plateau in Peril", *World Policy Journal*, Fall, pp.171-180.

<sup>30</sup> Katherine Morton, "Climate Change and Security at the Third Pole", *Contemporary International Relations*, Vol.21, No.3, May/June 2011, pp.34-55.

<sup>31</sup> *Tibet 2003: State of the Environment*, White Paper, Central Tibetan Administration, Dharamsala, 2003.

controlled in Tibet as it is the 'water tower of Asia' as all major rivers emanate here. To this end, the study indicates that there is an ecological aspect to the importance of Buddhism in the Himalayan region including Tibet. The carrying capacity of the Himalayan region is low and it is not possible for it to support a greater density of population. Bhutan being a small country has some policies such as gross national happiness. Sikkim has a green and organic policy evident by billboards and bumper stickers, but population growth may make it difficult to implement. Seeing the interrelated nature of people and their environment, it is suggested that both from ecological and Buddhist perspectives, the inner-line status quo, restriction of population and influx by special status continue to be maintained in the Indian Himalayan belt.

### **Summary on Buddhism in the Region**

Buddhist religion and culture is being vigorously pursued by Indians along the Himalayan belt. What is important to understand is that besides Tibet having an area half that of Europe and one fifth that of China, its population of six million (60 lakhs) dwarfs that of the Indian Buddhists in the Himalayas which varies from seven lakhs (census

figure) to 22 lakhs as assumed by one author.<sup>32</sup> Thus any discourse on Buddhism or Tibetan Buddhism of the Mahayana variety can not ignore these vast regions of Tibet and their people.

Lama Tashi, the Indian monk and Principal recalls that he owes all his training in Buddhist practices to the 'Harvard' of India at Mundgod, north Karnataka (Drepung Loseling Monastery) where most of the teachers were Tibetans. What he implied was that a sprinkling of Tibetans monks and scholars had led to the enrichment of the culture and preservation of this knowledge.

### **Relative Position of India and China**

There are two different narratives in China and India. To preserve the culture and to let people develop according to their genius India restricts non-tribal people from settling down in the strategic Himalayan states according to our constitution and laws. The concept of inner line is still maintained.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the Chinese carry out Hanisation of Tibet. One should not see this in purely material, economic and infrastructural terms. While India allows religious freedom, it is suspect in Tibet. As the March 2008 events (spontaneous

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<sup>32</sup> Dr Nawang Tsering, "Why Bhoti Should be in the Eighth Schedule", *Border Affairs*, April-June 2007, pp.16-20.

<sup>33</sup> Some Tibetan youth are known to have admired the Sikkim model and feel that Tibetans could flourish in a democratic pattern laid out by the Dalai Lama following the example of Sikkim, which is to some degree its own world, even if it is part of India. See Pico Iyer, *The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*, New Delhi, Penguin/Viking, 2008, p. 219.

demonstrations all across the TAR and also neighbouring regions of China having Tibetan population) show, religion appears to be a very powerful factor in Tibet.

How about Buddhism in China?<sup>34</sup>  
Box A is one theoretical snapshot of

Buddhism in China. Appendix A is based on fieldwork and interviews in China in July 2009. Appendix B is an article by Wu Yungui of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences titled “The History of the Institute of World Religions”.

**Box A**

## **BUDDHISM IN CHINA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Amartaya Sen shows how Buddhism went first to China from India. Buddhism later reached Tibet. The journey of Buddhism from India to China has been particularly notable in the case of Chan (dhyān) which transformed to Zen in Japan. In Tibet Buddhism survived and thrived. In 792 AD there was a great debate in which the Tibetans accepted the Indian version of Buddhism rather than that of China. What is important to know is that it declined simultaneously in China due to Neo-Confucianism and in India due to Hindu revival.

Daoist (or Taoist) opposition to Buddhism also had strong elements of Chinese intellectual nationalism and a sense of superiority of Chinese ways. For example, the early fourth century Daoist activist Wang Fu in his book claims that Lao-tzu, the semi-legendary founder of Daoism went on a civilizing mission to India and to influence Gautam Buddha.

It is the tradition of irreverence and defiance of authority which came with Buddhism from India that was singled out for a particularly strong chastisement in early anti-Buddhist criticism in China. Fu-yi, a powerful Confucian leader had complained about Buddhism to the Tang emperor which parallels the contemporary disorder generated by the present day Falungong.

New discoveries along the silk route in Dunhuang show the spread of Buddhism

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<sup>34</sup> For those interested in religion in China, it is revealing to know that Christians probably outnumber Communist Party members. According to D. Aikman's *The Beijing Factor*, there could be 130 million Christians in China and Christians constitute between 20 and 30 per cent of Chinese population. See Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: the West and The Rest*, London, Allen Lane/Penguin, 2011, pp.277-288.

from China through Central Asia till it got replaced with Islam. In the twentieth century, communism officially put an end to established religion. Yet in the contemporary world, one book on Chinese Buddhism (Ling Haicheng, translated by Jin Shaoqing, *Buddhism in China*, China International Press, nd.) claims that out of the three types of Buddhism in the world (Han Buddhism, Pali Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism), China is the main region of two (Han and Tibetan). It is paradoxical that an atheist country can take credit for owning two thirds of Buddhism. Although there is communism as an ideology, the Chinese government has again revived Buddhism as an instrument of its foreign policy, with Chinese Buddhist Association playing a crucial role.

### THE NEW FAD

Like the Dalai Lama's effort to create interest and fascination with himself, his cause, and his religion around the world, something similar is happening in China. A. Tom Grunfeld writes, "There is a similar phenomenon going on in China, where the government's attention to Tibet has resulted in a different sort of fad; an infatuation with things Tibetan, at times portraying Tibetans as 'noble savages' with curious ways. Tibetan traditional medicine has become very popular while young Chinese are 'dropping out' by leading 'hippy lives' in Lhasa."

Anant Krishnan of *The Hindu* observes that in new China's cities millions of young people are turning to Buddhism to make sense of their country's rapid transformation while in the far West, minority communities are searching for ways to preserve their culture against the pressure of development. He reports that there are an estimated 100 million (300 million according to some estimates) followers of the Buddhist faith in officially atheist China.

### INDIA AND CHINA

The modern development of Buddhism in China is already being assisted by the Indian Government as can be seen by the parliamentary debate on building Indian Buddhist temple in China. The Joint Declaration of 21 November 2006 between Premier Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh when the former visited India is reproduced at Annexure I.

The President of India dedicated an Indian style Buddhist temple in Luoyang in May 2010. India yoga gurus such as Sri Sri Ravishankar, founder of the Art of Living inaugurated his ashram near Beijing in October 2010. 93 year old South Indian yoga master B.K.S. Iyengar was honoured with a postage stamp when he visited China for the first time for the "2011 China-India Yoga summit" held in Guang Zhou. Eight postage stamps of the iconic guru and the Chinese translation of his fourth book "Trees of Yoga", were released.

In a broader framework India must be proactive via the ancient Nalanda trail and the new network which is emerging, including that of the Himalayan belt and South East Asian countries, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. It is unlikely that Buddhism will encompass the whole of China, but its spread may lead to a better understanding of democratic rights and Tibetan autonomy in future. In any case the name Shangrila (imaginative name in the 1933 novel *Lost Horizon* by British author James Hilton) and Buddhist mythical concept of *Shambala* have already been innovatively used by China for tourism. In 2002, they have even renamed Zhongdian County as Shangri-La (Xianggelila). The bulk of tourists are domestic Han Chinese.

It needs to be seen if the Japanese variation of Soka Gokai (which is now also popular in urban India) may also spread in China in the future. Falung Gong was suppressed as in Chinese history, secret sects and cults have been eyed suspiciously. But this now cannot be said for Mahayana Buddhism and allowing India the opportunity to promote the religion in China.

India has nothing to lose in spreading monuments to China. Rather it will be useful to track the historic routes of Buddhism and attempt to have Asoka type pillars in China and its neighbourhood through diplomacy.

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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON BUILDING INDIAN BUDDHIST  
TEMPLE IN CHINA AND JOINT DECLARATION OF 21  
NOVEMBER 2006**

**Q. 2145 BUILDING INDIAN BUDDHIST TEMPLE IN CHINA**

**07/12/2005**

**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2145**

**TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.12.2005**

**2145. SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY:**

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India has an opportunity to build the first Indian Buddhist temple in China;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard; and
- (c) the extent to which Indian heritage is likely to be boosted in China as a result thereof?

ANSWER THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

- (a) Yes Sir.
- (b) The decision to construct an Indian-style Buddhist Temple in Luoyang, China was finalized with the conclusion of a Memorandum to this effect during the visit of the Chinese Premier, Mr. Wen Jiabao to India in April 2005. Under this Memorandum, the Indian side would provide Rupees Five Crores to the Chinese side for the construction of the Temple, in addition to providing the Buddha idol and other accompanying material. The Indian side is also responsible for the architectural design of the Temple project, its blueprint, material specifications and landscape planning, as also architectural and expert supervision during the construction work. The Chinese side will provide land and also undertake the construction work. The design and the architect for the project have been selected by an Advisory Committee constituted by the Prime Minister. The construction work to be undertaken by the Chinese side is expected to begin in 2006.

- (c) It is expected that the Temple, once completed, will become an enduring symbol of the centuries-old cultural exchanges between India and China, of which Buddhism is an important and integral part.

Joint Declaration by the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China of 21/11/2006.

IX. Revitalising Cultural Ties and Nurturing People-to-People Exchanges:

29. The centuries-old cultural contacts between the two peoples provide a strong foundation for enduring friendship between India and China. The initiatives to rediscover these historical linkages and revitalise them in the present day context, including through an early completion of the Xuanzang Memorial in Nalanda and the Indian-style Buddhist Shrine in Luoyang, will further strengthen these bonds. The two sides agree to strengthen cooperation in the area of spiritual and civilizational heritage, discuss collaboration in the digitisation of Buddhist manuscripts available in China as well as the re-development of Nalanda as a major centre of learning with the establishment of an international university on the basis of regional cooperation. In order to promote greater awareness of each other's culture, the two sides shall organise a "Festival of India" in China and a "Festival of China" in India, with a joint logo. Detailed modalities in this regard will be decided by the concerned authorities through mutual consultations.

The other narrative is about India which on the other hand allows religious freedom. India is preserving Tibetan Buddhism which now is lodged in India and is also the land of Buddha. When comparing the two narratives it is clear that this soft power factor with India is vital. Policy planners must be sensitive to it. Buddhism, then with this logic needs to be nurtured in the Indian Himalayan belt. It is no surprise that the Dalai Lama has mentioned Buddhism as a line of Defence by India. What he meant was surely that defence is not only a function of weapons and

military power. Much like the contemporary discourse on broadening of security agenda to include non traditional threats, culture and religion, but also provide a soft power which military weapons of coercion cannot match, and which are available at a far lesser cost than military forces.

As regards ethnicity, it can be said that Indians should not sound apologetic for Indian citizens being ethnic Tibetans. India in any case is a mixture of many races, religions and people. A study of literature at Box B shows that there are very varied accounts of ethnicity.

## ETHNICITY AND LITERATURE SURVEY OF THE INDIAN HIMALAYAN BELT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH TIBET

There are a number of anthropological, social, cultural and political accounts on the complex nature of the ethnicity of the people in the Himalayan belt under study.

When the Dalai Lama fled to India, Jawaharlal Nehru the Indian Prime Minister stated in the Lok Sabha that, "We have large number of people of Tibetan stock living in India as Indian nationals. We also have some Tibetans émigrés in India" (Bureau of Parliamentary Research).

The various Tibetan type Buddhist people on the southern side of the Himalayan watershed in India and Nepal are broadly described as Monpas in Tibetan, meaning 'ravine dwellers' (Das, Gautam). The 'Gyagar Khampas' or Kinnauris, Spitis or Ladakhis are Indian citizens with Tibetan ethnicity or religio-cultural affiliations with Tibetans (Falcone and Tsering).

According to Kharat, a population of Tibetan race inhabits Nepal, especially the Tamang region, Bhutan, Sikkim and along the westward Himalayas and is also found in varying numbers in the hill districts of Garhwal, Kullu, Spiti, Lahaul, Ladakh, Kashmir and NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh). This shows there were many Tibetans who had settled in India much before the post-1959 events, living peacefully, while maintaining cordial relations with the local inhabitants of India. In the Tawang region many Tibetans settled almost a century ago and hold Indian citizenship (Kharat).

### LINGUISTIC GROUPS

According to Nawang Tsering (Tsering), Bhoti is the name of a language as well as the name of a class or tribe who speaks this language. It is the lingua-franca of the people of Mongolia, Bhutan, Tibet, Pakistan Occupied areas of Skardu, Nepal, and the Indian Himalayan region from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh. Bhoti language is also known as Tibetan language because central Tibet has been the nucleus of Bhoti culture and language for centuries.

Regarding the linguistic groups, according to the Central Institute of Indian Languages, both Tibetan and Bhutia languages are of Tibeto-Burmese origin like Manipuri, Boro, Tripuri and others (CIIL).

Recent scholarship (Huber) shows that the entire region of Siang to Kameng in Arunachal Pradesh can be divided into four linguistic groups: Kho Bwa, West Tani, East Tani and Mishmi. In the region of Subansiri and Siang, community structure is very complex. The Membas area has a heterogeneous population. They are also mixed with Khambas in the area of Gelling.

### **LADAKH**

According to Dewan (Dewan), in Ladakh initially Aryan Dards followed Bon Chos. Later, some converted to Buddhism. Dards were squeezed in from the east by Mongolian people from Tibet. In an alternative theory, Tibetan nomads were the first to arrive, followed by the Mon people of north India and eventually by the Dards. There are two distinct groups of Ladakhi population (Mann). Firstly are the the Ladakhi or Bhoto, Boto, Bhaota, Bodh, Bodpa, and secondly are the Mons and Dards. According to Fernanda (2007), Ladakh is regarded as part of 'ethnographic Tibet'. Mullik (1971) mentions that the whole of Ladakh, except the western end near Kargil, is ethnically similar to Tibetans.

### **HIMACHAL PRADESH**

The Anthropological Survey of India (ASI) on Himachal mentions that the Bodh, Bhot or Chanzang are primarily distributed in the Lahul and Spiti valleys. Though the history of the Bodh is not available, according to local accounts, those people of Tibet who came and settled here in the past i.e. prior to 1962 are called Bodh or Bhot, whereas those who came after 1962 are known as Tibetans (ASI, a).

### **SIKKIM**

In the case of Sikkim, the Anthropological Survey of India mentioned that Lepchas, the original inhabitants call themselves Rongkup or Muntachi Rongkup. Later in the book it is mentioned that Lepchas are known as 'Monpa' by Tibetans and are a Kirate tribe, while Bhutias call them 'Meris' (ASI,b).

Sinha alludes to Bhutia immigrants representing Tibeto-Burman stock, Tibetan culture, language and a combination of pastoral and semi-settled grazers. The Lepchas (in Nepali 'lap' is vile, and 'che' is speakers) call themselves Rong and are known to Tibetans as 'Mon-ba' or 'Mon-rik', referring to the people of Mon country—a general Tibetan name for the lower Himalayas, from Kashmir to Assam and Burma (Sinha).

*The Sikkim Development Report* by the Planning Commission in tracing the history mentions that no historic records exist to show how Lepchas came to the region. Lepchas themselves have no history of migration. They consider themselves the

original inhabitants of Sikkim and their myths say they originated from the slopes of Mt Kangchendzonga. No one has so far succeeded in imposing a migrating history on the Lepchas.<sup>35</sup> These- the oldest inhabitants, are believed to have migrated via Assam and upper Burma. They have their own language known as Rong. In 1642, Bhutia rule was established in Sikkim. Land monopoly shifted from Lepchas to Bhutias. Bhutias also promoted inter-marriages with Lepchas and converted the spirit worshipers to Lamaist Buddhism. The name Bhutia is derived from their original habitat 'Bhot' (Tibet). Limbus and Tamangs are the two new schedule tribes now recognized. Tamangs are Buddhists but generally Limbus are not. They have their own religion, or are Hindus. Some original Sikkimese Limbus, historically known as Tsong, were Buddhists, but today they are a very tiny minority in west Sikkim near Pemayangtse and now prefer to be associated with the wider Limbu population that immigrated from Nepal and call themselves Limbus. More recently, some non-Buddhist Limbus did portray themselves as Buddhist in order to be granted the tribal status but it is not the majority.<sup>36</sup>

According to late Topden, a lot of research needs to be done at the grass root level. His critical appraisal of available accounts of Sikkimese history, especially in English language, showed how writings by British colonial civil servants, adventurers and soldiers were based on their own biased observations, translations from grossly inaccurate Tibetan texts and incorrect interpretations provided by local guides. The British's exposure to Himalayan Buddhism was also limited. Ignorance of social systems, customs and religious beliefs of the local people resulted in 'Tibetanised' versions of Sikkimese history, given the British's primary fascination with Tibet during that particular period. Early accounts also suffered from a total ignorance of Sikkimese language such as Lepcha. The absence of academic interest by local scholars has also resulted in a very superficial account of Sikkim. Scholarship needs to be encouraged in this direction (Topden).

### **ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

According to the *Techno-Economic Survey of NEFA* by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (1967), the local population consists of 82 Indo-Mongoloid tribes and sub-tribes. In Western Kameng it shows that the region is

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<sup>35</sup> We are thankful to Anna Balikci-Denjongpa, editor *Bulletin of Tibetology* in bringing this to our notice.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

home of Monpas and Sherdukpens. Both tribes are Buddhist and are strongly influenced by Tibetan and Bhutanese culture, tradition and customs. In Siang, along the international frontier, the two Buddhist tribes are Membas and Khambas which resemble the Monpas of Kameng district.

What is of particular interest now is what B.N. Mullik (1971) has mentioned at page 94 on Siang District:

“This big bend of the Tsangpo contained within it Pemako and Chimdru areas, the inhabitants of which were not Tibetans and who had more access to India than to Tibet. Even as late as 1959 petitions were filed by the people of Pemakao and Chimdru to the Government of India to take them under Indian administration.”

According to Chowdhury (1983), ethnically the Monpas of Kameng might have affinity with the Bhutanese to the west and Tibetans across the northern borders.

In current government documents most of the people in Arunachal Pradesh are either Tibetan or of Thai and Burmese origin (North Eastern Region, Vision 2020). According to Keki N. Daruwala, the tribes in Arunachal Pradesh have migrated over centuries from the Mekong and Tibet. The Adis claim Tibetan descent (Daruwalla).

Some just prefer to mention that Monpas and Sherdukpens of Tawang and West Kameng have close social and religious ties with the Tibetans (Das, Pushpita). In the case of Tawang and Kameng, to counter the Chinese claim, Indian scholars (Dutta) have gone on to argue that Monpas are not Tibetans and China can not claim the area on the basis of ethnicity or religion. These arguments of denial of ethnicity are not convincing. Probably they are based on one of the initial official publications (Bureau of Parliamentary Research, page 38), which also emphasised this point. It was mentioned that the Monba, Aka, Dafla, Mir, Abor, Mishmi had no kinship ties with Tibetans. Rather the Tibetans refer to them as ‘Lopas’– ‘southern barbarians beyond the pale’.

## CONCLUSION

This survey establishes the incompletely researched, complex, multi-cultural, linguistic and ethnic composition of India in the frontier zone of the Indian Himalayas. The crux is that at no time should Indians be apologetic for having Tibetan stocks in their population. Rather, it is time we shed mongoloid prejudices all together. Priority is for an Indian identity followed by regional identities. However, more multi-disciplinary scholarship is needed to have the correct ‘data’ on our own people.

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To consolidate this invaluable soft power, what needs to be done is to make further attempts to integrate the Buddhist Himalayan belt with national and international centres of learning and preserve and promote the Buddhist cultural heritage of India. As the evidence shows, Indian Buddhist institutions have a symbiotic relationship with those in Tibet. Buddhism is a common factor. With this logic, religious and cultural roots are integrated into the Indian Himalayan region through Buddhism. Thus even the exiled Tibetan Buddhists, the Buddhists in TAR and other regions of China, the Tibetan Buddhist Diaspora and Buddhists of the India Himalayan belt have much more in

common with each other than Han Chinese with Tibetans. It is no surprise that after 50 years, Tibetans are never unwelcome in India. This as we show is due to the linkages of Buddhism.

In summary Indian diplomats, academics, military officers, scholars and citizens must be educated on the complexities of these issues. More research and publicity concerning the Buddhist regions of the Indian Himalayas is needed at an international level by the Indians. The Upcoming Nalanda University has an important role to play (See Appendix C). Similarly Lumbini must be saved from geopolitical rivalry on materialistic foundation (Appendix D).

Unfortunately, in spite of a very high order of academic institutes now functioning in India no Tibetan Buddhist in exile has been co-opted in the project for Nalanda, though Buddhism in the Himalayan belt and Tibet is rooted in the ancient Nalanda school. Main reason is that the Chinese have also funded it and it may lead to embarrassment. As pointed out by Vijay Kranti,

Despite the fact that Dalai Lama and his fellow Tibetan scholars who have established and run at least three deemed universities in India in subjects directly related to the Nalanda tradition, have been completely ignored, it is interesting to know that the committee is headed by Prof Amartya Sen, who though an acknowledged leftist economist and winner of Nobel Prize in economics, is not known for any

serious association with Buddhism and instead well known for his pro-China intellectual leaning.<sup>37</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to show the influence and importance of Buddhism in the Himalayan belt and beyond. The overlapping nature of Tibet and Buddhism as practiced in Tibet has also been shown to have entwined linkages with India. The twenty-first century should not be like the twentieth with military conflicts with hard power tools. Rather, importance of soft power such as culture and religion can now be supplemented to enhance both national and human security of the people. The Indian state and citizens need to be made aware of these characteristics to nurture Buddhism in the Himalayan belt and beyond in Tibet.

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<sup>37</sup> Vijay Kranti, "Karmapa Controversy: Implications for India", *Border Affairs*, April- June 2011, pp.21-27.

## Appendix A

### BUDDHISM IN CHINA TODAY

Many authoritative scholars and experts in China today are of the view that the main reason for the decline of Buddhism in China was the philosophical clash between Communism and Buddhism. Leaders like Mao Zedong were particularly hostile to religion. It is argued that Buddhism in the PRC has always been under state control, and Buddhist institutions submitted to Communist authority. In the early years of the Mao regime, some monasteries and temples were converted to secular use. Many also became state-operated organizations and the priests and monks became employees of the state.<sup>38</sup>

Prof. Wang Dehua of the Shanghai Academy of Social Science opines that in 1953, most of Chinese Buddhism was organized into the Buddhist Association of China (BAC) to ensure that Buddhism would support the Communist agenda. One result was that when China brutally suppressed Tibetan Buddhism in 1959, the BAC approved of the development. Buddhist temples and art were incalculably

damaged during the Cultural Revolution in 1966 by Mao's Red Guards.

Contemporary governments have, however, made some conciliatory gestures to Buddhism. Wang Xueshi, a Party official in charge of the BAC in southern China, views that China is revitalising its approach towards Buddhism and noted that in April 2006 China hosted the World Buddhist Forum, in which Buddhist scholars and monks from many countries discussed the relevance of Buddhism in the contemporary world.

The fact remains, however, that all monasteries are controlled by the government and the monks are, in effect, government employees. The government views monasteries and Buddhist historical monuments as lucrative tourist magnets. It may be noted, for instance, that in 2006 the BAC expelled a master of Huacheng Temple in Yichuan City, Jianxi province, after he performed commemorative ceremonies for the victims of the

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<sup>38</sup> Barbara O' Brien, "Buddhism in China and Tibet Today", *About.com (Buddhism)*, at <http://buddhism.about.com/od/vajrayanabuddhism/a/Chinareport.htm> (accessed on September 1, 2010).

Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989. After the riots of March 2008, the government allowed hardly any news from Tibet to trickle out. Currently, a few foreign journalists are allowed in the region, after ensuring from their professional record that they are not likely to make trouble for the government.

While granting that China has invested a great deal of money in Tibet to modernize it, and that the Tibetan people overall enjoy a higher standard of living because of it, the obverse reality is that Tibetan Buddhism is pervasively oppressed by the government. Tibetans risk imprisonment merely for possessing a photograph of the Dalai Lama. The

government insists on choosing the reincarnated *tulkus*. A great many reports say that younger Tibetans, including monks, are much less likely to compromise with the government, unlike the Dalai Lama. The crisis in Tibet is simmering, for all that it may not always appear on the front pages of newspapers, and is much likely to get worse.

Buddhism is a vital force in some parts of China, especially in villages. The country has an estimated 100 million followers of Buddhism and there are over 20,000 Buddhist temples.<sup>39</sup> Table 1 presents skeletal figures of adherents of Buddhism among the ethnic minority groups.

**Table 1. Ethnic Minority Groups that Practise Buddhism in China**

Minority Group	Number	Province	Remark
Mulam	207,352	Guangxi	Also has adherents of Taoism
Jingpo	132,143	Yunnan	
Maonan	107,166	Guangxi	Also has adherents of polytheism
Blang	92,000	Yunnan	
Achang	33,936	Yunnan	
Jing or Gin	22,517	Guangxi	Also has adherents of Taoism
De'ang or Derung	17,935	Yunnan	

*(Table based on information given by a Chinese Scholar at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China)*

Zhang Xueying, a well-known media personality, is of the view, “..during its 2000 years in China, Buddhism has

absorbed Chinese culture and influenced the Chinese way of life. Today this foreign-born religion is a

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<sup>39</sup> Information gathered from a Chinese scholar through discussion. Names are not disclosed under request.

constituent of traditional Chinese culture as well as a lifestyle.”<sup>40</sup> Explaining the rationale behind the integration of Buddhism with Chinese culture, Lou Yulie, an expert on religious studies at Peking University says that Confucianism preaches person-oriented ethics and focuses on the temporal world. In contrast, Buddhism values otherworldliness and believes in karma. The Confucians criticized Buddhist doctrines and practices such as tonsure, celibacy and almsgiving. The Taoists, who believe in immortality, also fiercely denounced the Buddhist concept that “everybody is doomed to die”. Buddhism was banned in China on four separate occasions in history. Lou Yulie considers these episodes symptomatic of a conflict between Indian and Chinese cultures. Hence, Lou Yulie says,

Gradually Chinese Buddhism abandoned concepts and regulations that did not fit Chinese society, and introduced new doctrines.... Huineng (638-713), the Sixth Patriarch of Chan Buddhism, prompted the development of Chinese Buddhism by introducing Confucianist concepts into the religion.<sup>41</sup>

Huineng believed that everybody has a Buddha nature and can become a Buddha. He insisted that Buddhists

could attain Buddhahood without reciting the sutras and observing other ceremonial rituals, as long as they could keep Buddha in their heart.<sup>42</sup> His propositions were well received by politicians, scholar-bureaucrats and common people. Huineng reconciled Buddhist doctrines with Confucian ethics, such as filial piety. Having passed through these cultural barriers, Buddhism finally became popular and spread quickly in China.<sup>43</sup>

Fang Litian, director of the Institute for the Study of Buddhism and Religious Theory, Renmin University, says:

Chinese intellectuals are split between Confucian secularism and the transcendental naturalism of Zhuangzi. When encountering frustrations in reality, they tend to renounce the temporal world for a life of seclusion, though it may be mental rather than physical. Buddhism accommodates the spiritual needs of people, raising their mental realm to a higher level without isolating them physically from the real world. This is an art of life that the wisdom of Buddhism has bestowed on intellectuals.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, Buddhism was popular among scholar-officials in dynastic times. Because Buddhism helps people

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<sup>40</sup> Zhang Xueying, “Buddhism in China”, *China Today*, June 19, 2009, at [http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/se/txt/2009-06/19/content\\_203310.htm](http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/se/txt/2009-06/19/content_203310.htm)

<sup>41</sup> Zhang Xueying, “Buddhism in China”, *China Today*, June 19, 2009, at [http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/se/txt/2009-06/19/content\\_203310.htm](http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/se/txt/2009-06/19/content_203310.htm)

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

maintain psychological balance in the face of setbacks, it is a necessary supplement to secularism. Over two thousand years Buddhism has also revitalized Confucian culture. According to Buddhism, death means entering Sukhavati (the Pure Land), providing an instructive supplement to Confucian culture, which values life and fears death. Many scholars believe that the Confucian school of pragmatic philosophy during the Song and Ming dynasties was a response to the influence of Chan (Zen) Buddhism.

Buddhism is also preserved in many masterpieces of literature and art in China. The four-toned pronunciation of modern standard Chinese was formed from the prevalent Indian style of sutra chanting.<sup>45</sup> Yu Hai worships on bended knees in every hall of the Guanghua Temple, since he believes that no matter which Buddha or Bodhisattva you worship "what you experience is

spiritual catharsis and guidance in life."<sup>46</sup>

To promote Tibet study, it has been a deliberate strategy to organise and host academic conferences on Tibet study annually. Many lectures are also given on special topics, symposiums and classes for advanced studies in academic institutions. Exchange of visiting scholars is also undertaken between academic institutions in several cities. Foreign scholars on Buddhism are frequently invited to China now to speak over the subject. As one of the prime study centre, the Centre for Tibetan Study of China has received hundreds of scholars from other countries to participate in symposium and joint-research projects and to conduct research. Another most important thing that is noticed today is that the works and research studies of the foreign scholars have been translated into Chinese.

**Note:** Information's and Data's for Appendix A are compiled form various sources like: Barbara O' Brien, *Buddhism in China and Tibet Today*, (Buddhism.about.com); Zhang Xueying, *Buddhism in China*, (Chinatoday.com); and data collected form various open sources and fom scholarly meeting and interactions.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

## *Appendix B*

# THE HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD RELIGIONS CHINESE ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES BY WU YUNGUI

In my private talks with foreign scholars and friends when I was abroad in the past years, they often put up such questions to me as “Why should the Chinese Communists have devoted so much attention to the study of religion, given that they do not believe in any religion at all?” and “Did the Chinese scholars study religion merely for the sake of eliminating it?” For clearing up these misunderstandings, I have given brief explanations on several occasions during my stay in foreign countries, but have never yet found an opportunity to give a detailed answer for such misconceptions. So, I hope to take this opportunity to give a systematic account of the founding and developing of the Institute of World Religions (IWR) wherein I have worked for 35 years since 1964 when I graduated from a college, which might be useful I hope, for a correct understanding of the basic facts related with it. Needless to say, what is more significant for our purpose here is to enhance, through face-to-face talks like this, mutual understanding, deepen friendship and broaden academic exchanges and co-operations between scholars of our two countries. I will talk about three issues as follows:

### **THE BACKGROUND FOR THE FOUNDING OF IWR**

China is an ancient civilized nation with multi-nationalities and multi-religious beliefs. Apart from Taoism and folk religions that were born at different times in the native land, there are also Buddhism, Christianity and Islam that were introduced from overseas in history into China. In the course of their taking roots, opening out blossoms and bearing fruit in the land, all these religions have left their clear and enduring prints on the Chinese society, particularly on the knowledge and practice of the Chinese people. In their long historical development, all these religions - native born or imported from abroad, have experienced a problem of adapting themselves to China’s social environment, and as a result of inculturation or sinicization process, these different cultural elements have become mutually complimentary and flourished, and thus formulated traditional Chinese culture with a good harmony of different elements as what we understand it today. In this sense we can say, therefore, understanding Chinese religions is understanding

Chinese culture, and studies of Chinese religions are the first step to a profound understanding of Chinese society. However, such ideas were not very clear at first. A decisive factor to deepening our understanding is an instruction given in 1963 by the late Chairman Mao Zedong. He said in the written instruction that religions have had a profound impact and influence on the world's population, of which we have little knowledge. He argued that you can not write out a good history of philosophy, literature or world history without understanding the story of human religion. His instruction came at a crucial time that it virtually led to the birth of the Institute of World Religions, the first of its kind that ever appeared in the Chinese academic world. Since then China has had a professional research body for religious studies backed by the state. At its early days IWR had only three research departments with some 20 personnel. It was affiliated then to the Philosophy and Social Sciences Division of the Chinese Academy of Science (the former body of today's Chinese Academy of Social Sciences). Its work, however, was soon interrupted by the Cultural Revolution just after it began to operate. With the ending of the Cultural Revolution, China was ushered into a new period of reform and opening, in the outside world. With the fundamental changes taking place in every aspect of social life, man's attitude on religions has experienced a big change, which in turn laid down a good foundation for religious studies on the part of Chinese scholars. Today as we recollect the history of IWR, we are happy to find that we have now over 80

working staff, and we are more delighted to see that we truly understand today the nature of religion and the significance of religious studies. A general point of view shared in common among my colleagues in the Institute today is that we should conduct research on human religion in a correct way, that is comprehensive, historical as well as dialectical in nature. We should not only pay attention to the study of human religious ideas as we did in the past but also to the study of those ideas that embodied themselves in the forms of human religious culture. And to do so, the first step for us is to make friends with religious believers, Chinese and foreign alike. Our general attitude towards religious people can be termed as "respect each other, learn from each other, and co-operate on equal basis." Compared to the early days of IWR, we can say that our understanding of its policy today is a break-through in the sense that we really understand what religion means to us as human beings. If we must put in simple words our understanding of the scope and meaning of religious studies today, it should be like this: We are trying to make a deep and systematic study of human religious phenomena from the dimensions of theory, history and reality. And religious studies can be conveniently termed "human science" because such studies are aimed at understanding of the human nature which exists deep inside the depth of human heart.

#### **THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

As a research institution at the state

level, IWR shoulders heavy tasks in scientific research, whose working staffs has a strong sense of mission. For the sake of discipline development and personnel-training, we are trying to combine producing academic works with talents-training, combine personal interest with the needs and demands in scientific research, and combine the collective interest of the Institute with the interest of the state. For the management of scientific research, multi-level projects are organized and managed by the Academy through its Scientific Research Bureau. Projects at the Institute level are organized and coordinated by the director-general through its Department for Scientific Research Affairs. Projects at the department level are organized and coordinated by the chairman of the department. Another classification of the projects followed for years is to classify projects according to their source of funds. Thus, we have six types of projects: state-funded projects, academy-funded projects, academy-supported younger scholar projects, institute-funded projects, department-level projects and personal projects. Apart from these, we accept each year, special tasks commissioned or distributed by the departments of the State Council concerned, which were in most cases investigation reports on certain hot religious issues. The principal purpose of scientific management is to guarantee the quality of the projects undertaken by the working staff of the Institute. For this, procedures such as project-sponsoring, middle-term check up, final examination and approval of the

projects, assessment of the final result and publication of the works completed are normal practice for the scientific management department. Another important aspect in scientific research management is to help personnel-training. To recruit and train up research workers, IWR has adopted two measures. One is to recruit working staff from college graduates, particularly from those having master and doctor degrees, and help them grow up after they enter the Institute, through such methods as sending them abroad for postgraduate studies or doing research for a period of time, training them by distributing work to them, and examining and raising their working abilities through professional check and promotion of academic titles. This has yielded good results. Most backbones in the Institute are university graduates in 1960s. For example, Professor Yang Zengwen who has been to Japan many times for academic visits is one of them. As for those young and middle-aged backbones, most of them are college graduates with MA or Ph.D. degrees who have worked as guest scholars for a period in foreign universities. Graduates with doctorates working in the Institute (17 in number) have played an important role in their posts. For example, Dr. He Jingsong who came to Japan this time as a member of our delegation is one of those doctors trained by the Institute. As a young associate professor in Buddhist studies, Dr. He is diligent in work and has published three books, including *A History of Buddhism in Korea*, the first book of its kind ever published in

China. Another way for talents-training is to find "good buds" in the course of discipline- development and to help them grow by assigning tasks for them to accomplish. This is basically a duty of the chairmen of the departments and we are grateful to them for their role in this connection. To promote disciplinary building, IWR has established seven sub-departments, each of them constituting a sub-branch of learning. Thus we have departments respectively for Buddhist Studies, Christian Studies, Islamic Studies, Taoist Studies, Confucian Studies, Contemporary Religious Studies, Studies on the General Theory of Religion and Studies on Buddhist Culture and Art. For publication of papers, articles and reports written by our colleagues in the Institute, we have two journals (*Studies on World Religions* and *World Religious Cultures*), both published quarterly. An old Chinese saying "an excellent master has good disciples" summarises it aptly. Most chairmen of the departments are experts with rich and profound learning. They have trained, through their work, a good many young and middle aged scholars for the Institute. Naturally, not all of those who have received training will surely become first-rate talents.

### **MAJOR ACADEMIC WORKS PRODUCED BY IWR**

Religious studies can be dated back to ancient times in China. However, modern religious studies with new outlooks and approaches have been less popular until the first 30 years after the

founding of the People's Republic of China. For a long time in history, Chinese scholars were interested in religious studies in Buddhism and Taoism, but they left only a small number of works on them. This backwardness in religious studies has changed a great deal nowadays through protracted efforts on the part of Chinese scholars. For example, in 1994, IWR welcomed a special occasion for celebrating its 30th anniversary and we were very happy to find that on display in the exhibition hall, were over 150 books and more than 1,000 papers and articles on religion produced by the Institute. If with these, works produced by other Chinese scholars were added, the number would have become surprisingly large. If calculated according to the fields involved, the above-mentioned publications can be classified into 10 categories: (1) works on the history of different religions (2) works on philosophy of religion (3) works on the general theory of religion (4) works on different subject matter of various religions (5) introductory works on religion for general readers (6) religious classics with annotation (7) re-publication of ancient religious literature and of valuable materials (8) re-publication of religious cultural relics and literature unearthed (9) religious dictionaries and other reference books (10) translations of valuable works by foreign authors. Of all the departments in the Institute, the Buddhist Studies department is the biggest one. Its scope of interest covers four aspects, namely, Buddhism in the Han nationality populated areas, Tibetan Buddhism, Theravada

Buddhism and Buddhism in foreign countries. Buddhism among the Han people is widely studied. Han Buddhism works have a wide coverage including those on Buddhist scriptures, historical development of Buddhism, doctrines of different sects or schools, Buddhist philosophy, temple economy, Buddhist tradition at different localities, biographies of eminent monks and the inter-reaction of Buddhism and traditional Chinese culture. Evaluation of scientific result is a complex matter. People may very often than not have different opinions about one book. Generally speaking, the most influential works on Buddhism include: *The Great Buddhist Sutras in Chinese Language* (edited by Ren Jiyu), *History of Buddhism in China* (Ren Jiyu), *An Intellectual History of Buddhism in China* (Guo Peng), *History of Chinese Zen Buddhism*, *History of Chinese Hua Yan Sect* (Wei Daoru), *A History of Buddhism in Japan* and *Modern History of Buddhism in Japan* (Yang Zengwen), etc. Apart from Buddhism, other disciplines have also their representative works. Christian studies are noted for the best-known works: *Contemporary Catholicism* (Ren Yanli), *Contemporary Theology of Protestantism* and *Contemporary Theology of Western*

*Catholicism* (Zhuo Xinping). Major works in Islamic studies include *A History of Islam* (edited by Jin Yijiu), *History of Islam in China* (Li Xinghua) and *Outlines of Islamic Law* (Wu Yungui). Important works in Taoist studies include *Abstracts of Taoist Scriptures*, *History of Chinese Taoism* (edited by Ren Jiyu), *Chinese Taoist Metaphysics* and *Taoist Philosophy* (Lu Guolong). Theoretical work on religion is best represented by Professor Lu Daji's two books: *On Religious Studies* and *History of Theories of Religion in the West*. Religious studies are a new branch of learning in China. Though we have made great progress in the past 20 years, we are still faced with quite a few difficulties and problems, such as knowledge-restructuring, training of young scholars, increasing quality of academic works, etc. In fact, we have a long way to go. In concluding my speech, I would like to express once again my hearty thanks to our Japanese host, Mr. Yasuo Morita, chairman of the board of trustees of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy for his kind invitation to our delegation to visit Japan and to make presentations before such a great audience. Thank You.

(Source: <http://www.iop.or.jp/0010/yungui.pdf>)

**Note:** This note "History of the Institute of World Religions" in Appendix B is written by Wu Yungui a Scholar from the Chinese Academy of Social Science, and this piece, and this piece was shared to us by a Chinese Scholar. This piece can also be found at [www.ip.or.jp/0010/yungui.pdf](http://www.ip.or.jp/0010/yungui.pdf)

## Appendix C

### THE UPCOMING NALANDA UNIVERSITY<sup>47</sup>

The new Nalanda International University<sup>48</sup> in Bihar being rebuilt will soon provide momentum to the systematic study of Buddhism in India of various shades and nuances. According to Shashi Tharoor, Nalanda was destroyed three times by invaders, but only rebuilt twice. The first time was when the Huns under Mihirakula laid waste to the campus during the reign of Skandagupta (455- 67CE), when Nalanda was only a few decades old. Skanda's successors rebuilt it. The second destruction came a century and a half later, with an assault by the Gaudas in early seventh century. This time the great Hindu king Harshavardhana (606-48) restored the Buddhist university. Nearly 800 years after it's founding, Nalanda was destroyed a third time and burned by Turkish Muslim invaders under Bakhtiar Khilji in 1197. This time there was no reconstruction. The author, a former Minister for State for External

Affairs argues that if we are to rebuild it after 800 years, we will need not just money but the will to excellence, not just a physical plant but a determined spirit. A great University is the finest advertisement for the society that sustains it. If we recreate Nalanda, it must be as a university worth its name – and we must be a society worthy of a twenty- first century Nalanda.<sup>49</sup>

Through the look east policy and the upcoming Nalanda University, India will take its rightful place in the Buddhist world. Early twentieth century Indian Tibetologists such as Sarat Chandra Das - who wrote the first *Tibetan- English Dictionary* and *An Introduction to the Grammar of the Tibetan Languages* (1902) were pioneers.<sup>50</sup> But at present, Indian scholars of Buddhism in general and Tibetologists in particular are rare or if they exist are barely known. Rather the best scholar who also undertake painstaking field

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<sup>47</sup> Revised work based on IDSA web comment, PK Gautam, "The Upcoming Nalanda University" of August 31, 2010 at <http://www.idsa.in/node/5841/1873#comment-1873>

<sup>48</sup> The idea of Nalanda University was that of Singapore. It organized a Nalanda symposium in 2006. Later in an East Asian Summit support of China, Japan and Korea was enlisted. See S.D. Muni, "Nalanda: a soft power project", *The Hindu*, August 31, 2010.

<sup>49</sup> Shashi Tharoor, "Reconstructing Nalanda" in *The Elephant, the Tiger & the Cell*, New Delhi, Penguin? Viking, 2007, Chapter 36, pp.167-169.

work in remote Indian border region are mostly foreigners and whites – like the linguist of West Arunachal Pradesh Prof Toni Huber, Professor of Tibetan Studies, Humbolt University, Berlin (Germany), Prof Alex McKay, formerly of University of London, and Indo-Tibetan Historian, affiliate fellow, International Institute of Asian Studies, Lieden, the Netherlands and Dr Heleen Plaisier of Leiden University, Denmark who leads in this surge for Lepcha studies. Scholars such as Melvyn C. Goldstien and Mathew T. Kapstien of the US have no matching Indian contemporaries.

High calibre and motivated professionals need to be appointed in the university. More young scholars must be encouraged to enter this field by creation of jobs and incentives. Network must be established rapidly with Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (Gangtok), Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies Sarnath, (Varanasi), Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi, Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies, Dahun, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Choglamsar (Ladakh), Songsten Library, Centre for Tibetan & Himalayan Studies, Sehastradhara, Dehradun, Delhi University and other universities in India that have departments of Buddhist studies. India will need to catch up with Buddhist studies, Tibetology and Buddhism in the Himalayan belt as is being done in many Western universities.

We can draw a parallel with the state of international studies in India. Indian political scientists and those in the strategic community lament that unlike the West, there is no India specific international studies in India or its important off-shoot in international relations. India is branded as a consumer of ideas. The Nalanda initiative may go the same way if the state does not step in to create and support the human resource needed for such an enterprise. It should not be a sinecure for retired bureaucrats in any case.

A former Principal of the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Choglamsar (Ladakh) felt, “..historically we need to understand that it is the ‘Nalanda System of Religion’ that informs Buddhism in these parts (Buddhist Indian Himalayan Region and Ladakh). The top managers of the forthcoming university, have no deep knowledge about Buddhism and its nuances. The climate, terrain and environment has to be conducive for Buddhism. People also must be living and practicing it. In plains the impact and influence gets diluted. The best place for a centre of this knowledge is Ladakh. Further, we need to have practitioners to have Nalanda school fully operational. Though both faith and academic knowledge have their roles, absence of practitioners is lacking and is a key issue”.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Tsetan Namgyal, “Tibetan Language and Culture Studies”, *Himalayan and Central Asian Studie*, Vol.13, No.1, January- March 2009, pp.88-101.

It may be good idea to have its extension in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The ideal place to encourage scholars to be involved or recruited for present and future is from the ancient Buddhist belt all along the Himalayas. Other regions and scholar also must be encouraged. Many non-practising Buddhists are indeed in various departments of India- but the number is less and the quality of future

generations is an issue. The state therefore, must also revive studies linked to Nalanda with departments of Buddhist Studies of Indian universities and institutes. Jobs must be created to encourage the young generation of Indian scholars to master Prakrit, Pali, Bhoti, and other aspects of Buddhist Studies which originated in India. Nitisastras also needs to be rediscovered.

## Appendix D

### SAVING LUMBINI FROM GEOPOLITICAL RIVARLY ON MATERIALISTIC FOUNDATION

One popular case which assumes that India lacks strategic imagination was reported in the media in July 2011. It was of Chinese interest in developing Lumbini in Nepal at par with world class facilities like the Vatican and Mecca.<sup>51</sup>

Problem here is that some Indian analysts jump to materialistic conclusions. Nepali scholar Kanak Mani Dixit has explained the problems in converting this holy place into a Disneyland :

While Beijing's interest in Lumbini is welcome, what is disconcerting is heavy-handed carpetbagger methodology. A Lumbini Master Plan was developed by the great Japanese planner Kenzo Tange in 1978 at the behest of U-Thant, the first Asian Secretary-General of the UN. The Master Plan sets out the strategy to maintain the spiritual worth of the

Sakyamuni's birthplace while developing the larger region for pilgrimage and tourism.<sup>52</sup>

Kanak Mani elaborates that :

The Sakyamuni, a historical personage rather than a figure of myth, surely wanted Lumbini to serve as a spiritual centre to guide the world's seekers. Would he have approved the conversion of the place into a commercial Disneyland? One often hears complaints that Lumbini is 'so under-developed', and comparisons are made to Mecca, the Vatican and Bethlehem, but that is perhaps the very point – Lumbini is a 'minimalist' response to the Sakyamuni's suggestion to look inward in the search for external peace. The income for Nepal should come from visitors who arrive to partake of the very spiritualism that Kenzo Tange sought to preserve.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See C. Raja Mohan, "Clinton and ASEAN", *Indian Express*, July 20, 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Kanak Mani Dixit, "Between Sycophancy and Adventurism- II", *Republic*, July 28, 2011 at [http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news\\_details&news\\_id=33975](http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=33975)

<sup>53</sup> Kanak Mani Dixit, "Between Sycophancy and Adventurism- II", *Republic*, July 28, 2011 at [http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news\\_details&news\\_id=33975](http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=33975). The late Kenzo Tange's finest buildings include the twin arena of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the Yamanashi press and broadcasting centre at Kofu (1964-67) and Hiroshima peace park and peace centre (1949-55).

It has been clarified by the United Nations Industrial Organisation that it is not involved in any activities related to the Lumbini Special Development Zone in Nepal.<sup>54</sup>

*Comment by Tom Turner English landscape architect* : It is difficult to think of anywhere in the world less ideologically suited to a Baroque design than Lumbini. Buddhism is a faith which advises us to turn away from the endless

cycle of desire and follow a life of quiet contemplation. The Baroque style is associated with pride, boastfulness and Christianity on the march. My suggestion is to leave Tange's linear and circular canals in place, as symbols of the world's materialistic temptations, but to utterly ignore them in the planting design and future management of the Lumbini World Heritage Site.<sup>55</sup>



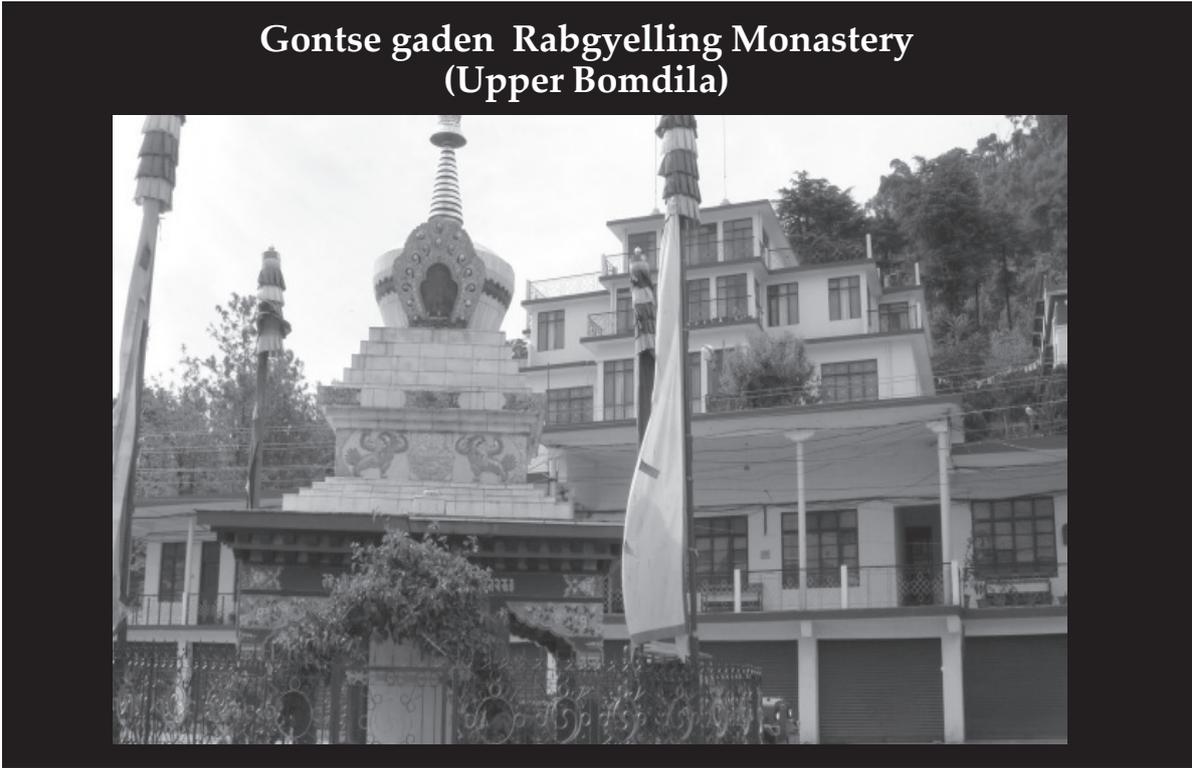
**Photo 1:** Lama Tashi (in the centre), Principal Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies, Dahung, Arunachal Pradesh, with his team of teachers.

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<sup>54</sup> In July 2011, media had reported that the Chinese foundation Asian Pacific Exchange Cooperation Foundation (APECF) had plans to build a \$ 3 billion "special development zone" to transform the town of Lumbini into a major Buddhist pilgrimage centre". See Anant Krishnan, "Further doubts on Lumbini project", *The Hindu*, August 20, 2011.

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.gardenvisit.com/garden/lumbini\\_garden\\_nepal#ixzz1Vj27dj10](http://www.gardenvisit.com/garden/lumbini_garden_nepal#ixzz1Vj27dj10) accessed on August 22, 2011.

**Gontse gaden Rabgyelling Monastery  
(Upper Bomdila)**



**Photo 2**



**Photo 3: Last Day Scene of Civil- Military Maitreya Mela at Tawang**



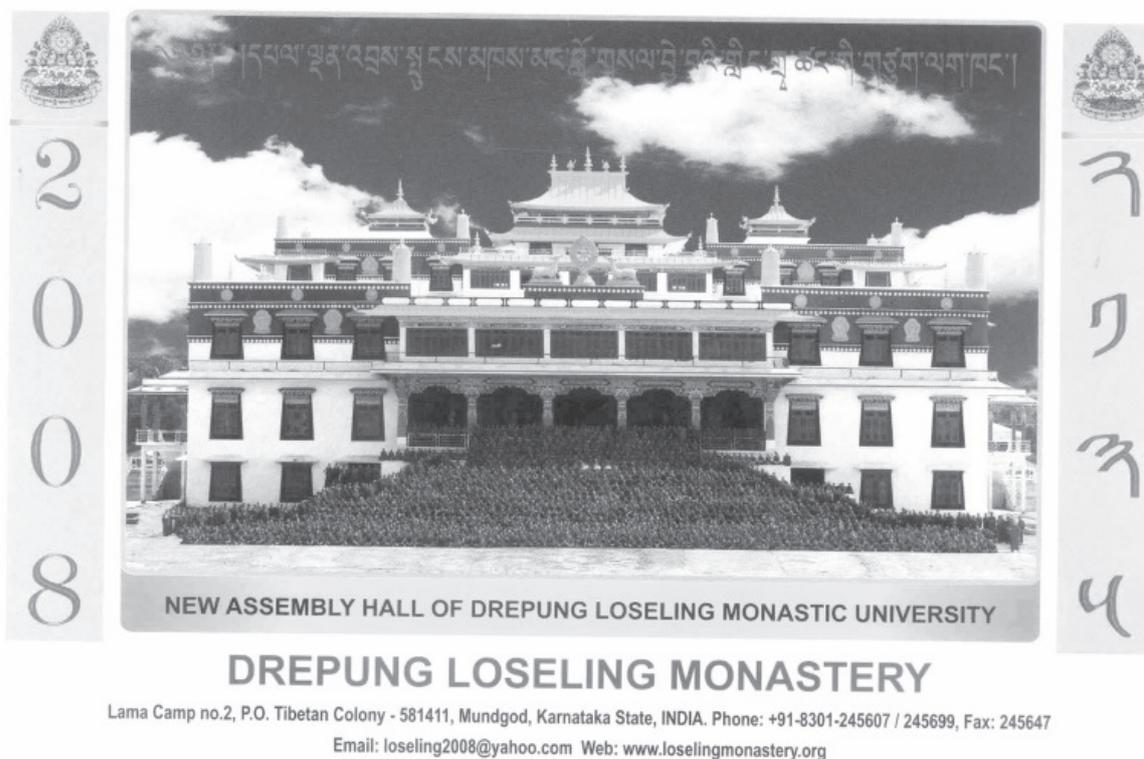
**Photo 4:** Songsten Library, Centre for Tibetan & Himalayan Studies, Dehradun



**Photo 5:** Drikung Kagyu Institute, Sahastradhara, Dehradun. Training Session of young Indian monks in progress.



**Photo 6:** Indian Students from the Himalayan Belt undergoing training at the College for Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarah, Dharamsala. Standing far right is Mr Passang Tsering, General Secretary of the College



**Photo 7:** Copy of a picture post card (many are Indians from the Himalayan Belt and other Buddhist countries)

## Chapter 3

# WHY REFUGEES AND THE STATUS OF REFUGEES IN INDIA, BHUTAN AND NEPAL

### INTRODUCTION

Why Tibetans flee and escape from Tibet in spite of harsh conditions in crossing the border and reaching India? We argue that there are four enduring pull factors: for true religious, spiritual and cultural education denied in Tibet, to see the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, more freedom and opportunities in life, and because India is the land of the Buddha.

### GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT IS NOT ENOUGH

There are problems with measuring everything with gross domestic product (GDP). According to *News from China*, Tibet recorded two digit GDP growth of 12.2 per cent for the last 18 years.<sup>1</sup> The May 2011 issue further informs that China will invest 26 billion Yuan in Tibet in the year 2011 on major projects such as the Lhasa-Shigatse section of the Qinghai- Tibet Railways, the Qinghai- Tibet plateau

power grid interconnection project, and Laohuzui hydro- electric project of 11<sup>th</sup> plan by 2011.<sup>2</sup> It asks the question – who has benefited from Chinese Tibet policy? It then answers that the 5<sup>th</sup> Forum on Work in Tibet Conference of 2010 had more favourable policies. Hanisation is not true. There are 95 per cent Tibetans of which 96 per cent are farmers and herders. The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama is lying.<sup>3</sup>

However from a study of secondary literature including field work by scholars in Tibet, discussion with Indian and international scholars and Tibetans in exile, a totally different picture emerges.

Although it may be true that CCP has spent a great deal of money in Tibet, but not necessarily on Tibetans. China has taken away more that it has given. It gives to itself, in the sense that recipients are mostly Han Chinese.<sup>4</sup> The most balanced findings are perhaps of the noted anthropologist Melvyn C.

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<sup>1</sup> "Tibet Today", *News from China*, January 2011.

<sup>2</sup> "Tibet Today", *News from China*, May 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Martin Fischer, "The Political Economy of Boomerang Aid in China's Tibet", *China Perspective*, No.2009/3, pp.38-53.

Goldstein and his co-authors. Field work from 2006 to 2009 with Puchung Wangdui a Research Scientist from the Tibetan Academy of Social Science Lhasa shows that it is unclear if people's first orientation fulfils Beijing's broader political objective and the standard of living is improving. They point out that there are other deep-seated issues that concern Tibet, such as: (a) Restrictions on monks and monasteries, (b) Language and (c) Large number of non-Tibetan migrant workers.<sup>5</sup> Their policy prescription is that "current decision makers in Beijing apparently believe that it is enough, but we suggest that it is too early to say whether this belief is correct or just wishful thinking".<sup>6</sup>

#### ASSAULT ON RELIGION AND CULTURE

**Why Flee?** Had the Chinese policies were in tune with the religion and culture of the Tibetans, it would not have created socio-economic miseries. Why Tibetans flee and escape from Tibet in spite of harsh conditions in crossing the border and reaching India? One of the important factor that pulls them is that true religious, spiritual and cultural education is denied in Tibet. Kharat in field trip in 1999 noted that every month hundreds of new refugees enter India, some register,

some do not. Four types were classified by him:

- (a) Who fled Tibet due to torture and atrocity.
- (b) Monks and nuns to take religious education about Buddhism in India and this is prevented in China.
- (c) The pilgrimage population which comes here just to get blessings of Dalai Lama and intends to return.
- (d) The youngsters who comes to India for the purpose of good moral education as they do not get the opportunity in China.<sup>7</sup>

Matters have become worst. The spontaneous uprising of March 2008 not only in TAR, but in ethnic Tibet have made a deep impact on the international community. It shows how GDP by itself is insufficient to know the feeling of the people. Policies such as government's role in reincarnation have all the potential to boomerang. Even in 2011 there was a standoff at Kirit monastery<sup>8</sup> (in Sichuan province) and monks are known to have self immolated themselves for their religion and beliefs. A case of a nun Hong Lei taking this extreme step indicating that oxygen like religious freedom is being denied.<sup>9</sup> In November 2011 Sonam

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<sup>5</sup> Melvyn C. Goldstein, Geoff Childs and Puchung Wangdui, "Beijing's "People First" Development Initiative for the Tibetan Autonomous Region's Rural Sector- A Cases Study from Shingatse Area", *The China Journal*, No.63, January 2010, pp.57-75.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Rajesh. S Kharat, *Tibetan Refugees in India*, New Delhi, Kaveri Books, 2003, p.63.

<sup>8</sup> The monastery is also spelled as Kirti in many print media accounts.

<sup>9</sup> *Hindustan Times*, Novemver 5, 2011.

Tsherab, a 26 year old Tibetan protestor from Dharamsala tried to immolate himself opposite the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi.

The cyberspace is also being used menacingly. In China posts on the web on Tibet, democracy, religion and politics in general tends to be taken down by 30,000 public sensors within a day or two of publication.<sup>10</sup> In 2009 Canadian researchers uncovered 'Ghostnet'. This programme had the capability to remotely turn on a computer's camera and microphone without alerting the user and export the images and sound silently back to servers in China. A top target of the programme were offices related to non governmental organisations working on Tibetan issue.<sup>11</sup>

### ADJUSTMENT AND ADAPTATION IN HOST COUNTRY

Sociologist Girija Saklaini wrote that Tibetans have successfully emerged

from a self-sufficient barter economy into a competitive economy and have adjusted to the new situation, which is a tribute to the Tibetan society. The three reasons for the success of Tibetan in India given by her are: Tibetans are hard working people, their womenfolk also work as hard as men if not more, and Tibetans have a natural instinct for trading.<sup>12</sup>

European anthropologist, Christoph von Furer-Heimendorf, has termed the preservation of their cultural identity and religious institutions as 'rennaissance of Tibetan civilisation'.<sup>13</sup>

On the question of resilience and as the most successful refugee group, we concur with Thubten Samphel. Samphel as Secretary General of the Department of Information and International Relations for the Tibetan Government-in-Exile quotes<sup>14</sup> Dagmar Berstorff and Friedrich-Naumann Foundation director Hubertus von Welck who have identified three major reasons.<sup>15</sup> The three are, the ability of

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<sup>10</sup> Alexander Klimburg, "Mobilising Cyber Power, *Survival*, Vol.53, No.1, February- March 2011, pp.44-45

<sup>11</sup> Richard A. Clarke and Robert K. Knake, *Cyber War: The Next Threat to National Security and What to Do About It*, New York, HarperCollins, 2010, p.59.

<sup>12</sup> Girija Saklaini, *The Uprooted Tibetans in India: A Sociological Study of Continuity and Change* (1984), New Delhi, as quoted by Dawa Norbu, "The Settlements: Participation and Integration", in Dagmar Bernstore and Hubertus Von Welck (ed), *Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, pp.186-212.

<sup>13</sup> Christoph von Furer- Heimendorf, *The Renaissance of Tibetan Civilization* (1990) as quoted by Dawa Norbu, "The Settlements: Participation and Integration", in Dagmar Bernstore and Hubertus Von Welck (ed), *Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, pp.186-212.

<sup>14</sup> Thubten Samphel, "Maintaining Vitality in Exile: The Tibetan Refugees in South Asia", *Harvard International Review*, Vol.XXXI, No.3, Fall 2009, pp.60-63.

<sup>15</sup> Dagmar Bernstore and Hubertus Von Welck, "Introduction" and Gerlad Schmitz, "Tibet's Position in International Law" in Dagmar Bernstore and Hubertus Von Welck (ed), *Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, pp.1-8.

individual Tibetans to survive and sustain themselves economically. Second, the education system created in exile and third, the Dalai Lama has introduced democracy to his people and is turning over political power to a directly democratically elected leader, the Kalon Tripa.

### LAYOUT OF CHAPTER

This chapter is in two parts. Part 1 is a literature survey on refugees in India and related issues including local incidences of security concern. It also includes sections on Bhutan and Nepal. Part 2 is summary of findings during a field trip to Dharamsala and Dehradun in April 2009.<sup>16</sup> Basic data for better understanding is at the following Appendices which are placed at the end of the chapter:

- (a) **Appendix A.** Data and Documentation of Tibetan refugees.
- (b) **Appendix B.** Position of Tibetan Government in Exile and Indian Government on refugees.
- (c) **Appendix C.** Policies on Tibetan Refugees/Status as per International Law in India.
- (d) **Appendix D.** Select Parliamentary

debates on Tibetan Refugees and Declaration between India and the PRC.

### PART I: LITERATURE SURVEY

#### Struggle According to International Law

The Tibetan state may have ceased to exist after Chinese annexation, but the Tibetan people have nevertheless the right to demand self-determination. A state which does not protect the lives and well being of its citizens – as in the case of the PRC vis a vis Tibetans – has forfeited the right to rule.<sup>17</sup> In Strasbourg Declaration (1988), the Dalai Lama proposed autonomy. The Tibetan Youth Congress opposed this. However, non-violence is common to both. According to international law, Tibetan people have the right to demand self-determination.

#### Central Tibetan Administration and Tibetan Government in Exile

The Tibetans as refugees have set up a Parliament in Exile. Its current organisation (as shown in the current *Annual Report* of 2009) has the following departments:

1. Religion and Culture- 208 monasteries (over 27451 monks)

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<sup>16</sup> Details are at Chapter 5A. A survey of Tibetan exiles by Mr Chok Tsering (an exile himself) formerly of the Vivekanand International Foundation, New Delhi titled "Socio- Political and Economic Conditions of Tibetan Refugees in India: A Case Study of Dharamsala" of October 2011 is available at <http://www.vifindia.org/article/131>

<sup>17</sup> Dagmar Bernstore and Hubertus Von Welck, "Introduction" and Gerlad Schmitz, "Tibet's Position in International Law" in Dagmar Bernstore and Hubertus Von Welck (ed), *Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, p. 3 and pp.45-71 respectively.

- and 17 nunneries (over 1696 nuns) established in exile
2. Home- Looks after 58 agricultural, agro-industrial and handicraft based settlements
  3. Finance
  4. Education – 77 schools of which 28 run Central Tibetan School Administration, under Govt of India,
  5. Security (including refugee reception)
  6. Info and IR (incl foreign missions) and
  7. Health – 53 centres of medicine

It is attempting democratization since 2001 of the administration. The Fourteenth Tibetan Parliament in Exile under Kalon Tripa, Chairman of Kashag (Cabinet) Samdhong Rinpoche (since replaced by Lobsang Sangye in 2011) had 46 Deputies from all religious traditions (Nyigma, Sakya, Kagyue, Gelug and Bon) and regions (U Stang, Dotoe, Domey, Europe and North America).

### **Budget**

As far as the budget goes, Stephanie Roemer's work throws some light on it.<sup>18</sup> The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) faced enormous financial constraint in early years. In 1964

money was raised by from the state treasury, with some aid from the Indian Government. The Dalai Lama received \$ 180,000 annually from CIA from 1950s to 1974. Annual revenues increased over the last 47 years in exile from \$ 42,000 to \$ 3,003,479. This leap in the 1990s is attributable to opening of seven CTA bureaus in Switzerland, France, Hungary, Russia, Austria, South Africa and Taiwan. Fund raising and donations now appear self sustaining. Now Tibetans in comparative terms are better off than many locals.

The CTA maintains itself not only through generous donations by international donors, but also by requiring taxes be paid by exiles above the age of six. This voluntary tax (*Danglang Chatrel*) also exhibits popular support for a stable Tibetan government in exile.<sup>19</sup>

The MHA's Annual Report 2010-2011 mentions expenditure of Rs 18.72 crores on their resettlement on one residuary housing scheme in Uttarakhand.

### **Stages of Settlement in India**

Before the PRC invasion of Tibet, some Tibetan settlers had found home in North Bengal and Sikkim in search of better standards of living to India. They had never encountered Chinese rule, they had allegiance with Karmapa, rather than Dalai Lama, and they had

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<sup>18</sup> The financial part is based on Stephnie Roemer, *The Tibetan Government – in – Exile: Politics at Large*, London/New York, Routledge, 2008, pp.123.

<sup>19</sup> Jessica Falcone and Tsering Wangchuk, "We're Not Home" : Tibetan Refugees in India in the Twenty- First Century", *India Review*, vol.7, no.3, July – September, 2008, pp. 164-199.

no desire to return. They were thoroughly assimilated with mainstream Indian society speaking Nepali. Almost all were extended Indian citizenship.<sup>20</sup> The elite from Tibet sent their children to study in India at Kalimpong and Darjeeling rather than mainland China.

### Initial Settlements

The Dalai Lama crossed into India on 31 March 1959. By 29 April 1959, the Tibetan Government in Exile (established at Musoorie) was renamed as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). In 1960 it moved to McLeodGanj (an abandoned earthquake hit hill station of the British era). On September 2, 1960, the Tibetan Parliament in Exile came into existence, later renamed as Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies. Indian authorities rehabilitated the refugees, not in one settlement but in settlements scattered all over India. The Tibetans were settled as under:

(a) In spring of 1959 the Government of India set up two temporary transit camps in Assam (Misamari) and West Bengal (Buxa, former British detention camp). The camp in Assam was planned for 9,000. Three months after the Dalai Lama reached India, it had 15,000 people. Livelihood was based on begging and selling valuable personal belongings.

(b) Due to the increasing number of deaths of the Tibetans due to climatic factors like heat, the Dalai Lama requested the Indian government for cooler places. In response, numerous exiles were sent to Himalayan region as road workers. For security reasons the Tibetans were not settled into large homogenous communities. They were scattered to different locations to discourage any unifying political activities.

(c) On further appeal from the Dalai Lama, the centre asked Sikkim, Bhutan, and all Indian state governments to provide land for the Tibetans. Sikkim, Bhutan, Orissa, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh responded favourably. The refugees were settled in 1) agricultural settlements 2) agro-based industries and 3) carpet-weaving and handicraft.

(d) First agricultural based settlements was set up in 1960 at Bylakuppe in Karnataka. In 1962 the second settlement was set up at Chaglang in Arunachal Pradesh and the third at Tezu in Lohit District the same year. The fourth was established at Mainpat in Chattisgarh (former Madhya Pradesh) in 1963. The fifth

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<sup>20</sup> Jayant Kumar Ray and Kingshuk Chatterjee, "Immigrant Communities", in D.P. Chattopadhyaya, General editor *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, Vol. X. Part 6, Jayant Kumar Ray (ed), *Aspects of India's International Relations 1700 to 2000: South Asia and the World*, New Delhi, Centre of Studies in Civilization, 2007, pp.59-98.

was established at Chandragiri in Orissa and the sixth at Mundgod in North Karnataka. By 1969, 21 agriculture based settlements were operating in India, Nepal and Bhutan. Later, eight more agriculture based settlements were set up at Hunsur and Kolegal in Karnataka, Bhandara in Maharashtra, Bomdila in Arunachal Pradesh, Changtan and Leh in Ladakh, and Herbertpur in Uttarakhand (earlier Uttar Pradesh). As it was not viable to rehabilitate all refugees in agriculture based settlements as many were nomads and traders with no idea of farming, agro-industrial settlements were launched. Some examples being: wool mill at Bir, tea estates at Bir and Chauntra, Tibetan crafts at Bajnath – all in the Kangra valley in Himachal Pradesh, a limestone quarry at Kumrao, a hydrated lime plant at Sataun, a fibre glass factory at Paonta Sahib and a handicraft centre in Puruwala (in Sirmour District of Himachal Pradesh). A Himalayan Marketing Society was set up in Delhi. Handicraft centres were set up in Kalimpong,

Darjeeling and Nepal followed by centres at Dalhousie, Dharamsala, Kalimpong, Shimla, Clement Town, Rajpur and Dehradun. Similar settlements were also set up in Nepal.<sup>21</sup>

Due to population rise and shortage of land, the Dalai Lama took steps to resettle refugees outside India – like Nepal, Bhutan, Europe, North America etc.

### **Data Bases, Fresh Arrivals and Inflow of Refugees to India**

The refugees came in waves. First was in 1959 of 85,000. The second exodus began in early 1980s. Between 1986 and 1996, nearly 25,000 people took refuge (40 per cent were monks or nuns) and in 1999, around 2,200.<sup>22</sup> Map indicates refugee clusters.

Ella Rolfe gives the figure of influx of about 25,000 which followed from 1985 and quoting BBC indicated a steady trickle of 2,200 between 1996 and 1999.<sup>23</sup> *UNHCR Country Profile- India*, September 1999 mentions that around 2,400 Tibetan exiles continue to arrive in India via Nepal each year.<sup>24</sup> Kharat in a field trip in 1999 noted that every month hundreds of new refugees enter

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<sup>21</sup> Tsewang Phuntso, "Government in Exile", in Dagmar Bernstore and Hubertus Von Welck (ed), *Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, pp.125-149.

<sup>22</sup> Rajesh Kharat, "Gainers of a Stalemate: The Tibetans in India, Ranbir Samaddar (ed), *Refugees and the State: Practices of Asylum and Care in India, 1947- 2000*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2003, pp. 281- 320.

<sup>23</sup> Ella Rolfe, "Refugee, Minority, Citizen, Threat: Tibetans and the India Refugee Script", *South Asia Research*, Vol. 28, No. 3, November 2008, pp.253-283.

<sup>24</sup> Amalendru Misra, "A Nation in Exile: Tibetan Diaspora and the Dynamics of Long- Distance Nationalism", *Asian Ethnicity*, Vol 4., No.2, June 2003, p 198.

India, some register, some do not. Four types were classified by him:

- (a) Who fled Tibet due to torture and atrocity.
- (b) Monks and nuns to take religious education about Buddhism in India as this is prevented in China.
- (c) The pilgrimage population which comes here just to get blessings of the Dalai Lama and intends to return.
- (d) The youngsters who come to India for the purpose of good moral education as they do not get the opportunity in China.<sup>25</sup>

New Delhi's current position is that the newly arrived Tibetans in India are 'pilgrims'. Although the legal status of all Tibetans in India (except, of course, the new arrivals who are considered as pilgrims) continues to be that of refugees, the law does not bar them from engaging in business, buying property or occupying positions in the public sector.<sup>26</sup>

The publication brought out by the Tibetan Parliamentary & Policy Research Centre, *Understanding the*

*Issues of Tibet* (2007) at page 11, mentions:

Each year hundreds of Tibetan children ranging in ages from six to eighteen cross the Himalayas seeking secular or monastic education in India. In 2006 alone, 2445 Tibetans, mostly young children fled from Tibet and have registered with the Tibetan Reception Centre, Dharamasala.

According to Honey Oberoi, in the past 15 years (approximately from 1996), 1,20,000 Tibetans, including approximately 18,000 politically revolting nuns and monks and long term ex-political prisoners have crossed the border for asylum in Bhutan, Nepal and India.<sup>27</sup>

Figures of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in its *Annual Reports* 2010- 2011 on Tibetan refugees is based on information provide by the Bureau of His Holiness at 1,09,015 as on February 2009. The majority of these have settled themselves either through self employment or with government assisted agricultural and handicraft schemes in different states in the country. Major concentrations are in-

- (a) Karnataka - 44, 468

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<sup>25</sup> Rajesh. S Kharat, *Tibetan Refugees in India*, New Delhi, Kaveri Books, 2003, p.63.

<sup>26</sup> Amalendru Misra, "A Nation in Exile: Tibetan Diaspora and the Dynamics of Long- Distance Nationalism", *Asian Ethnicity*, Vol 4., No.2, June 2003, pp.189- 206. The newcomers or *Sarjowas* have a lot of cultural differences such as in dress, speech (which is not the Lhasa dialect but dialect of Amdo and Kham), prefer Chinese pop music over Bollywood songs and watch Chinese TV serials. See Tenzin Sonam, "A Tibet of the Mind", *Himml SouthAsia*, December 2010, pp.50-53.

<sup>27</sup> Honey Oberoi, "Rethinking Tibet", *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 10, 2008, pp. 80-83.

- (b) Himachal Pradesh - 21, 980
- (c) Arunachal Pradesh - 7,530
- (d) Uttarakhand - 8,545
- (e) West Bengal - 5,785
- (f) J and K - 6,920<sup>28</sup>

The MHA's Annual Report mentions :

13.47- Tibetan refugees began pouring into India in the wake of the flight of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the year 1959 from Tibet. The Government of India decided to give them asylum as well as assistance towards temporary settlement. Care has been taken to retain their separate ethnic and cultural identity.

13.48- As per information provided by Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the population of Tibetan refugees in India in February 2008 was 1,10,095. Majority of these refugees have settled themselves, either through self-employment or with the Government's assistance under agricultural and handicrafts' schemes in different states in the country. The Ministry of Home Affairs has spent an amount of about Rs.18.72 crore up to November 2008 on resettlement of Tibetan refugees. The rehabilitation of Tibetan Refugees is almost complete except one residuary housing scheme

under implementation in the State of Uttarakhand.<sup>29</sup>

### **Refugee Information in Bhutan and Nepal**

Besides India, other countries which have substantial Tibetan refugees are Nepal and Bhutan. The status and relations are briefly given below.

#### **Bhutan**

Initially, 4000 refugees were settled in Bhutan after agreement between India and Bhutan. By 1973 there were tensions for reasons such as growing national consciousness of Bhutan, comparison of the privileges of the exiles with those of the locals, assassination of the Bhutanese king under curious circumstances with suspicion on refugees and the Tibetan's non-assimilative way of living. All Tibetans were requested to take Bhutanese citizenship in 1979, else face deportation back to the PRC. With the CTA's intervention, 2300 applied for citizenship- against the will of the Government in Exile. The remaining 4,000 settled in India and by 1998, the Tibetan population in Bhutan was only 1584. Since the 1980s, Bhutan has officially disallowed influx of new Tibetan refugees.<sup>30</sup>

One area which demands further study

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<sup>28</sup> *Annual Report MHA, 2010-11, p.249, Chapter XII.*

<sup>29</sup> *Annual Report MHA, 2010-11, p.249, Chapter XII.*

<sup>30</sup> Jessica Falcone and Tsering Wangchuk, "We're Not Home": Tibetan Refugees in India in the Twenty- First Century, *India Review*, vol.7, no.3, July – September, 2008, pp 164-199, n.37 and Stephanie Roemer, *The Tibetan Government in Exile : Politics at Large*, 2008, pp.74-76.

and understanding is that Bhutan also has two traditions of Nyigma and Drukpa. Both traditions are also in Tibet. The Drukpas are the ruling people and this aspect of how Nyigmas of Sikkim link with those of Bhutan and other dynamics need to be understood and grasped to understand the politics of that region. This link is indirectly related to Tibet and the relationship of its people with those of Bhutan.

### Nepal

Nepal is a transit country to reach India. Between 13,720 and 30,000 are in Nepal in 14 settlements (35 per cent). Balance (65 per cent) are scattered in remote regions near Tibet's border engaged in cross – border trade. Conditions for Tibetans are the worst in Nepal. Unofficially they could be 100,000. Since 1995, authorities have not issued any new residential cards. All new arrivals after 1995 are illegal, several times they have been repatriated. Applying for Nepali citizenship is strongly opposed by the CTA.<sup>31</sup> In an article in the *Guardian* by Isabel Hilton, it is mentioned that under Chinese pressure, Tibetans can not legally own property, travel, go to university, drive cars or own business or register their Nepal born children. They are easy

targets for extortion by everyone including the Maoists who have bankrupted many Tibetan businessmen.<sup>32</sup> The US government has offered visas to 5,000 Tibetan refugees. Brazenly, Nepal will not let them leave.<sup>33</sup>

It may be recalled that the Royal Nepal Army had mounted operations against the Tibetan guerrillas in Mustang in 1974. Unlike India, how Nepal treats Tibetans refugees is a litmus test for the Nepalese government to show its inclinations towards China. For China's security concern in Nepal it appears, are related to the flow of Tibetan refugees. In April 2003, for the first time, Nepal forced Tibetan refugees back into Chinese territory rather than allowing them to proceed to India as it had done over the years.<sup>34</sup> King Gynendra engineered the closure of the Dalai Lama's representative office in Kathmandu, stopped issuing exit permits to new refugees and halted registration of marriages and births of Tibetans and closed down the Tibetan Welfare Office.<sup>35</sup>

Author and journalist Jonathan Green in his book *Murder in the High Himalayas*, which is based on the famous case of Chinese border guards

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<sup>31</sup> Spephanie Roemer, *ibid*, p.76.

<sup>32</sup> Isabel Hilton, "Dissolution of paradise, *The Guardian*, 9 September 2009.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Holslag, "The Next Frontier: Regional Instability and Prospects for Sino-Indian Cooperation", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.33, No.5, September 2009, pp. 652-663. Author quotes Manish Dabhade and Harsh Pant, "Coping with Challenges to Sovereignty: Sino- Indian Rivalry and Nepal's Foreign Policy", *Contemporary South Asia*, 13(2), 2004, pp.157-169.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*.

shooting down fleeing 17 year old Tibetan nun Kelsang Namtso at the Nepal border close to Mount Everest in 2006 (caught by video camera by the Romanian Sergiu Matei), gives a figure of about 2,500 annually.<sup>36</sup>

A field trip survey at Dharamsala in early 2009 and discussion with the Home Secretary of the Tibetan Government in Exile indicated that the majority of respondents (Tibetan refugees in India) chose Tibet - Nepal route to escape from the Chinese controlled border. They revealed that they first land in Nepal and through UNHCR, pass to India. Almost 1500-2000 Tibetans used to escape from Tibet annually but this has stopped since the Maoist government in Nepal came to power. This they feel is due to the influence as well as nexus of the Chinese government with the Maoist government in Nepal. In 2008, they counted less than 500-600 refugee arrivals in India, and till April 2009, none had arrived. This shows the intensity and intimacy of Chinese government with the current Maoist regime in Nepal. This may be taken as a barometer of India's foreign relation with Nepal.

A professor of JNU mentions that as in 2009, each year the inflow may be 6,000 refugees. Informal conversation at Dharamsala by authors of this work, in April 2009 revealed that it may be about 2,000 per year. Of late none are coming via Nepal since Maoists have become part of the political process and the pro-Chinese leaning in Nepal. It has not been possible to trace the route or method now being adopted.<sup>37</sup> Due to tightening of the border security with China, the refugee flow into Nepal from Tibet has dropped from about 2,500 a year to 500 since March 2009 despite continuing repression inside Tibet. Since 1990, the Nepalese government has not allowed Tibetans to register as refugees but it has continued to offer important transit routes to India.<sup>38</sup> Another source presents a figure of the number of refugees appearing at the Kathmandu reception center having come down from a peak of almost 3,000 per year in 2006 to 2008 to 770 in 2010.<sup>39</sup>

### **Escape from Nepal to India**

Escape routes are along mountain passes on the Tibet- Nepal border. Nepal has failed to honour a gentleman's agreement with the UN to

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<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Green, *Murder in the High Himalayas: Loyalty, Tragedy, and Escape from Tibet*, New York, PublicAffairs, 2010, p. xv

<sup>37</sup> At a talk at the USI of India New Delhi on March 10, 2010 the information of the current inflows and return of refugees was not known. Unpublished proceedings of a talk by Colonel Virender Sahai Verma (Retd), "Tibet a Reality Check".

<sup>38</sup> Isabel Hilton, "Dissolution of paradise, *The Guardian*, September 9, 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Nidhi Bhardwaj, "The Strategic Significance of Nepal's Secret Deportation of Tibetans to China", Article No. 1809, 15 April 2011, Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi.

provide safe transit to Tibetans on their way to India.<sup>40</sup> Jonathan Green mentions that Tibetans flee the country in a brutal journey over the Himalayas. Some are escaping for a new life in India. Most mention that all they want is to meet their exiled leader, the Dalai Lama.<sup>41</sup> In the 1990s, China had an unofficial policy of turning a blind eye to those escaping. Later due to the image problem in connection with the 2008 Olympics, policies to put an end to it were enforced ruthlessly. The author observes that the escape routes are a closely guarded secret by the Tibetans.<sup>42</sup>

Due to the Chinese assistance to Nepal Army, the number of Tibetan refugees annually crossing into Nepal dropped from 3,000 to 500 in the year 2008. China was giving cash 'prizes' to Nepali border guards to apprehend and deport them.<sup>43</sup>

In spite of 11 percent of Nepal being Buddhist with close cultural and ethnic affinity of its people living on its borders with Tibet, Nepal is leaning towards China by being ruthless.<sup>44</sup> Surely it is not a good example to follow. It seems an unbecoming idea of a civilisation and nation which values and

protects Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhism.

### **Refugees in Areas where Military is Deployed close to the Chinese**

What happens if, say, at Nathula a Tibetan succeeded in crossing the border/ LoC and sought asylum or refugee status in India? As access and information to border regions was not provided and thus not mandated for the study, it is difficult to answer this question. However, the terrain is harsh where both militaries are deployed in close vicinity in areas like Ladakh, Sikkim or Arunachal Pradesh. As these areas have heavy military presences with extremely low population densities, refugees are unlikely to take this high altitude and inhospitable routes. They, in all probability, would rather take the easier route via Nepal. Informal talks with officers who have served in the region and have been involved in border talks with the Chinese, give an impression that the PLA shows a deep concern on any such infiltrators. It is understandable that infantry battalions responsible for their battalion defended area can not allow any such movement. They may well be Chinese spies pretending to be

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<sup>40</sup> Utpal Parashar, "India Losing Little Gate Game", *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, September 05, 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Green, *Murder in the High Himalayas: Loyalty, Tragedy, and Escape from Tibet*, New York, PublicAffairs, 2010, p.XV.

<sup>42</sup> Jonathan Green, *Murder in the High Himalayas: Loyalty, Tragedy, and Escape from Tibet*, New York, PublicAffairs, 2010, p. 36. We the authors also were faced with this issue of the escape route. Out of courtesy and karuna, we avoided to discuss this subject in our meetings with Tibetans.

<sup>43</sup> Purna Basnet, "China's Success", *Himal, South Asia*, April, 0211, pp.26-27.

<sup>44</sup> Export of Tibetan carpets has traditionally been a good foreign exchange earner for Nepal. Now due to cheap Chinese mass produced imitations, this carpet industry is in hard times in Nepal.

refugees. Probably the standard operating procedure may well be to hand them back where defences are manned in near eye ball to eye ball scenario. This can now be contrasted with how Assam Rifles was made responsible to receive the Dalai Lama in 1959. Much has changed and India and China have agreed to resolve their disputes peacefully. It will thus be better if status quo is maintained. What is important is that the nuances of this must be well understood by the commanders. An impression should not be created that India is "pushing back" genuine Tibetan refugees. This aspect may need more deliberation.

### Overcrowding and Other Issues

Facilities are now overcrowded and newcomers face problems. Dharamsala has the bulk of the aged refugees. Younger generation from Tibet prefer not to stay in camps but in isolated scattered camps not part of refugee establishment. In 2003 they had 20 per cent unemployment rate.<sup>45</sup> Staff writer Greg Buno from Council of Foreign Relations had observed that there were only elderly refugees in the agricultural settlements in Orrisa, implying that the

youth are getting attracted to urban centres where livelihood other than agriculture is possible.<sup>46</sup>

### Returning Refugees

Perhaps this is the greyest area of any data. Some refugees, mostly the elderly voluntarily return after seeing the Dalai Lama.<sup>47</sup> No figures or routes taken, or how they re-enter the TAR or other parts of China is available or has been found in any open source except that one author who had done field work in Yunnan and wrote *Tourism and Tibetan Culture in Transition* mentions:

Beginning in the 1980s, the Chinese government welcomed Tibetan refugees who had fled the country, as well as second generation Tibetans born in India or Nepal, back to their 'native' China. The invitation was also backed by financial support to returning Tibetans, which provided additional incentives to Tibetans who were tempted by opportunity to return 'home'. Thanks to their English skills and other 'cultural competence', many of the 'returnees' found work in tourism, some as English speaking enterprises such as restaurants and touring operations.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Rajesh Kharat, "Gainers of a Stalemate: The Tibetans in India, Ranbir Samaddar (ed), *Refugees and the State: Practices of Asylum and Care in India, 1947- 2000*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2003, pp. 281- 320.

<sup>46</sup> Meeting with PK Gautam on November 12, 2009.

<sup>47</sup> On reaching India children are sent to schools and monks to monasteries and the elderly return to Tibet. See Pico Iyer, *The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 2008, p. 168.

<sup>48</sup> Åshild Kolås, *Tourism and Tibetan Culture in Transition: A Place Called Shangrila*, Oxon, Routledge, 2008, p.21.

### Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC)

According to Pico Iyer, The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) was set up in 1980 by Lhasang Tsering (who presently owns the coffee house 'Chocolate lodge' in Dharamsala) and Jamyang Norbu, a first cousin of the Dalai Lama. The TYC links 30,000 people in 83 chapters across 11 nations. It has a different response to that of the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGIE). It favours a militant and separatist path as articulated by Lobsang Yeshe (Vice President) as narrated by Pico Iyer.<sup>49</sup>

Pico Iyer elaborates that unlike the middle non-violent path on ideals of Gandhi being followed by the Dalai Lama and TGIE, members of the TYC have also resorted to self immolation. Pawo Thupten Ngodup, a 51 year old Tibetan set fire to himself in Delhi in 1998 after a hunger strike. Lhasang Tsering tells Pico Iyer:

Dalai Lama is our greatest strength, and weakness. We have forgotten the ability to think for ourselves, the ability to do for ourselves, to stand on our own feet. And yet there was a Tibet before Dalai Lama. It was only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that Dalai Lama took over Tibet. Our history goes back two and a half thousand years.<sup>50</sup>

Lhasang Tsering continues to explain the paradox of violence and non violence:

His Highness congratulates the Tibetans who fight for Indians in the Indian Army. He congratulates the Tibetans who give their lives to the war in Bangladesh. But a poor young boy in Lhasa throws a stone at a Chinese – His Highness condemns it as an act of violence.<sup>51</sup>

According to its website accessed in July 2009, the TYC with 30,000 members has 81 regional branches in Nepal, Bhutan, Norway, Canada, France, Japan, Taiwan, Australia, USA and Switzerland. It has no political ideology and when it was raised on October 7, 1970 at Dharamsala it was blessed by the Dalai Lama. Its founding members were Tenzin Geyche Tethong (the first President), Lodi G. Gyari and Sonam Topgyal.

There is however some difference of opinion on the peaceful path of the Dalai Lama and also his middle path approach including accepting the TAR to be a part of China. The TYC has not deviated from the principle of non-violence. All policies are based on His Holiness' (the Fourteenth Dalai Lama) philosophy.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Pico Iyer, *The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*, New Delhi. Viking/Penguin, 2008, pp.193 and 202. TYC in the largest non – governmental organization in the Tibetan diaspora.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p.215.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p.216.

<sup>52</sup> Kalsang Phunstok Godrukpa, President of Tibetan Youth Congress, interviewed on 28 March 2003 by Dagmar Bernstorff in Dagmar Bernstorff and Hubertus Von Welck (ed), *Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, pp. 406-408.

The Dalai Lama's older brother Gyalo Thondup is one of the strongest voice of independence. He had written a foreword to a book featuring pieces by Lhasang Tsering and Jamyang Norbu arguing that the Dalai Lama's position was 'a pathetically watered down compromise' sponsored by 'pocket-Kissinger', "friends" of Chinese leaders.<sup>53</sup> Another activist is Tenzin Tsundue- Tibetan writer. He has managed to protest against continued occupation of Tibet during visits to India by Chinese leaders and dignitaries for which he has been imprisoned. He vows to continue the struggle.<sup>54</sup>

According to Abanti Bhattacharya the TYC had laid down clear aims, with the primary objective of total independence even at the cost of one's life. Keeping with the traditions of non violence, it launches campaigns from time to time. It also organizes cultural exhibitions and

festivals to create awareness about Tibet among people all over the world.<sup>55</sup> P. Stobdan in imagining on such future scenario mentions, "The possibility of radicals such as TYC - resorting to violent struggle and engaging in cross border operations cannot be ruled out in post Dalai Lama scenario".<sup>56</sup>

### **Learning from Gene Sharp and Samdhong Rinpoche**

The learned and former Kalon Tripa Samdhong Rinpoche has done some deep thinking on the issues of non violence. Out of the six kinds of principled non violence types theorised by Gene Sharp<sup>57</sup> , he feels that Satyagrah is the closest to Tibet's commitment to non-violent action and is the most perfect form of non-violent resistance.<sup>58</sup> We feel that the TYC will not deviate from this in future.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.217.

<sup>54</sup> Tenzin Tsundue, "Lhasa, in translation", *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), November 14, 2006.

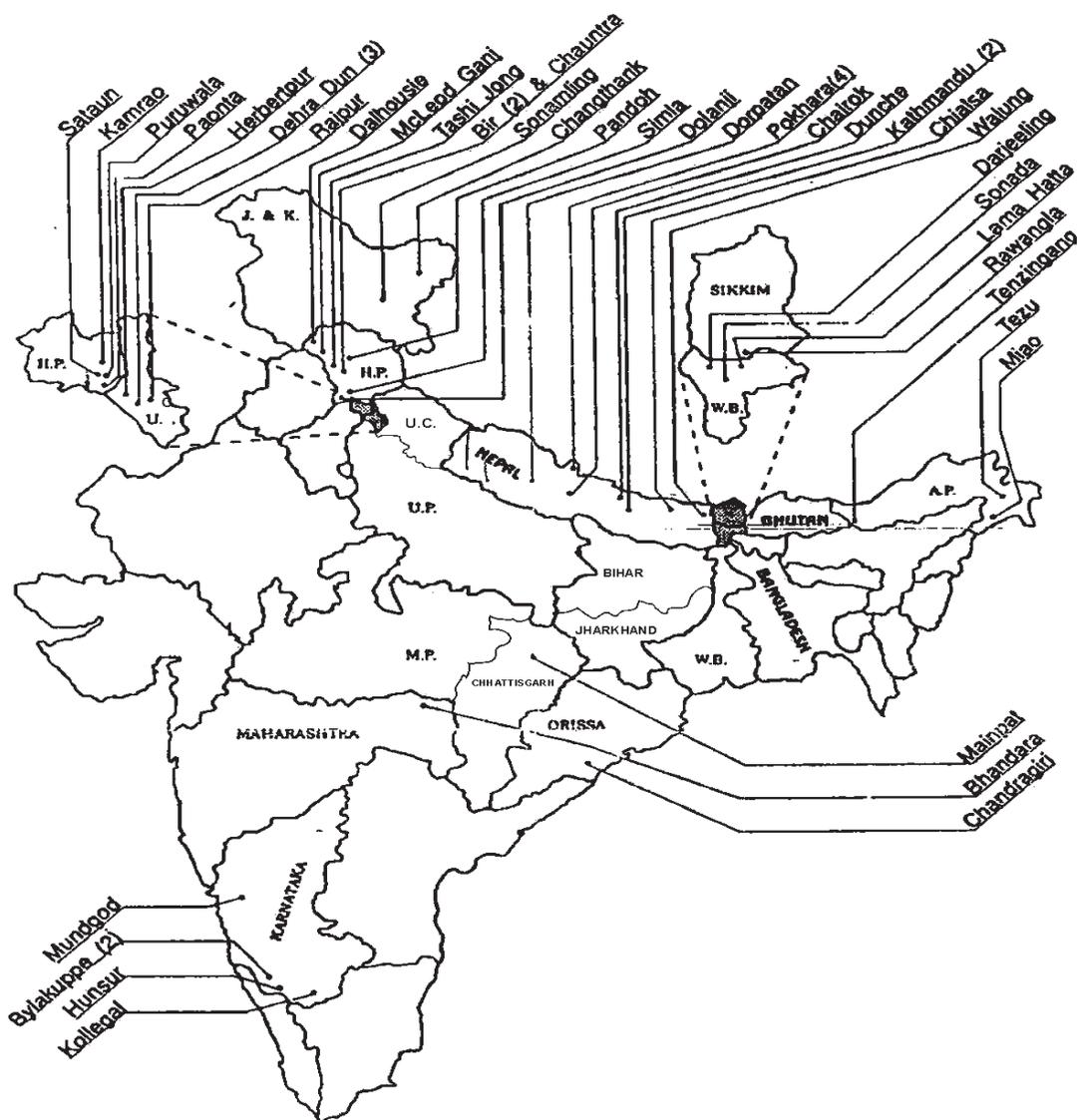
<sup>55</sup> Abanti Bhattacharya, "Chinese Nationalism and the Fate of Tibet: Implications for India and Future Scenarios", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.31, No.2, March 2007, pp.237-266.

<sup>56</sup> P. Stobdam, "Tibet and the Security of Indian Himalayan Belt", in K. Warikoo (ed), *Himalayan Frontiers of India: Historical, geo- political and strategic perspective*, London/ New York, Routledge, 2009, p.118.

<sup>57</sup> Gene Sharp, *Gandhi as Political Strategist*. The six major types are non resistance, active reconciliation, moral resistance, selective non-violence, Satyagrah and non- violent revolution. The Arab Spring revoltion which began in early 2011 is also informed by Gene Shap's work on Gandhi.

<sup>58</sup> Samdhong Rinpoche, "Education for Non-Violence", in Dagmar Bernstorff and Hubertus von Welck (Edited), *Exile as Challenge: the Tibetan Diaspora*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, pp. 454-470.

### REFUGEE ESTABLISHMENTS



Source: Modified from Planning Council CTA.

### Refugee - Host Relations

We find that the late Tibetan scholar and Professor Dawa Norbu’s work is the best in portraying this relationship. As is the practice, the author first thanks the people and the Government of India for living upto their ancient humanistic heritage, despite their own economic and space problem.<sup>59</sup> Two critical aspects of India’s

<sup>59</sup> Dawa Norbu, “The Settlements: Participation and Integration”, in Dagmar Bernstore and Hubertus Von Welck (ed), *Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, pp.186-212.

benevolent policy towards the Tibetan refugees – the liberal 'non- assimilative' framework as reflected in the separate settlements, and the broad 'delegated' authority of the Tibetan leadership headed by the Dalai Lama- ensures Tibetan cultural identity and social autonomy in a sea of the host population.<sup>60</sup>

What is new is that with the spread of urbanisation, most refugee establishments which were once remote are now a part of new towns and cities. Islands of unique Tibetan pockets such as in Karnataka are now on the national and international tourist circuit. Compared to 1960s and 1970s, relatively speaking, some Tibetans may be better off than many poor Indians. Business interest of locals also may compete. There is also an inverse relation for the cause. The young may not be idealist as their parents and grand parents. Finally there is the information and communication technology revolution with globalisation. Some of these factors are important to understand the complex micro or grass root refugee- host relations.<sup>61</sup>

### **Local Incidences of Concern in India**

During field visit scholars have noticed some concerns which are region specific. One example being the apprehension of people of Sikkim the before border trading post at Nathula was inaugurated in July 2006. In the late 1950s and 1960s Tibetans crossed over to India and settled in Sikkim and in due course of time added 'Bhutia' to their name and started availing of reservations facilities extended to scheduled tribes of the state. Being better educated than local Bhutias, they were able to grab top positions in the government. The fear was that opening of borders may lead to a massive influx of refugees with impact on demography and voter lists.<sup>62</sup> However, this fear it seems is unfounded as no such thing has happened. Table 3.1 records some local incidences which have been portrayed as security concerns or potential areas for problems.<sup>63</sup> We find that issues are local and more dialogue and understanding is needed for sustained positive relations.

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<sup>60</sup> Dawa Norbu, "The Settlements: Participation and Integration", in Dagmar Bernstore and Hubertus Von Welck (ed), *Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, pp.186-212.

<sup>61</sup> One good work is Jessica Falcone and Tsering Wangchuk, "We're Not Home: Tibetan Refugees in India in the Twenty- First Century", *India Review*, vol.7, no.3, July – September, 2008, pp 164-199.

<sup>62</sup> Pushpita Das, " Nathu La: Pass to Prosperity ButAlso a Challenge", *IDSAs Strategic Comment*, July 04, 2006 at [http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/NathuLaPassToProsperityButAlsoAChallenge\\_PDAs\\_040706](http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/NathuLaPassToProsperityButAlsoAChallenge_PDAs_040706)

<sup>63</sup> Data extracted from survey of literature given in brackets.

**Table 3.1 : Local Incidences of Concern in India**

Serial	Incidence	Remarks
1.	<p>April 22, 1994 at Dharamsala, Gaddi youth stabbed to death by a Tibetan refugee in a fight that developed over an India–Pakistan cricket match.</p> <p>(Bibhu Routry, "Tibetan Refuges in India", <i>Refugee Survey Quarterly</i>, Vol. 26. Issue 2)</p> <p><b>Key sentence:</b> "Political generosity has failed to percolate down to the popular level when those involved are faced with realities of competition for livelihood" (p.84) .</p>	<p>(a) Mob stormed Tibetan administration and looted Tibetan shops</p> <p>(b) The Dalai Lama threatened to move out the HQ from Dharamsala. Relented later when BJP leaders and CM apologized and assured safety and cordial relations</p> <p>(c) Resentment over driving up land prices, benami land purchaser envy because of prosperity of some shop owners, meat eating by monks</p>
2.	<p>In July 1999 a Tibetan youth killed a local student in Manali. 140 shops of Tibetan refugees ransacked by irate mob (Bibhu Routry, "Tibetan Refuges in India", <i>Refugee Survey Quarterly</i>, Vol. 26. Issue 2).</p>	<p>Indirectly linked to perceived prosperity</p>
3.	<p>(a) November 2000, Students Union of Arunachal Pradesh found out that 1,600 Tibetans in Tawang District and 181 in West Kameng and 300 in Bomdila had managed to obtain ST certificates. Also refugees in West Kameng, Lohit and Changalng districts were alleged to have moved out of camps to dominate business and economy in Tawang and West Kameng and were acquiring land by money power.</p> <p>(b) Locals in Dehradun dislike the meat eating habits of monks.</p> <p>(Bibhu Routry, "Tibetan Refuges in India", <i>Refugee Survey Quarterly</i>, Vol. 26. Issue 2).</p>	<p>(a) Formation of Bharat Tibet Sahyog Manch in 1999 along with RSS/BJP. In 2001 the Dalai Lama joined hands with World Hindu Council etc for conflict resolution</p> <p>(b) Govt has tightened control by making Registration Certificate(RC) more difficult, and restricting movement</p>
4.	<p>In Chandragiri (Orrisa) refugee camp occasional local resistance to the visible presence and economic success of the Tibetans migrants. Local political leaders seem to quote the instances such imposition of aliens on the local tribals as an example of lack of concern for socio-economic interests of the tribals.</p> <p>(Ashok K. Behuria, "Forced Migrants, Citizens and the State: A Study of State Behaviour Towards Forced Migrants, Tibetans, Tamils and Bangladeshis", <i>Journal of Peace Studies</i>, Vol. 9, Issue 6, November- December 2002, pp.1-9).</p>	<p>Such resistance (author assumes) has not so far led to violence mainly because of the culture of peaceful coexistence</p>

Serial	Incidence	Remarks
5.	<p>(a) In Karnataka in the initial phases in 1970s the locals had expressed problems and felt relatively marginalised at the cost of refugees. There was internal opposition.</p> <p>(T.C. Palakshappa, <i>Tibetans in India: A Case Study of Mundgod Tibetans</i>, New Delhi, Sterling, 1978 as quoted by Rajesh. S. Kharat, <i>Tibetan Refugees in India</i>, New Delhi, Kaveri Books, 2003, pp. 87-88 and A.V. Arakeri, <i>Tibetans in India: the Uprooted People and their Cultural transplantation</i>, New Delhi, Reliance, 1980).</p> <p>(b) Since the 1980s, the economic dominance of the Tibetans and favourable treatment meted to them by the Government of India in terms of financial and material transfers has increasingly caused animosity and jealousy among the locals, which partly led to disputes and even killing.</p> <p>(Stephanie Roemer, <i>The Tibetan Government in Exile: Politics at Large</i>, 2008).</p>	<p>This phenomenon is not unique to Tibetans. Later in the 1990s field work by scholars did not show much tension in south India. In 2010 anecdotal accounts mention that there was no local tensions but just that the locals were unhappy about Tibetans wanting to be issued ration cards. The issue of ration cards could over time lead to Tibetans wanting to vote in elections, etc. There was some apprehensions about the greater financial resources that Tibetans seem to have which enables them to acquire property in that area. The fear could be related to the locals losing out to Tibetans in terms of ownership of property, the locals' dominance over the electoral stakes, etc. <sup>64</sup></p>

## PART II: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON STATUS OF REFUGEES DURING FIELD TRIP TO DHARAMSALA AND DEHRADUN IN APRIL 2009

During our field trips to Dharamsala and Dehradun our respondents told us that officially Tibetans do not have refugee status in India as India is not a signatory of the 1951 Convention of UNHCR or others resolutions. They are enjoying good lives in India in exile.

Over the question of citizenship rights, some said that they are eligible but only 2 to 3 per cent have obtained the Indian citizenship. Rest are not interested, even His Holiness himself does not wish that Tibetans should obtain Indian citizenship. This would damage the movement in two ways. One, it would depress the Tibetans living in mainland Tibet and accept Chinese rule as a *fait accompli*. This would be a real blow to the entire movement from

<sup>64</sup> We thank Dr Kalyan Raman and Dr Pushpiat Das in sharing these impressions.

within. And second, if Tibetans rally for Indian citizenship who would fight for the Tibetan cause? Entire efforts of half a century would go in vain. Some have also expressed that initially the facilities provided by the Government of India in the forms of land, housing and other amenities were adequate but as population grew over the period these facilities have become scarce. Now there is a problem of space, economic opportunities, job and social security services. "We expect," as many noted, "that the concerned government authorities should revise our status and provide revised facilities". On our question of birth certificate, they said that they required a comprehensive procedure for this. Right now they have three sets of authorities which provide birth certificate. The CTA (Central Tibetan Administration) in Dharamsala, provides birth certificate, in Delhi some agencies provide while

schools certificates are also considered valid. On renewal or issuance of certificate, they expressed some dissatisfaction. There are some cases of corruption, delays and denial as well. They also raised the objection that when they are here for a decidedly long period then why is their certificate required to be renewed every year. Why not renew it every five or 10 years? On the matter of issuing of new certificates, they wondered why certificates are not issued when the fresh lots of refugees are allowed to enter India. There are many hundreds living without certificates. This always creates problems for them, particularly when they move from one place to another or from one state to another. Most of the respondents agreed that although they are not harassed by the local administration, they need to be issued with their papers. This would give them confidence.

## *Appendix A*

### DOCUMENTATION OF REFUGEES

- Arrivals in the late 1950s and early 1960s were given refugee status. In 1963 recognition as refugees was stopped. Since 1986 Indian government aid now only includes transport to settlement areas.
- Tibetans have to possess a Green Book issued by the Tibetan Government in Exile. These are also called Freedom Books. These are to be renewed each year.
- Tibetans are issued Registration Certificate (RC) by Indian authorities from the Foreigner's Regional Registration Office (FRRO) which needs to be renewed each year. Tibetans over the age of 18 who were born in India are also eligible to obtain the RC.
- The second wave of refugees were able to obtain the RC by claiming that they were born in India. Tibetans without legal status are not provided with government assistance, nor are they permitted to live in settlement without official authorization.
- Travel within India is allowed after obtaining permission from Indian authorities and reporting back to the local police upon their return.
- Since the Tibetan exile government is not recognized as a national government by other countries, they cannot issue passports themselves. For international travel, Tibetans must obtain an Identity Certificate (IC) from the Indian Government. The application must have the Green Book and RC.

## POSITION OF TIBETAN GOVERNMENT IN EXILE AND INDIAN GOVERNMENT ON REFUGEE STATUS

**TIBET'S PARLIAMENT IN EXILE  
CURRENT ANNUAL REPORT 2009,  
P.61**

Unlike many other groups in exile, Tibetans continue to use international permits for ID and travel. They have not sought Indian or other citizenship, and certainly not Chinese citizenship—exiles continue to be weighed down by the strain of statelessness, the price of holding on to their Tibetan identity while being unable to return home as free people.

To discourage the process of citizenship- This is to keep movement for autonomy and Tibet question alive. In other words if citizenship is taken, then the movement for freedom and nationalism will extinguish. From literature survey, CTA prefers exile/ refugee status. Some possible reasons being:

(a) It will be a blow to the freedom struggle.

(b) Loss of Tibetan culture.

(c) Loss of refugee status and foreign funding.

(d) A diminishing sympathy for the Tibetan freedom struggle.<sup>65</sup>

Some second generation refugees have taken Indian citizenship, mostly to avail of facilities of passports and visas to go abroad. Though the general impression is that they want to go to greener pastures to the West<sup>66</sup> (including their getting citizenship and doing well in life so to speak) with rising expectations, it cannot be applied across the spectrum. This could be more pronounced in Dharamsala.

### THE INDIAN POSITION

No policy document of Indian government could be located. However implicit understanding probably is that it serves strategic purpose to keep them as exiles.

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<sup>65</sup> Rajesh Kharat, "Gainers of a Stalemate: The Tibetans in India", Ranbir Samaddar (ed), *Refugees and the State: Practices of Asylum and Care in India, 1947- 2000*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2003, p.305.

<sup>66</sup> Pico Iyer, *The Open Road : The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama* , New Delhi , Penguin Books, 2008, pp. 35-36

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao had promised that India will not allow any anti-Chinese activities on Indian soil.

India is not signatory to UN convention on refugees or its protocol. It has membership on executive council as it has large number of refugees (3 lakhs). Article 21 of the constitution is applicable to refugees. There is no refugee law or definition of refugee. However, absence of law does not mean

absence of performance. All refugees in India are well looked after. In a TV programme on refugee day on 20 June 2009 on X channel, Tashi Wangdu, second generation India born Tibetan, Secretary Bureau of the Dalai Lama stated that he hopes the new UPA government will sign a convention on refugees. This indicates that Tibetans may prefer to see India become party to the treaty.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> News X "Uprooted People", panel discussion 2030 to 2100 hours on 20 June 2009 conducted by anchor Monika Kshtriya. Panelists, Kiran Kaur, UNHCR, Virender Dyal, Colin Gonsalves, Tashi Wangdu et al. and others including video conferencing. The panelists mentioned that a Model law proposed by UNHCR in 2008 is being examined by a high level committee.

## POLICIES ON TIBETAN REFUGEES STATUS AS PER INTERNATIONAL LAW IN INDIA AND UNGA RESOLUTIONS

### BACKGROUND

**India Not Signatory to 1951 convention and 1967 Protocol:** For its own national security reasons India is not a signatory to the convention on refugees of 1951 or protocol. However, India is a member of the executive council as it has a large number of refugees (about three lakhs in total from various countries). It has not enacted national law on refugees, instead it deals at political and administrative levels in an ad hoc manner, case by case in context. Refugees are treated as per law of the land. They were granted asylum by India and the principle of non-refoulement<sup>68</sup> has been strictly adhered to. For Tibetans, refugee status was till 1963. Newly arrived are termed as 'pilgrims'. Second wave of refugees obtained Registration Certificate by

claiming birth in India. Tibetans without legal status are not provided Government assistance, or permitted to live in settlements without official authorization.

The Tibet's Parliament in Exile maintains that:

Unlike many other groups in exile, Tibetans continue to use international permits for ID and travel. They have not sought Indian or other citizenship, and certainly not Chinese citizenship— exiles continue to be weighed down by strain of statelessness, the price of holding on to their Tibetan identity while being unable to return home as free people.<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, Tibetan refugees born in India are entitled to Indian citizenship

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<sup>68</sup> The principle of *non-refoulement* is the cornerstone of asylum and of international refugee law. Following from the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution, as set forth in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this principle reflects the commitment of the international community to ensure to all persons the enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to life, to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and to liberty and security of person. These and other rights are threatened when a refugee is returned to persecution or danger. See <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain>

<sup>69</sup> *MHA Annual Report 2009*, p.61

according to section 3 of Indian citizenship Act 1955, though taking citizenship is still very rare and limited. The Delhi High Court judgement of December 2010 in case of Ms Namgyal Dolkar born to Tibetan parents in India on April 13, 1986 is a new development and needs to be observed with sympathy.<sup>70</sup> With this court ruling according to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 1986, any person born in India on or after January 26, 1950, but prior to the commencement of the 1986 Act on July 1, 1987, is citizen of India by birth. Thus 35,000 are eligible (born between 1956- 1987). The case is not new. One Tibetan pointed out that “We all knew about the 1986 Act long back in school time and still chose to stay as refugees. The Act is not new at all, but much hyped recently only. Back in college I wanted to join National Defence Academy (NDA) but later I chose not to. It's clearly written in the eligibility criteria that those Tibetan students whose parents are in India from before 1962 can join the NDA”.

### UNGA RESOLUTIONS

UNGA resolutions of 1959, 1961, 1965 and 1991 UN 42 Sub- Commission on human rights is reproduced below.

### UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY - RESOLUTION 1353 (XIV)

New York, 1959

#### *The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* the principles regarding fundamental human rights and freedoms set out in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948,

*Considering* that the fundamental human rights and freedoms to which the Tibetan people, like all others, are entitled include the right to civil and religious liberty for all without distinction,

*Mindful* also of the distinctive cultural and religious heritage of the people of Tibet and of the autonomy which they have traditionally enjoyed,

*Gravely* concerned at reports, including the official statements of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to the effect that the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the people of Tibet have been forcibly denied them,

*Deploring* the effect of these events in increasing international tension and embittering the relations between

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<sup>70</sup> The Delhi High court has directed the Ministry of External Affairs to issue a passport. See Kanu Sarda, “ Ministry of External Affairs to Issue Passport to Tibetan”, December 27, 2010 at <http://www.dnaindia.com/>

peoples at a time when earnest and positive efforts are being made by responsible leaders to reduce tension and improve international relations,

- 1) *Affirms its belief* that respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is essential for the evolution of a peaceful world order based on the rule of law;
- 2) *Calls* for respect for the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people and for their distinctive cultural and religious life.

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY - RESOLUTION 1723 (XVI)**

New York, 1961

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolution 1353 (XIV) of 21 October 1959 on the question of Tibet,

*Gravely concerned* at the continuation of events in Tibet, including the violation of the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people and the suppression of the distinctive cultural and religious life which they have traditionally enjoyed,

*Noting* with deep anxiety the severe hardships which these events have inflicted on the Tibetan people, as evidenced by the large-scale exodus of Tibetan refugees to the neighbouring countries,

*Considering* that these events violate fundamental human rights and freedoms set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights, including the principle of self-determination of peoples and nations, and have the deplorable effect of increasing international tension and embittering relations between peoples,

- 1) *Reaffirms its conviction* that respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is essential for the evolution of a peaceful world order based on the rule of law;
- 2) *Solemnly renews* its call for the cessation of practices which deprive the Tibetan people of their fundamental human rights and freedoms, including their right to self-determination;
- 3) *Expresses the hope* that Member States will make all possible efforts, as appropriate, towards achieving the purposes of the present resolution.

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY - RESOLUTION 2079 (XX)**

New York, 1965

*The General Assembly*

*Bearing* in mind the principles relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Reaffirming its resolutions 1353 (XIV) of 21 October 1959 and 1723 (XVI) of 20 December 1961 on the question of Tibet,

*Gravely* concerned at the continued violation of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people of Tibet and the continued suppression of their distinctive cultural and religious life, as evidenced by the exodus of refugees to the neighbouring countries,

- 1) *Deplores* the continued violation of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people of Tibet;
- 2) *Reaffirms* that respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is essential for the evolution of a peaceful world order based on the rule of law;
- 3) *Declares* its conviction that the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Tibet and the suppression of the distinctive cultural and religious life of its people increase international tension and embitter relations between peoples;
- 4) *Solemnly* renews its call for the cessation of all practices which deprive the Tibetan people of the human rights and fundamental freedoms which they have always enjoyed;
- 5) *Appeals* to all States to use their best endeavours to achieve the purposes of the present resolution.

**UN SUB-COMMISSION ON  
PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND  
PROTECTION OF MINORITY RIGHTS**

Resolution 1991/10

Geneva, August 23, 1991.

- 1) At its forty-third session, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted, on 23 August 1991, resolution 1991/10 entitled "Situation in Tibet," as follows:

"The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities Guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the International Bill of Human Rights and other international instruments in the field of human rights,

Concerned at the continuing reports of violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms which threaten the distinct cultural, religious and national identity of the Tibetan people,

- 1) Calls upon the Government of the People's Republic of China fully to respect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Tibetan people;
- 2) Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to the Commission on Human Rights information on the situation in Tibet provided by the Government of China and by other reliable sources."

## Appendix D

# SELECT PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES ON TIBETAN REFUGEES AND DECLARATION BETWEEN INDIA AND PRC

The TPPRC's *Indian Parliament on the issue of Tibet: Lok Sabha 1952- 2005* (2006) has reproduced nearly all the debates as it pertains to Tibet. Some debates relevant to the present study are highlighted below. These are followed by those on the Ministry of External Affairs web pages.

### NUMBER OF REFUGEES

In various debates from 1967 to 1989 the answers to the number of refugees were:

- (a) As in 1967, the total number who have come over since March 1959 is about 51,000 (p.289).
- (b) 867 in 1967 and 240 in 1966(p.289).
- (c) As in 1972 there are about 58,000 Tibetan refugees living in India (p.328).
- (d) As in 1989 there are about 80,000 Tibetan refugees living in India (p.346).

### SPIES

In 1967 there were fears that refugees 51 in number who had crossed over in Uttar Pradesh may have some Chinese spies coming with them. In reply it was

said that the government is taking all precautions by screening etc (p.282).

### CITIZENSHIP

On May 5 1976 the Deputy Minister in the MHA clarified that:

- (a) Every person born in India on or after 26 January 1950, becomes a citizen by birth under -subsection (1) of section 3 of Citizenship Act, 1955, subject to exceptions under sub-section (2) thereof.
- (b) Tibetans who came to India and have been residing in India for more than five years will acquire citizenship rights only if they are granted certificates of naturalization by the Central Government under section 6 of Citizenship Act, 1955.
- (c) A few applications have been received for grant of Indian citizenship by naturalization and these will be dealt with as per rules and regulations on the subject (p.332).

### The Stand of Government of India on Tibet- Debate of April 20, 1978

The Government of India has

consistently held that Tibet is a region of the PRC. It is well known that thousands of Tibetans led by HH the Dalai Lama, fled to India from Tibet. HH Dalai Lama was granted political asylum by the Government of India on the condition that he and the Tibetans in India would not take part in activities vis-a-vis the PRC. This is in line with our policy of not interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. However, the Government of India provides humanitarian assistance to rehabilitate the Tibetan refugees in India and supports the preservation of their culture and religious traditions (p.334).

**Objectives of Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath Debate of 5 May 2003**

The Institute was established in 1967 by efforts of Nehru and the Dalai Lama. It was associated with Sampurnanand Sanskrit University till 1975. It was granted autonomy in 1978. In 1988 it was declared Deemed University, managed and supported by the Department of Culture. Its objectives:

- (a) Preservation of Tibetan Culture and Tradition
- (b) Restoration of Ancient India Sciences and Literature preserved in Tibetan Language but lost in the original.
- (c) To offer alternate educational facilities to the students of Indian Himalayan Border formerly availing of the opportunity of receiving higher education in Tibet.
- (d) Accomplishment of gains of

teaching and scope of research in traditional subjects through modern university education system with provisions for award of degrees in Tibetan studies. (p.348).

**QUESTIONS FOUND ON  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
WEB PAGES FROM 2000 TILL JULY  
2009**

Discussion on Karmapa Issue

Unstarred Question No 1011

To be Answered on 1.3.2000

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SHRI Y.S. VIVEKANANDA REDDY:

SHRI U.V. KRISHNAMRAJU:

SHRI R.L. BHATIA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether China has sought information from Indian Government about Karmapa Lama's visit to India;
- (b) if so, whether India had also requested China to provide full details about how Karmapa Lama left Tibet and let it know the circumstances under which the 17th Karmapa Ugyen Trinley Dorje managed to travel the long arduous route to Dharamsala;
- (c) if so, whether both the countries have agreed to discuss this issue amicably;
- (d) if so, whether India and China are working together about this episode and there is a clear

understanding between India and China on this issue; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER: THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a) Following the arrival in Dharamshala on January 5, 2000 of Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji, recognised by his supporters as the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, the Chinese Government requested the Government of India to provide information regarding his whereabouts.

(b) The Chinese side has been requested to share with us details regarding the circumstances of his departure from Tibet for India.

(c) - (e): India and China have been in touch through diplomatic channels. The two sides have noted with satisfaction the improvement and development of bilateral relations on the basis of Panchsheel.

Unstarred Question No 1050

To be Answered on 1.3.2000

Karmapa Origin

SHRI SURESH CHANDEL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that the Chief Secretary

of Sikkim issued a firm statement on the 17th Karmapa Rinpoche, who escaped to India in January, 2000 from Tibet, has Indian origin;

(b) if so, whether the Chief Secretary has made this Statement with the approval of the Government of Sikkim or the Union Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the steps proposed to be taken in the matter which is sensitive and affects the Indo-China relations?

ANSWER: THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS : (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a): Government is not aware of any such statement made by the Chief Secretary of Sikkim.

(b) - (d): The question does not arise.

Unstarred Question No 2013

To be Answered on 8.3.2000

Asylum to Karmapa

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA:

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN:

SHRI SURESH KURUP:

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA:

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA:

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN:

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE:

SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA:

SHRI SUKDEO PASWAN:

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH:

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN:

SHRI R.L. BHATIA:

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA:

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO:

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE:

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA:

SHRI RAM PRASAD SINGH:

SHRI MOHAMMAD ANWARUL  
HAQUE:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL  
AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have obtained the necessary information about the flight of the 17th Karmapa along with his team from Tibet to Dharamshala in January, 2000;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, whether the mystery still surrounds the reported flight of Karmapa Lama from Tibet and his proposed visit to Rumtek monastery in Sikkim;
- (d) whether Dalai Lama has requested the Union Government to give asylum to Karmapa;
- (e) if so, whether the Government have also received any request from some organisations to provide political asylum to Karmapa along with his associates;
- (f) if so, whether the Government have received any protest from China and some organisations against

providing asylum to Karmapa;

- (g) whether the Government proposes to give him the same status as had been given to Dalai Lama;
- (h) if so, the action taken by the Government on this issue; and
- (i) if not, the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER: THE MINISTER OF  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: (SHRI  
JASWANT SINGH)

- (a) - (i): Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji, recognised by his supporters as the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, arrived in Dharamsala from Tibet on January 5, 2000. The Chinese side has been requested to share with us details regarding the circumstances of his departure from Tibet for India. The official Chinese position on Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji's arrival in India is that Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji had gone abroad to "get the musical instruments" of the Buddhist rituals and the "black hat" used by previous Karmapas. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has publicly stated that Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji would like to stay in India and study. Representations have been received from his supporters regarding his continued stay in India. Representations have also been received against his continued stay in India. The matter requires careful consideration taking into account all relevant factors.

Unstarred Question No 6843  
To be Answered on 10.05.2000

KARMAPA ISSUE

SHRI GEORGE EDEN:

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have received any official communication from the Government of China regarding the stay of Karmapa in India;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the action taken thereon?

Answer: The Minister of State for External Affairs: (Shri Ajit Kumar Panja)

- (a) - (c): Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji, recognised by his supporters as the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, arrived in Dharamsala from Tibet on January 5, 2000. The official Chinese position on Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji's arrival in India is that Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji had gone abroad to "get the musical instruments" of the Buddhist rituals and the "black hat" used by previous Karmapas. The Chinese side has been requested to share with us details regarding the circumstances of his departure from Tibet for India. India and China have been in touch through diplomatic channels. The two sides have noted with satisfaction the improvement and development of

bilateral relations on the basis of Panchsheel.

Unstarred Question No 7943  
To be Answered on 17.05.2000

ASYLUM TO KARMAPA

SHRIMATI SHYAMA SINGH:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have unofficially permitted Karmapa to stay in India; and
- (b) if so, the reaction of China thereto?

Answer: The Minister of State for External Affairs: (Shri Ajit Kumar Panja)

(a) & (b) Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji, recognised by his supporters as the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, arrived in Dharamsala from Tibet on January 5, 2000. The official Chinese position on Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji's arrival in India is that Lama Ugyen Thinley Dorji had gone abroad to "get the musical instruments" of the Buddhist rituals and the "black hat" used by previous Karmapas. The Chinese side has been requested to share with us details regarding the circumstances of his departure from Tibet for India. India and China have been in touch through diplomatic channels. The two sides have noted with satisfaction the improvement and development of bilateral relations on the basis of Panchsheel.

Unstarred Question No 5529  
To be Answered on 29.08.2001

OBJECTION TO KARMAPA STAY

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SHRI R.L. BHATIA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether China has objected to the staying of Karmapa Lama in India; and
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

ANSWER: THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

- (a) No Sir.
  - (b) Does not arise.
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**Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation**

**Between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China**

23/06/2003

At the invitation of Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China H.E. Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister of the Republic of India H.E. Atal Bihari Vajpayee paid an official visit to the People's Republic of China from 22 to 27 June 2003.

The Indian side recognizes that the Tibet Autonomous Region is part of the territory of the People's Republic of China and reiterates that it does not allow Tibetans to engage in anti-China political activities in India. The Chinese side expresses its appreciation for the Indian position and reiterates that it is firmly opposed to any attempt and action aimed at splitting China and bringing about "independence of Tibet".

# POST-DALAI LAMA CONTINGENCIES

There are two complex issues related to the post-Dalai Lama scenario.

First, who will be chosen successor and considered legitimate? The PRC, Tibetans in the TAR, Tibetans in the PRC and Tibetan exiles need to be considered in this issue of authenticity. The role of India and other countries also cannot be ignored. The hierarchy of the leadership issue will also come into focus for scouting the tulku (reincarnation). Within Gelugpa the next is Panchen Lama: a Chinese selected one is in the PRC; the one endorsed by the Dalai Lama is missing in China. The next in hierarchy is probably the Karmapa, now in India (endorsed both by the PRC and the Dalai Lama). According to Ashwani Kumar, the Karmapa is the spiritual

leader of the Kagyud school of Tibetan Buddhism and ranks third in the spiritual hierarchy after the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama.<sup>1</sup> Pico Iyer also places him third in the hierarchy.<sup>2</sup> For the first time the Karmapa was allowed to travel outside his exile in Sidhbari (near Dharamsala) to border regions such as Ladakh in September 2008 and was received well.<sup>3</sup> To the best of the information available, he has not been allowed to go to Sikkim.

The Dalai Lama has stated that his successor will not be found within the present Chinese borders but from the exile community. A new Dalai Lama installed by the Chinese in Beijing – like the Eleventh Panchen Lama – may be seen as a puppet.<sup>4</sup> The Chinese leadership has proclaimed that the

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<sup>1</sup> Ashwini Kumar, "Karmapas: A historical and philosophical introduction", *Bulletin of Tibetology, New Series*, No. 1, 13 February 2002, pp. 7–15. In a presentation to the research committee, P. Stobdan mentioned that the Karmapa is ninth in the hierarchy; his hierarchical status may be in doubt, although in the search for the Twelfth Gyalwang Drukpa Rinpoche of Hemis Gompa of Ladakh in the 1960s, the lama reincarnation was located by rights and rituals of the Dalai Lama, Karmapa (the sixteenth), Dudjon Rinpoche and Sakya Trichen.

<sup>2</sup> Pico Iyer, *The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*, New Delhi: Penguin/Viking, 2008, p.121.

<sup>3</sup> Chering Dorjay, "How Rescue Mission Was Carried Out", *Border Affairs*, October–December 2008, pp. 14–16.

<sup>4</sup> Stephanie Roemer, *The Tibetan Government in Exile: Politics at Large*, London, Routledge, 2008, p. 177.

Fifteenth Dalai Lama will be born in the PRC and will be chosen through traditional methods.<sup>5</sup> Confusion is certain in future on this account. Will the Tibetan Parliament in Exile play a part via democratic means? Like the Tenth Sikh Guru, will the institution come to an end? In India, the first line of opinion of importance in the changeover will be that of the Tibetan refugees.

The second issue is- how does Tibetan nationalism play out in the absence of a charismatic leader such as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama? Will the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), which was in any case opposed to the peaceful middle path become more strident, but at what and at whom? Will China's "strike hard" policy win hearts and minds? Can a spontaneous movement such as of March 2008 in Tibet be repeated? Will Tibetans in exile go the way of the Parsis in India? Will India and Tibetans lose its case for Tibet in the case? Will there be a day when Tibetans return to Tibet (either voluntarily, or as a negotiated settlement or no more welcome as guests and expelled by India?)

#### SURVEY OF LITERATURE

*Åshild Kolås*, author and researcher at the Peace Research Institute, Oslo:<sup>6</sup>

The interim period between two Dalai

Lamas is in practice almost 20 years, since a regent would be in charge while the new Dalai Lama was a minor. So the scenario for when the current Dalai Lama passes away should be careful to take into account how the interim period functioned traditionally. The young Karmapa would probably have a very important *informal* role in this period, but I don't think he could become a regent. He is not a Gelugpa lama, and historically the regent would normally be a member of the aristocracy. So in my view the Karmapa could not fill the formal leadership slot. The exile government has for a long time embarked on a process of democratization, and there would definitely be a "democratically elected" regent, if at all, so the secular nature of the regency would probably be even more prominent today than it was in the past. This is according to my understanding of the role of the regent and the interim period between two Dalai Lamas. This is a sensitive topic to discuss with Tibetans though, because many Tibetans do not like to talk about the Dalai Lama passing away. Still this is a very important question.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Abanti Bhattacharya:*

Given the scenario where no second line of Tibetan leadership is in sight, the future of Tibet, particularly in the post-Dalai Lama era, is uncertain. This

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Åshild Kolås, *Tourism and Tibetan Culture in Transition: A Place Called Shangrila*, Oxon, Routledge, 2008 and "Tibetan Nationalism: The Politics of Religion", *Journal of Peace Research*, 33(1), February 1996, pp. 51-66.

<sup>7</sup> Internet correspondence with task force leader in November 2008.

uncertainty could have its impact on India-China relations, as Tibet remains a live issue shaping them. Several trends may emerge among Tibetans in the post-Dalai Lama era:

- A vacuum in leadership after the Dalai Lama may lead to a power struggle between the TGIE and the Seventeenth Karmapa, while the whereabouts of Panchen Lama are uncertain.
- Infighting among various Tibetan monastic organisations may arise.
- The TYC may go radical and launch a more open political and even armed struggle.
- India could recognise the democratically elected TGIE, if relations with China deteriorate, and some other states may follow suit.
- The Tibetan community in India may pose a problem if conflict of interest grows with locals and the Indian Government could then ask them to return to China.
- The Tibetan diaspora could complicate negotiations on the border problem between the two countries.
- The TGIE may fall into disarray with no leadership and the Tibetan movement fizzles out.

- China may prop up its own Dalai Lama and the pro-PRC Tibetans may rally behind the Chinese-appointed Dalai Lama.

Much will depend on what course India-China relations take in the future, the ability of the Tibetans to conduct a unified and peaceful national struggle and the approach of the reformist forces in China.<sup>8</sup>

In a commentary in March 2010 Abanti points out that the Fifth National Conference on the Work of Tibet was held in Beijing on January 18–20, 2010 (the first time after the March 2008 uprising) to address the issue of the future Dalai Lama. The thrust was to promote Tibetan Buddhism to blunt Western criticism of China's repressive policy. She suggests that while China has shown eagerness for the Dalai Lama's return to China, it has not categorically refused to take back the exiled Tibetan population based in India. China according to the author is buying time till the Dalai Lama passes away, after which, it hopes, the Tibetan movement would naturally fizzle out.<sup>9</sup>

*Dennis J. Burke* concedes that this will be a complicated problem. Tibet will suffer confusion, power play and weaknesses. The reasons given are:

- (a) There are elements in the Tibetan community who are holding back

<sup>8</sup> Abanti Bhattacharya, "Chinese Nationalism and the Fate of Tibet: Implications for India and Future Scenarios", *Strategic Analysis*, 31(2), March 2007, pp. 237–66.

<sup>9</sup> Abanti Bhattacharya, "As China prepares for post-Dalai Lama Tibet, what is India to do with the Tibetan Exiles?" [http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/AsChinapreparesforpost-DalaiLamaTibetwhatisIndiatodowiththeTibetanExiles\\_abhattacharya\\_250310](http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/AsChinapreparesforpost-DalaiLamaTibetwhatisIndiatodowiththeTibetanExiles_abhattacharya_250310)

on more radical action purely because of the Dalai Lama's leadership. Petty acts of terrorism cannot be ruled out.

- (b) Tenzin Tsundue believes that Tibetans have enough unity to continue the peaceful path in the Dalai Lama's absence.
- (c) China may choose a successor like it did for Panchen Lama (the one currently recognized by the Tibetans is missing in China). It may happen that there are two Dalai Lamas.
- (d) Without the recognition of the Panchen Lama (under house arrest or dead) the Tibetan choice of the Dalai Lama will need the blessing of the next higher Lama, the Karmapa, who has yet to demonstrate that he is entirely on Dharamsala's side and who has not, in this incarnation or the previous one, been called upon to legitimize the choice of successor.
- (e) It takes 18 years for the new Dalai Lama to be old enough to take power. In the past this led to the appointment of regent, and once again the logical choice is the Karmapa.<sup>10</sup>

*Stephanie Roemer* proposes the hypothesis that "The function and political legitimation of the CTA as Tibetan government in exile is

determined by the institution of the Dalai Lama". In her opinion, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has been a unifying force, yet he hinders a secular democratic transformation of the exile Tibetan political system as a whole. Is the exiled Tibetan political system in a position to handle his death in terms of keeping things stable and controllable? The institution of the Dalai Lama is based on tulku, the concept of reincarnation since the seventeenth century. The absence of such a leader generally leads to instability. Unsteadiness is most likely because of the existing factionalism along regional, religious and political lines among the Tibetan exiles. The present Dalai Lama says that his reincarnation will not be born in the PRC. It is possible that the Seventeenth Karmapa emerges as leader, but the crucial question is whether he has the exceptional personal qualities, the expertise and the charisma comparable with those of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, which will allow him to handle political affairs until a new Dalai Lama can succeed. The death of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama will reveal the real strength of the CTA to act as an exile government on behalf of the entire Tibetan nation.<sup>11</sup>

*Pico Iyer* writes that the Dalai Lama says that the time of tradition is now over. He may designate his own successor from among the young lamas

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<sup>10</sup> Denis J. Burke, "Tibetans in Exile in a Changing Global Political Climate", *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 12, 2008, pp. 79–85.

<sup>11</sup> Stephanie Roemer, *The Tibetan Government in Exile: Politics at Large*, London, Routledge, p. 177.

around him and ask Tibetans to treat him as their leader, whether or not he bears the title of the Dalai Lama.<sup>12</sup> The Dalai Lama insists that the future is in separating church and state. Iyer's book *The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama* lists two views of some exiles: (a) possible civil war and terrorist action; (b) continuation of the democratic pattern laid out by the Dalai Lama.<sup>13</sup> Iyer quotes the Dalai Lama to have said that

All depends on the respect of the Tibetan people for their popularly elected leader. 100%, impossible, but 60, 70 and still 30 and 40% opposed: it can create some problems. We're in a foreign country; meantime if the Indian government withdraws some formal recognition, then I don't know. Very complicated. (pp. 228–9)

The Dalai Lama also mentions that the system of elected Prime Minister is in place. One of the first factors he mentioned when contemplating the future was not Tibet or even China but India, which would grow anxious if they started to assert themselves too much as a political force (p. 229).

**Mohan Guruswamy** speculates that:

- (a) The lid on Tibetan militancy kept by Dalai Lama will be off, leading

to challenge of political power of the next Dalai.

- (b) The chosen leadership will be challenged by the Chinese who will foist their own incarnation.
- (c) Young exiles will stake a claim of temporal leadership; power struggle to include regents.
- (d) Splintering of the exile leadership would be the objective of the Chinese.

Regarding consequences for India he mentions how Indian Buddhists of the Himalayan belt are integrated with Tibetans. This contradicts P. Stobdan's view.<sup>14</sup> Guruswamy points out that the Dalai Lama has shown restraint by not overtly interfering with the functioning of the numerous monasteries, but a future religious leadership might not be so restrained, particularly when easy Western money is involved. He is uncomfortable with the fact that India has anointed the Tibetan Dalai Lama as the only Buddhist leader we recognize.<sup>15</sup>

**P. Stobdan:** The Chinese treat the Dalai Lama as a strategic commodity and will influence both the process of the next Dalai Lama's selection and the role he would play in Tibet. They will seek to install their own nominee and will have

<sup>12</sup> Pico Iyer, "A Hell on Earth", *The New York Review of Books*, March 2009, pp. 6–10.

<sup>13</sup> Iyer, *The Open Road* n. 2, p. 219.

<sup>14</sup> P. Stobdan, "India's Concerns over Tibet – I and II", *Defence & Technology*, June 2006 and July 2006, pp. 36–41 and pp. 38 to 43. Also see P. Stobdan, "Tibet and security of the Indian Himalayan belt", in K. Warikoo (ed.), *Himalayan Frontiers of India: Historical, geo-political and strategic perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 102–21.

<sup>15</sup> Mohan Guruswamy, "India's 'Tibet Policy' ", *South Asia Defence and Strategic Year Book*, 2009, pp. 72–6.

nothing to do with the Dalai Lama based in India. India will then land up with a Tibetan problem of its own that may have other kinds of implications.<sup>16</sup> He further amplifies:

- (a) Chinese efforts to gain control over Tibetan refugees will intensify via manipulation of the Karmapa.
- (b) There would be much turbulence between faction-ridden refugees. The Chinese will further attempt to divide the Tibetans (like in Shugden and Karmapa controversies).
- (c) Cross-border forays by radical groups like the TYC, Chushi Gangdrug, etc. cannot be ruled out.<sup>17</sup>

As regards reincarnation, he argues that China has been preparing for the contingency for more than a decade to ensure that: (a) the transition has no security implications (b) China is able to control both the selection process and its choice of candidate for the next Dalai Lama. The Chinese have enacted a law in 2007 for the next Dalai Lama.<sup>18</sup> Further options suggested by the Dalai Lama are:

- (i) Ending the born-again rule and relying on referendum to decide the future.
- (ii) For the selection option he has suggested the Zen model of

choosing a qualified adult, or successor in consultation with other eminent lamas or passing the seat to the next lamaist hierarchy, Sakya Lama or Karmapa.

As the Tibetans place the lama ahead of even the Buddha, option (i) above is least likely and may also end the Gelugpa-Lamaist supremacy, leading to sectarian strife. The Dalai Lama can be proactive and appoint the fifteenth reincarnation while he is still alive, hoping that an amicable solution would be found before his demise.<sup>19</sup>

*C.V. Ranganathan and Vinod C. Khanna:*

The pessimists fear that China is engaged in changing the demographic profile of Tibet, reducing Tibetans to a minority in their own land and thus exterminating Tibetan civilization. They believe that the Chinese are willing to wait till the present Dalai Lama dies, in the hope that it would extinguish Tibetan resistance. In a more optimistic scenario, painted by important exiled Tibetan scholars, the amazing economic liberalisation in China could lead to a gradual political democratisation. This, they hope, will eventually result in a change in Beijing's policy not only towards internal dissent but also towards Tibet. It is their hope that a non-dogmatic post-revolutionary leadership will think differently and more liberally about Tibet.

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<sup>16</sup> Stobdan, "India's Concerns over Tibet – I and II", n. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Stobdan, "Tibet and security of the Indian Himalayan belt", n. 14.

<sup>18</sup> Discussed at IDSA, June 20, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Some Tibetan leaders argue, perhaps with reason, that those in present Chinese leadership who believe that the problem will go away when the present Dalai Lama dies are miscalculating.<sup>20</sup>

*In Rajiv Sikri's assessment* contrary to what the Chinese Government may be thinking, the situation may deteriorate and go out of control after the present Dalai Lama is no more as there is no leadership like his for the peaceful middle path.<sup>21</sup>

**B. Raman** notes that after the violence in March–April 2008 the Chinese have regained their confidence in 2009. They are convinced that the international community barring sections of Western NGOs has accepted the irreversibility of the ground reality of Tibet as an integral part of China. They are prepared to show patience and wait for the Dalai Lama's death and thereafter nominate their own Dalai Lama. What they are worried about is that His Holiness might try to pre-empt this by changing the traditional process by which a successor is chosen. B. Raman is certain that when the Dalai Lama dies, his successor – however chosen and by whomever – may not enjoy the same reverence and loyalty from the Tibetans in China. The Chinese are counting on this possibility for ultimately wearing

out the Tibetan resistance. At present, the Chinese are not making an issue of the Dalai Lama's activities from his exile in India. They understand the love and reverence for him from the Indian people. Once he dies, the Chinese attitude to the activities of his followers from Indian territory may harden and could become a new friction point in Sino-Indian relations. The author urges the Government of India to identify the various possible scenarios with regard to Tibet during the next 10 years and examine its options.<sup>22</sup>

**Michel Bonnin**- The Chinese order of September 2007 "Reincarnation of Tibetan Living Buddha" stipulates that all decisions on this issue by religious entities have to be approved by Chinese State Administration for Religious Affairs. Bonnin points out that the term 'Living Buddha' does not appear to hold much significance for Tibetan Buddhists, who only speak of "incarnation". There is a growing suspicion, especially since the aforementioned order regarding the 'Living Buddha' that the Chinese leadership is simply waiting for the Dalai Lama's death so as to replace him with someone less charismatic and more docile. The regime hopes that without the revered spiritual leader around, Tibetans would lose much of

<sup>20</sup> C.V. Ranganathan and Vinod C. Khanna, *India and China: The Way Ahead*, 2nd edition, New Delhi, Har-Anand, 2004, pp. 176–7.

<sup>21</sup> Rajiv Sikri, *Challenges and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, Sage, 2009, pp. 98-99.

<sup>22</sup> B. Raman, "Civil Disobedience Movement by Tibetans Continues", *Indian Defence Review*, April–June 2009, pp. 154–5.

their capacity to unite and resist. Quoting views of the Chinese writer Wang Lixiong it is realised that should the Dalai Lama die in exile it could lead to a feeling of despair in Tibet, giving rise to more serious conflict. That is why it is necessary to conceive of a change in strategy leading to an acceptance of real autonomy for Tibetan people. The period of 2012 is to be watched, for a change in heart in Chinese leadership when a new generation of leaders take office.<sup>23</sup>

### SOME CHINESE VIEWS

There is one view (by at least two Indian scholars) that for the Chinese government the window of opportunity is to settle Tibet during the present Dalai Lama's lifetime.<sup>24</sup> Most of the survey of literature, including fieldwork in China, points to the reality that the Chinese will attempt to have their own way. This is in contrast to the survey carried out by our task-force study member in China in August 2009, given below (names of the Chinese scholars and officials are not disclosed under request).

#### **Inputs from China: Field Study Impression**

The recent series of protests in Tibet have put immense pressure on the Chinese government to take resolute

action on the issue. Although the movement looks calm for the moment, the Chinese authorities anticipate that it may take a violent turn at any time like the recent Xinjiang crisis of 5 July 2009. A group of Chinese writers and intellectuals have shown the courage to publicly question the government's current Tibet policy. The psychological impact of the Tibetan movement could be debilitating for China in the long term. Many believe that it could perhaps have inspired the other ethnic communities like the Uyghurs to try to coalesce with Tibetan groups, both within and abroad. Tibet and Xinjiang are seen as issues related to China's national prestige for a long-time.

While the government's plan on the future of Tibet looks resolute and seems much more economic-oriented, the political strategy in the post-Dalai Lama period remains somewhat undisclosed; interactions and interviews with leading Chinese officials and scholars suggest that it is a complex issue. While the government seems not to compromise its stance over the issue, it remains critical due to China's constant reiteration over Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh linking it with historical China-India boundary issues.

An assessment of this point is made

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<sup>23</sup> Michel Bonnin, "Far from Harmonious: the Chinese Authorities' Handling of the 2008 Tibet Crisis", *China Perspective*, No.2009/3, pp.66-72.

<sup>24</sup> Ravi Bhoothalingam, "For a 'Harmonious Resolution' of the Tibetan Question", *Economic and Political Weekly*, August 18, 2007, pp. 3383-7 and Iyer, "A Hell on Earth", n. 12.

after talking to many leading experts, scholars in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Sichuan and Beijing.

- Most officials and scholars are of the view that China will elect a separate spiritual leader to be called the next Dalai Lama for China's Tibet after the demise of the current Dalai Lama. Leading experts are of the view that under the current scenario China is unlikely to make any compromise on the Tibet question as the Dalai Lama has already damaged China's image at the global level.
- Though there are some rounds of talks have happened, however, under the present Dalai Lama's tenure, any kind of understanding between the Chinese government and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGIE) looks almost impossible. China will make no concession unless the Dalai Lama apologizes to China and its people over his "ugly" remarks for many years.
- A high-profile Communist Party official in Beijing during our interaction said that under three conditions China will start making some concessions and try building some understanding with the Tibetan leaders. They are: (1) The Dalai Lama should apologize and publicly accept his fault; (2) give up the independence of Tibet issue and publicly accept that Tibet is a part of China; (3) acknowledge that the territory of Tawang or Arunachal Pradesh belongs to China historically.
- In the post-Dalai Lama period, many scholars and experts in China are of the view that any kind of rational talks with the TGIE look impossible. Still, if a situation arises for bilateral talks, no third party, say India or any other power, should be involved in this talk. The talks should be exclusively between the TGIE and the Chinese government.
- If such talks take place, the Chinese government may give an option for the TGIE to come over to China. But that should be done exclusively between the Chinese government and the TGIE. The latter would have to accept certain conditions. It would be asked to take part in China's "national security" strategy under certain given conditions and criteria. But before that, the Chinese government will make it sure that the TGIE is honest and holds sentiments of loyalty for the country. The Chinese government will see how it can accommodate such a huge number of refugees.
- There is widespread debate in China among the experts that immediately after the current Dalai Lama, the Chinese government should bring some laws and regulations to tighten the "national security" sentiments in the autonomous region. This is being debated after the protests in Tibet and Xinjiang. Though one is not sure about the extent and nature of the forthcoming laws and regulations, surely the Chinese government will bring some political and legal measures in order

to prevent the "autonomous region" from resorting to protests and violence.

- China is aware that the Tibetans and Uyghurs in Xinjiang may unite against it at the international level. It is keeping tabs on the World Uyghurs Congress (WUC) followers and particularly the supporters of Chief Rabeeya Kadeer. It may also investigate whether the extremist Uyghurs and the TYC activists have any kind of terrorist links and are planning to damage the Chinese interests at any point of time.
- After the riots in Urumqi on July 5, 2009, most of the Chinese government officials are linking the Xinjiang and Tibet crisis as "national concern issues". Though the nature of the crises in the two regions is different, to the Chinese officials the intention seems the same, being aimed against China and the Chinese government.<sup>25</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The strategy is to prepare for all contingencies and let the Tibetans themselves conclude matters within the framework established so far, assuming that the civil society, government machinery, policymakers, analysts, scholars and the Tibetans in India are all alive to the future scenarios and contingencies. For this a dialogue must be initiated with the TGIE. A joint

scenario exercise must be played out if not already done. The decentralized leadership of refugee establishment must be incorporated so that the post-Fourteenth Dalai Lama era is accepted with calm, fortitude and further cohesion among the Tibetans. The exiled Prime Minister Dr Lobsang Sangay will play a central role in bringing this about.

After the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, India's task will become more difficult. The transition and institutionalization of the Tibetan movement will need to be facilitated by India openly. Here the international community can be shown how India can manage such issues of human rights, cultural protection and democracy. This will demand a cohesive and well-coordinated response not only by the Ministry of External Affairs but other organs such as Department of Culture, Home Ministry and Ministry of Defence (for military signalling like that of 1986-87 and professionalism for a limited war, better logistics and roads in the region and massive people's participation to repulse a Chinese offensive).

The first phase starting with the Dalai Lama's escape in 1959 is nearly over. Preparations need to be done for the coming phase. The Indian public opinion also needs to be built up to be more favourable for the Tibetans' desire for autonomy. Only then the political will to implement new policies will be generated.

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<sup>25</sup> The above points are made by Dr Jagannath P. Panda on his field study impression from China.

## **HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DO TIBETAN REFUGEES WIELD IN THE INDIAN SOCIO- POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT?**

### **ASSESSMENT BY TASK FORCE MEMBERS DURING FIELD TRIP TO DHARAMSALA AND DEHRA DUN**

The young westernized Tibetan generation has, to some extent, influenced the Indian counterparts in their environment. There is now the so-called jeans culture, free social mixing of sexes, and an increasing habit of eating out; and at some places (Majnu ka Tila in Delhi and Dharamsala) smoking and the marijuana culture has also grown and is copied by some Indian youths.

Overall, their influence on the Indian society is quite localized and insignificant. Their presence in India itself is infinitesimal. They do not make any deliberate attempt to expand their culture; rather they remain confined in their sanctuaries. There is also not much social mixing of sexes from the two cultures. At Dharamsala there had been one marriage between a Tibetan girl and local boy but it broke up after two years. In Dehradun intermarriages are relatively more; but in a period of 50 years of settlement of the Tibetans, these examples carry insignificant weight.

### **HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DO TIBETAN REFUGEES WIELD ON THE INDIAN SOCIO-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT?**

Although the political policy of the Tibetans is more or less the same at both Dharamsala and Dehradun, their social relations with local Indians are quite different. In Dharamsala and McLeodGunj the Tibetans are more secluded; they are more comfortable with foreigners. They hardly interact with the local populace, but their aloofness is taken without rancour. The locals, generally appreciate their peaceful and humble ways.

The Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile usually take part in the local functions of social and cultural importance.

The young Tibetans' lifestyle, which is trendy and fashionable, is influencing the local Indian youth. Tibetan society maintains a fair degree of gender equality; we found them equally active at all places we visited. This has impressed the Indian social system, especially in Dehradun.

### **MARRIAGE AND ADOPTION**

There has been no case of intercultural

adoption. In Dehradun some intercultural marriages have taken place, mostly between Sikh boys and Tibetan girls but none between Tibetan boys and Indian girls. This is not because of any social problem as such; their economic and indeterminate social status in India is the main hurdle. The Tibetans are not citizens and their economic position is not quite stable. All intercultural marriages are initiated by the couple themselves and their parents only facilitate them. These marriages have been successful, unlike in Dharamsala.

In McLeodGunj, Tibetans are more interested in marrying foreigners, particularly Western tourists; these marriages generally do not endure. Marriage provides a route to migrate to the Western countries. Abroad, they are mostly employed in the hospitality industry. They are fluent in English, well attuned to Western culture, discipline and habits, are punctual and hard working.

### **RELIGIOUS CONVERSION**

Tibetans continue to adhere to Buddhism as individuals. There has not been a single conversion. The older generation revere Buddhism; much of the younger generation is the least bothered about religion. Buddhism has a social base in India and is respected. So they feel at home with their religious affiliation. Some Tibetans have, however, converted to Christianity after migrating to the West.

### **MEMBERSHIP OF RELIGIOUS/ CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS**

The mahants (priests) of the two temples informed us that sometimes the Tibetans visit their temples merely as an outing. The McLeodGunj temple Mahant said that the Dalai Lama, when he was living on the premises of the temple, used to visit the temple. After moving over to the main town of McLeodGunj, he has hardly visited the temple.

## Chapter 5-A

# SURVEY OF REFUGEE ESTABLISHMENTS: DHARAMSALA AND DEHRADUN IN 2009

*By Dr Jagannath P. Panda and Zakir Hussain*

### INTRODUCTION

Tibetans in exile have successfully reconstituted their institutions and set up non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to keep alive their culture and

language at various places in India. Dharamsala, which houses the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, is the most important site for Tibetans in India.



*Main Office of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Dharamsala. It is closed on Sundays.*

The strong cultural heritage of the Tibetan community at Dharamsala and Dehradun – their identities, memories and narratives – have come to be informed by an increasingly strong meta-narrative focused on religiosity and suffering. This meta-narrative is built both intentionally and organically

by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGIE) and numerous organizations openly funded and supported by foreign associations and agencies. Among these are Norbulingka Institute, the SOS Children's Village Dharamsala, the Tibetan Youth Congress, the Tibetan Women

Association, and the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

Ironically, as the target of the meta-narrative is to support Tibetans and to conserve their cultural affluence and tradition, it also restrains the independence of personal experience, generating homogenized narratives.

As we leave the guest house and walk down to the hills of the Tibetan community in Dharamsala, we are



*Main Chowk (Centre) of the Tibetan Parliament-in Exile, Dharamsala*

immediately surrounded by a wide-ranging mixture of ethnicities – Tibetans, monks and nuns, Pahadi Indians, Westerners – amidst the beautiful mountains. At McLeodGunj this diverse group of individuals meshes together perfectly.

### WAVES OF MIGRATION

There have been three waves of Tibetan refugees into India, as follows:

- The first wave fled out of Tibet with the Dalai Lama, which continued in the 1960s

- The second wave after the 1960s to 1990s

- The third wave since the 1990s.

The post-1990s refugees generally crossed in the hope of better education, both modern and monastic; to escape repression; and also as they were attracted by the lure of migrating to the Western countries, which is not possible in China. These are mostly in the age group of 15 to 30.

### ARRIVAL ROUTE

The Home Secretary of the TGIE is of the view that the majority choose the Tibet–Nepal route. They first land in



*Secretary Mr. Phurbu Tsering of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in his office,*

Nepal and through the UNHCR, pass to India. Almost 1,500–2,000 Tibetans used to escape from Tibet annually, but this has been stopped since the Maoist government came to power in Nepal. In 2008, less than 500–600 refugees arrived in India; in the first four months of 2009, none had arrived. This may be taken as a barometer of the intensity and intimacy of the Chinese

government with the Maoist regime in Nepal and also India's relations with Nepal.

### CURRENT OCCUPATION

The respondents belonged to four occupational categories, viz., administrative, business, professional and casual labour.

The first category is associated with the Tibetan administration as well as schools and other official organisations running in India. Their salaries range between Rs. 7,000 and Rs. 20,000. They are keenly interested in grooming their offspring in a modern milieu.

The business class is the largest group. The first are those who run the well-



*Students doing practical work at Tibetan SOS Vocational Training Centre, Selakui, Dehradun*

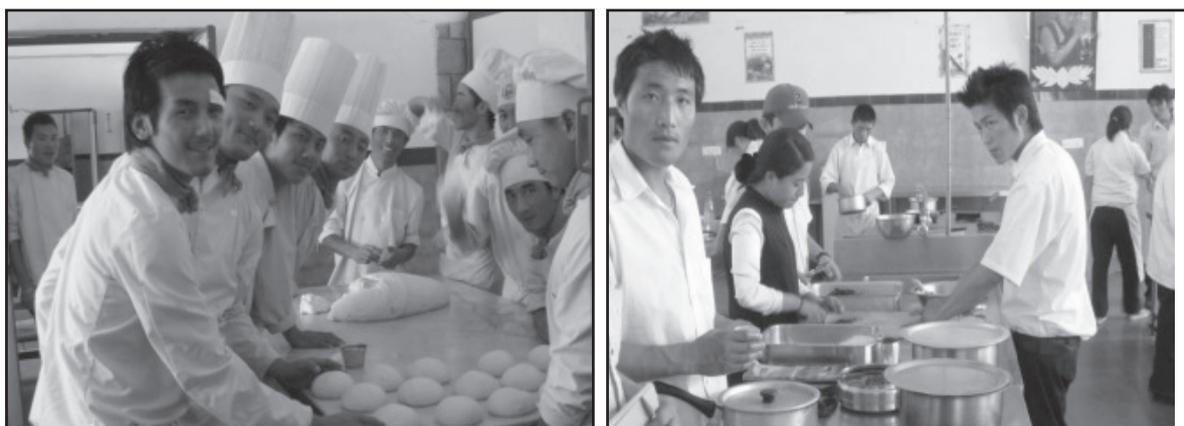
known Tibet markets in cities. They sell woollen clothes, special Tibetan attires, etc. Some Tibetans are also engaged in seasonal trading, such as selling woollen clothes during winter. They purchase their items mostly from Ludhiana and sell mostly in Delhi.



*Staff of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile*

Some others are engaged in catering and restaurant services, where they provide Tibetan specialities, or modern services like computers, internet café, photo shops, etc.

The emerging youth, which is the third category, are mostly the post-1990 Indian-born generation. At Selakui in Dehradun, we were informed by Mr. Tenzin Pao Dhashi, Director, Tibetan SOS Vocational Training Centre, that their students are well received by renowned hotels and bakeries like the Taj, Radisson, Hotel Rajdoot, etc. in Delhi, Goa, Mumbai, etc. They sometimes make campus recruitments or call the training centre to send trained professionals. The training centre watches the market performance closely and also learns from the feedback it receives. The strengths of these students are their effective English communication skills, punctuality, efficiency, adaptability, sense of hygiene and dedication to their profession. The training centre also takes vigorous training sessions in extra-curricular activities, which include communicative, interpersonal and team working habits.



*Students at a cooking session at the Tibetan SOS Vocational Training Centre, Selakui, Dehradun*

We found the classes were well equipped with modern implements and facilities and were staffed by able instructors. Everything looked spic and span, with attention to minute details.



*Workshops of the vocational training school at Selakui, Dehradun*

Very few Tibetans are engaged in casual labour. They are mostly employed in catering, sales, etc. In Dehradun, Tibetans are employed by Indian shopkeepers mostly selling fashionable items and they are well liked.

Some of the newly arrived refugees want to complete their monastic education and return to Tibet. Others aspire to migrate to the Western



*Mr. Tengin Choe Ton, Deputy Staff*

countries. The monks feel under pressure in China because the Chinese authorities do not permit the Tibetans to revere the current Dalai Lama. The Chinese have their own brand of Buddhist philosophy and strictly control the religious lives of the Tibetans.

#### **STATUS OF TIBETAN REFUGEES – THEIR RELIGIOUS STATUS AND POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS**

Theoretically, the Tibetans neither enjoy either refugee status nor have they been granted citizenship. They hold an intermediary position. They do not have citizenship rights or the UNHCR declared status. In this situation they are politically insignificant as they do not have suffrage/voting rights.

The Tibetans maintain a cordial relation with all political parties and especially with those which are in power. Tibetan leaders want to maintain a close

relation with the ruling political parties so that they help in solving their local



*Zakir Hussain with Buddhist Linguist Administrators at McLeodGunj, Dharamsala*

problems; manage the local administration with the help of ruling parties; and sort out their differences on various issues such as law and order. They also seek favour of the ruling parties to get registration of new refugees and facilitate renewal of the older ones. They do not exhibit preference for any single political party.

Tibetans are particularly grateful for the freedom of religion prevailing in India. It works as a strong magnet for the new refugees to escape from China. At the big religious seminaries and monasteries there are huge statues of



*Discussion with Tibetan monk scholars in McLeodGunj*

Gautama Buddha. The monks also repose faith in the Guru-Chela (teacher-student) relationship between India and Tibet.

### CONDITIONS OF LIVELIHOOD

The Tibetans' conditions of livelihood are just like those of Indian citizens. Their lifestyles are generally trendy and fashionable; they converse in English and exhibit a middle class attitude.



*Zakir Hussain (third from left) and Jagannath Panda (third from right) with monk scholars of The Buddhist Linguistic University, McLeodGunj*

### ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

In Dharamsala/McLeodGunj it is difficult to guess the Tibetans' economic status; in Dehradun it is easier. In Dharamsala they maintain a good status in clothing, shoes and in health. Monks usually wear good quality maroon cloaks and shoes (Rs. 2,500–3,000); the youth wear expensive jeans and shirts.

The TGIE staff expressed satisfaction with the economic situation of the Tibetans. But individual Tibetans revealed a different story. They

expressed deep concern over their poor economic condition. Outwardly they wore good clothes and expensive shoes and maintained an expensive lifestyle but lacked a bank balance. They have no regular and fixed income because of the uncertainty and temporary nature of their professions. This was attributed to their refugee status; it was felt that citizenship could improve their economic conditions.



*Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Ms. Gyari Dolma at Dharamsala*

They also regularly receive charity. This has been a good bulwark to their economic security. The funds and donations come from the US, Canada, the UK, Germany, France, etc.

These charities and donations are used to run hospitals, schools, administrative functions of the Parliament-in-Exile, maintaining hygiene, imparting English speaking courses free of cost to all Tibetans and meeting expenses of other welfare activities. These donations thus help in maintaining good personal, public and social lives of the common Tibetans. If these donations dry up some day, the quality of the Tibetans' lives will suffer considerably.

### THE POST-DALAI LAMA SCENARIO

Two major scenarios are seen as possible by the respondents: a power struggle in the structure, and decline in the Tibet movement, particularly at the international level.

*The First Scenario:* There may be a complex power struggle. Even the Karmapa may like to influence the power structure. This may for some time rock the business of the Parliament-in-Exile, but this would not be beyond control. Over time, the parliamentary committee which is formed particularly to



*Interviewers with the Speaker Mr Penpa Tsering of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile,*

deal with the post-Dalai Lama situations would fill the gap.

*The Second Scenario:* The passing away of the present Dalai Lama would naturally cause a setback to the pace of the Tibetan movement globally. There is no other successor who can come up to his stature. Globally, the current Dalai Lama has lifted the Tibetan movement through his benign personality, reasonable writing campaigns and addressing national and international meetings and gatherings with equal passion and

enthusiasm. The current generation is habituated to his presence.



*With a Taiwanese Scholar taking education in Buddhist Linguistic University, McLeodGunj*

### VIEWS ON THE HEALTH OF THE DALAI LAMA

The Dalai Lama's health is causing concern to some, particularly after his kidney operation. He also has problems with memory. The Tibetans have maybe 10 years to reach some meaningful agreement with the Chinese government during the Dalai Lama's sojourn on earth. All sects are against violence as a means of freedom struggle.



*Central Worshipping Hall, Dehradun. It is the only centre in India which imparts teaching in Tantric Buddhism in India.*

**Who are the most influential leaders next in line? Why? How is the Chinese**

### **position/behaviour viewed in the post-Dalai Lama period?**

When the Dalai Lama is no more on the scene, the Chinese government will create rifts in the ranks of the movement for Tibetan independence by creating suspicion and misguiding the Tibetans, particularly the new generation. It will also use its Panchen Lama card. China will not confine its campaign to the Indian border but also cover the global audience through media propaganda, blogs, etc.

### **What is the possibility for negotiations?**

The present century is a century of negotiation. Hence, the door for negotiations is always open. The track of the negotiations would be within the framework of the TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region) as expressed by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Most of the respondents want to achieve this within his lifetime as the future is very uncertain.



*With Mr. Sonam N. Dagpo, Secretary,  
International Relations,  
Department of Information & International  
Relations, Dharamsala*

### **POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS**

There are three streams of opinion.

The first group perceives the future as good and relatively stable. They have confidence in their leaders and faith in getting cooperation from the world in their freedom struggle.

The second group is apprehensive but optimistic. Although it would be tough and tedious to negotiate with China, it is not impossible. Effective plans and policies need to be chalked out to handle the probable future situation. Two probable scenarios are envisaged: (i) it is easy to get the Tibet issue settled during the current Dalai Lama's lifetime; (ii) the post-Dalai Lama situation would be tough to negotiate with China at least for a decade. Some expressed the view that if the Tibet issue is not settled during the present Dalai Lama's lifetime, it would take another 50 years and they are prepared for it. The *50-50 Vision* document is expected to review the performance of the Tibet movement in the last 50 years and to develop the freedom struggle roadmap for the coming 50 years.

The post-1990s generation appeared particularly restive and impatient. Most of them want to migrate to the Western countries, but show a strong



*Mr. Duke Tsering, Principal,  
Tibetan Children's Village School, Selakui,  
Dehradun*

commitment to the Tibetan cause. They want to contribute to the struggle financially. They see the Tibetan Diaspora as a platform to contribute and act for the Tibetans' cause.

The third generation of Tibetans is somewhat casual towards the cause of Tibetan freedom. In their view, waging a liberation movement from an alien land will not be effective. They want to go back to Tibet and wage the war of independence from there. This inspiration was gained from the strong agitations waged on the occasion of the Beijing Olympics by the Tibetans in Tibet itself. The atrocities committed by Chinese authorities have also enraged these young 'Turks'.

Almost all respondents reject violence as a path. Violence in their view is against the tenets of Buddhism. It would hurt the Dalai Lama and lose them the support and sympathy of the world. Numerically they are insignificant in comparison to the Chinese military might and demography. Tibetans totally number six million; their exiled community in India is just 125,000. If they agitate violently, it gives an excuse to the Chinese authorities to repress them. The Indian government would also not like this.

A third group is indifferent and does not have its own independent views. They are mostly the older generation of the 1970s or earlier. They have full faith in the Parliament-in-Exile.

The staff of educational institutions have a more optimistic vision. They think that imparting modern education while

preserving their cultural, traditional and religious ethos would effectively prepare the Tibetans to fight for the cause of Tibet with a modern vision. The new generation is enthusiastic about pursuing modern science and technology, humanities and professional courses. They are very supportive of the cause of Tibet movement but do not show an inclination towards violence. At the same time they are curious to know China's moral right to occupy their homeland and why the world is not taking adequate steps to pressurise China to free Tibet.



*Students of the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) School Selakui, Dehradun*

The TCV school has a declared mission: *to ensure that all Tibetan children under its care receive a sound education, a firm cultural identity and become self-reliant and contributing members of the Tibetan community and the world at large.* The school's motto is "Others before Self". The school was founded in 2004 and is affiliated to the CBSE, New Delhi.

The instructors at the school also told us that the new generation is more inquisitive and interactive. They do not take things for granted. Some students have also exhibited traits of frustration

and disbelief in the current style of carrying out the freedom movement. To manage this, the authorities of the school have arranged religious instructors to educate them about the Buddhist ethos from time to time. In Selakui, Dehradun, the school has arranged a special religious class which is open round the clock. Here, a monk (from Dharamsala) interacts and answers the queries of the students in the light of the Buddhist philosophy. Our discussion with the monk revealed that the new generation is restive. Some of their major concerns are: why do we live in exile; what is the world doing for us; why can India not come forward and help us in getting our homeland; what is our future; how can we manage our daily lives; we should make progress and fight for our motherland, etc.

#### **What may be expected from the Government of India?**

Some referred to the historical stand of India on Tibet as a paradox; some others viewed it in the modern context. They are perplexed with the Indian policy of recognizing Tibet as an integral part of China.

This group supports the semi-independent Tibet policy of consulting India on every move. In recent years Tibetan leaders have been actively seeking foreign support, to internationalise the Tibet cause. They see the conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize on the Dalai Lama as a result of that policy. They want the Indian government to actively facilitate the negotiation process between the Chinese government and the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and put pressure on

China to accept the demand document handed over to the Chinese government by the Dalai Lama.

The other group agreed, with some reservation, with the current Indian stand but highly appreciated the kind of support India has continuously provided. This group is politically more active and mature. Their ultimate end is to get freedom but currently they want tactical entrance in Tibet through the process of negotiation with the Chinese government. In this, they expect India to become an active partner. In their view, a stronger India could be more effective in bringing China to the negotiating table. The Deputy Speaker suggested that India should reorganize its foreign policy, particularly in the South Asian region and improve its relations with Pakistan. This would tactically weaken China in the region. So far as India's support is concerned, they expect an active and persuasive role of India. They expect India to mediate but at the same time are aware of India's limitation in this direction. They fully understand the political implication of India going out of the way for the Tibetan cause and remember the background of the 1962 war with China. They appreciate India's vision for Tibet to be an autonomous region of China but are of the view that in the current context, this is not enough; India should prepare the ground for negotiation between China and the TGIE.

The youth, when queried about this aspect, were initially ambivalent. Some insisted that India should strengthen the position of Tibetans, particularly the

upcoming generation. They raised several issues like educational preference, citizenship rights, property rights, and easy renewal of their registration cards. They asked why their registration must be renewed annually, given the fact that they are here on a



*Monastery—a popular tourist sport at Clement Town, Dehradun*

long-term basis. Renewal every five years would add to their comfort.

The business class insisted that the Indian government should also arrange some permanent fixed places for them in metro-cities. This would improve their economic well-being.

### **Will the protest movement turn violent?**

Almost all respondents express a strong commitment to a non-violent, peaceful movement for the liberation of Tibet, particularly when they are in exile. Their religion does not permit them to be violent.

The youth may be frustrated, but to keep them firmly based on non-violence, their instructors take particular care to orient and guide them.

The Tibetan Planning Commission

head at Dharamsala believes more in evolving the natural human qualities of the scholars than producing stereotype, soulless, money-making professionals. He said that they are interested in developing the fundamental qualities of a human being through education. They emphasize on inculcating and nurturing the basic human qualities which should contribute to world peace and help them learn to live in harmony with Nature and ecology. There is no space for violence in their lives. They are also concerned that their scholars should not be swayed by militant nationalism or a militant way of life. One monk even termed militants as 'idiots' and strongly believed that the movement should remain peaceful, non-violent and within Buddhist dogmas. In Buddhism, the concept of *avalokiteshvera* has great impact.

### **Is the Dalai Lama's leadership adequate?**

Almost all respondents believe that the demand made by Dalai Lama is quite reasonable and the course he has adopted is also appropriate. They praised particularly his peaceful non-violent method.

### **What more is expected from the Indian government and other international powers? Which country could be the most reliable partner in supporting the protest movement?**

From the international powers they expect open political support. The international media coordinator, Speaker and Deputy Speaker urged strongly, both India and the international power,s to openly provide

political support for the Tibet cause. In their view, the time has come to openly declare Tibet as a political issue rather than merely giving economic and social support. After the current Dalai Lama, if the Tibet movement remains unsolved, it would suffer. They expect the world powers to put pressure on China economically, socially and morally. They are anguished that the Olympics were not boycotted, that everyone participated without pressurizing China to sign an agreement with the Dalai Lama. Besides India, they express faith in the US, Canada, France, the UK, Germany and some Gulf countries.

**What is the source of the funds for the protest movement?**

The bulk of the funds comes through donations and charities from the US,



Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Sweden and Israel. They also receive funds from private agencies, individuals and charitable organizations.

**Who is the most influential youth leader in the pipeline? What is his stance on the future course of the protest movements?**

The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker

expressed the belief that after the Dalai Lama, the scope of the Parliament-in-Exile would be enhanced further. It is representative of all sections and provides a forum where things can be democratically deliberated. Tibetan youth express their faith in democracy; Parliament is the one forum where they can participate and express their feelings.



*Jagannath Panda with Swami Maharaj, the Mahant of the Temple  
A local shopkeeper is also present (the previous photo is with Zakir Hussain)*

**Is it foreseen that the Tibet factor may lead to another mishap between China and India?**

Tibetans would not want that. The current Indian policy is not provocative.

**Can the TGIE be a mediating factor between China and India to improve Sino-Indian relations?**

The TGIE can play a constructive role, but the Chinese would not allow this to happen. The Parliament-in-Exile is a democratic forum which might pose a kind of threat to the Chinese political system which is based on authoritarian principles.

**Given an option, would the refugees**

**like to go back to Tibet? If yes, what specific initiatives do they expect from the China-India bilateral dialogue?**

They universally yearn to go back to Tibet if they get the desired space there. They expect that both countries would mutually help in building Tibet as an economically better-off state; assist Tibet in its modernization but at the same help Tibet to preserve and maintain- its unique culture, relation with ecology and make it a land of peace with all care to preserve its pristine culture and environment.

**What is the opinion on the current China-India relations and on possible Chinese adventures along the border?**

They view the current political India-China relation as non-cordial and of mutual suspicion. Some bilateral issues, such as the border and Tibet itself, are the bone of contention between them. Economic relations between the two are growing, but their political relations, particularly the border issues, are not moving positively. China is doing all possible things to seal the border lines to make Tibetans' cross-border movement difficult. They see the Tibetans' return from India as provoking anti-China feelings in Tibet.

**Are the Tibetan refugees a threat to Indian security?**

Our interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) with almost all representatives – officials, students both secular and monastic, monks, business class, teachers, lay Tibetans, etc. have convinced us that as of now Tibetans would not be a threat to Indian security. They universally reject

resorting to violence as a means of struggle. They are deeply grateful and respectful of the Indian government's magnanimous treatment of them. They would even be happy to serve in the Indian security forces. A couple of them who participated in the 1971 War shared their experiences; some also referred to Operation Blue Star. The informed respondents even talked of strengthening Indian diplomacy in the region to counter Chinese presence in the South Asian countries.

**Would Tibet act as a facilitator for India to improve its (i) cultural parameters (ii) economic conditions and (iii) security situation? If yes, how?**

*i. Cultural parameters*

Tibetan refugees can be India's *cultural* ambassadors in the world. Many respondents expressed a genuine and deep affection for India and are articulate about expressing their gratitude for India's generosity to them. Even foreigners are appreciative of India's role in the matter and were surprised that for five decades Tibetans have been living at the same location peacefully and have built excellent rapport with the local people.

*ii. Economic conditions*

Economically, Tibetans are more inclined towards ecologically clean professions. The Head of the Tibetan Planning Commission emphasises that living a harmonious life with Nature is an important goal of Tibetans.

*iii. Security situation*

Tibetan refugees could be a source of improving India's security in the

Himalayan belt ranging from Ladakh to Tawang and could even prove helpful in providing information about crucial Chinese settlements in Tibet. They could also work in India's interest in the event of an aggression against India by China. They are also ready to join the Indian defence services, para-military forces, etc.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

Some expressed the view that in future they would like to organize more international events in India, inviting foreigners to participate. These participants would spread positive images about India and the richness of its culture in their countries. This would be good for the Tibetans' cause as well.

Many respondents said that they would like to nourish a good, modern education. This would add to India's constructive development. They would also like to promote the culture of living in harmony with Nature, which is supported by both Buddhism and Hinduism.

### **Issues thought relevant for addressing in the study**

- Re-look at Tibetans' problems by the Indian government.
- The Indian government should consider granting citizenships, maybe dual temporary ones, to Tibetans.
- The government should also think of granting them property rights, so they can purchase land and improve their economic well-being. Their current deprivation would not be good for long-term sustenance of

the Tibetan freedom movement. India would not lose anything by giving them either citizenship or property rights. Both would be temporary and conditional. In any case they would leave immovable properties when they leave India.

- The Indian government should include a concrete plan for their education. The government should consider granting them some quota or seats in institutes and universities of repute so that they can groom the new generation with healthy values. They could also be allowed to have their own government-sponsored schools on a larger scale.
- Currently, most of them agree with the middle path invoked by the Dalai Lama. They think that the demand for the TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region) is quite logical and expedient. Once they enter Tibet they would be in a position to carry forward their broader agenda of independence. The world should



*Mr. Tenzin Pao Dhashi, Director,  
Tibetan SOS Vocational Training Centre,  
Selakui, Dehradun*

come forward to help them. They are peace-loving, non-violent people.

**Differences between Dharamsala and Dehradun Tibetan Settlements**

Aspect	Dharamsala/McLeodGunj	Dehradun
Centre	Major centre	One of the settlements
Political	More active	No so active
Social and Cultural	Segregated from the locals. One failed marriage with a local person	More associated with the locals. More than 5-6 marriages between Indians and Tibetans. Tibetans mix more with the locals and have a gregarious social life.
Living style	Westernised and urbanite. Youths are mostly Westernised.	Indianised and partly modernised. Lifestyle more akin to Indian.
Outlook	Intense desire to go Western countries	No such intense desire noticed

## Chapter 5-B

### VISITS TO TIBETAN ESTABLISHMENTS AND EVENTS

By P. K. Gautam

#### **PART I - DHARAMSALA SEPTEMBER 2007**

The familiarization visit to Dharamsala was undertaken to research the literature on diversion of Yarlung Tsangpo by China and on Tibet. Two days were spent in the library of the Environment and Development Desk (EDD) of Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The time was also utilized to meet the Education Secretary.

#### **Discussion with Ms Choki (editor), EDD newsletter Green Tibet**

As I had basic doubts over the traditions or sects in Tibetan Buddhism I had taken along the classic *The Dragon in the Land of Snows* (1999) by Tsering Shakya, which mentioned four sects as Gelugpa, Sakya, Kagyu and Nyingmapa. According to Ms Choki, traditions are in many ways interchangeable and there is not much difference among them. She outlined

that Gelugpa is headquartered at Dharamsala, Sakya at Dehradun and Rajpur, Kagyu at Sidhpur (adjacent to Dharamsala) and Nyingma at Dehradun.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Photos of the Missing Panchen Lama**

Posters were prominently displayed on the kidnapping by the Chinese of the six-year-old Eleventh Panchen Lama Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, the second-highest spiritual Gelugpa leader. The poster showed that the Tenth Panchen Lama died under mysterious circumstances in January 1989. On May 14, 1995, the Dalai Lama had declared Nyima as the Panchen Lama. The Chinese in November 1995 declared another person, Gyaincain Norbu, as Panchen Lama.

#### **Discussion with Mr Tashi Norbu, Joint Secretary, Education on September 5, 2007**

He explained that there are boarding

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<sup>1</sup> According to one author the headquarters of various traditions of Tibetans in exile are (a) Sakya Tridzin – Rajpur, Dehradun, (b) Bonpos – Shimla, (c) Drukchen and Kagyu – Hemis (Ladakh). (d) Nyigma – Darjeeling and Kathmandu. See Amalendru Misra, "A Nation in Exile: Tibetan Diaspora and the Dynamics of Long- Distance Nationalism", *Asian Ethnicity*, 4(2), June 2003, n. 6.

and day schools. Out of 82, 65 are in India (other countries being Nepal and Bhutan). The categories of schools are:

- (a) Central Tibetan School Administration (CTSA) schools funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. They are like Kendriya Vidyalayas. They are the largest. There are six residential schools (Mussoorie, Shimla, Darjeeling and Dalhousie were named as examples) out of a total of 21. Hostels are for Tibetans only. 10 per cent of the students are Indians, who are wards of government employees in remote regions who have all-India liability to serve.
- (b) Tibetan Children School Village (TCV). The headquarters is at Dharamsala. There are 20 schools, mostly residential in Ladakh, with CBSE syllabus. They are financed by the community and donors. The student strength is growing with new arrivals.
- (c) Tibetans Home Foundation. They are in Mussoorie and Rajpur, and are affiliated to the CBSE.
- (d) Sam Bota Tibetan Schools and Society. They are a mix of small, middle and a few large schools with

residential facility. They also admit students of the Himalayan region like Shillong (Meghalaya) and Darjeeling( West Bengal).

- (e) The Department of Religion and Culture looks after the education of lamaist children for religious training in monasteries.

Mr Tashi suggested that it would greatly help if the Indian government opens more schools in the Himalayan belt since there is a lot of pressure to admit Indians in Tibetan schools.<sup>2</sup> He said, "Being your guests we cannot refuse but our resources get stretched. If possible, open more of them of quality." One reason why locals want Tibetan schools, he thought, was that sometimes in the Indian schools the Indian teachers were absent.

#### **OCTOBER 2009 AND NOVEMBER 2010**

Two more visits to Dharamsala helped in understanding how the Tibetans in exile have set up their institutes.

#### **College for Higher Tibetan Studies (CHTS)**

The Institute of Buddhist Dialectics was founded in 1973. Besides Gelugpa it also includes other traditions such as Nyigma, Kagyud and Skaya Schools. With the initial aim of training Tibetan

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<sup>2</sup> In 2008 when I visited the Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies (CIHCS), Dahung (near Tenga) in Arunachal Pradesh being run by India and met Principal Geshe Ngawang Tashi Bapu and had a discussion with the teachers of the school, I thought that the concerns were exaggerated, though it could not be checked by visiting any Tibetan school in the remote border region..

language teachers, in 1991 the College for Higher Tibetan Studies (CHTS) was established. It is now located about 7 km away at a lower altitude than Dharamsala and beyond a tea estate near village Sarah. Inaugurated in 1998, the college is a branch of the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics at Dharamsala. It was founded to promote the broadest intellectual culture in harmony with Tibetan democratic institutions and imbued with the principles and influence of the Buddhist religion. The set up is the initiative and labour of the exile community. The Department of Education of the Tibetan government formally recognised the college in 2001 with the degrees and diplomas being considered at par with those granted by Indian universities. It has partnership with Emory University in Atlanta, USA besides attracting students from Miami University, USA. A number of students are also enrolled from the Indian Himalayan belt. Unlike the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics (IBD), the CHTS gives greater emphasis to secular subjects such as language, grammar, literature, poetry, religion, political history through courses on Buddhism. To broaden the outlook, the institute invites regular guest speakers to talk on contemporary subjects including those from the local army

establishment. Mr Passang Tsering, General Secretary of the college arranged an interaction with students on the topic of Buddhism in the Himalayan belt. Most teachers here are Tibetans, though students are mixed. Many students are from the Indian Himalayan belt and during my interaction with them, I realised that there is a great ongoing struggle in their mind in choosing monkhood. Though dropouts (like in hard military life) are expected, the key question which was the continued importance of monkhood in an era of globalisation when spiritual values and practices are being sought by humans saturated with materialistic matters. In simpler terms it a demand-supply issue.<sup>3</sup> These young boys need to be applauded for having taken the decision for monkhood in the twenty first century. Like other Indian institutions in the Himalayan belt, this is also a synergetic experiment and needs much more support and encouragement.

### **Tibetan Handicraft Production cum Sale Cooperative Industrial Society**

To restore the vanishing tradition which is centuries old, the society (one of the oldest) was set up in 1963. The centre produces hand knotted products which

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<sup>3</sup> Whether sufficient monk aspirants will be forthcoming from Indian Himalayan belt region such as Ladakh is a moot question. According to Karine Gagné's (an anthropologist from Montréal University Canada) account based on her field work of August 2011 in Nubra region: "As a consequence of family planning in Ladakh, parents tend to have less child than in earlier days. One consequence of this change is that the traditional custom of sending one son to a monastery tends to disappear. This in turn reduces the number of young monks being registered in the monasteries, a situation that could be observed in the Nubra Valley". Discussion with PK Gautam of August 16, 2011 and correspondence of November 24, 2011.

are durable and attractive, garments, traditional door curtains besides travel and hand bags.

### **Tibetan Institute of Performing Art (TIPA)**

The TIPA throngs with the young and old and is preserving the performing art well by hosting regular events .

### **Some Opinions of Locals (November 2010)**

**Some views of Indians :** Interaction with some locals, living there or settled outside, showed that there are mostly property and behaviour related issues . The gist was that property is now in prime land. Land prices for locals have gone up. The refugees also must obey laws of the land. They are only interested in making money. At no stage was the suspicion of any Chinese agent mentioned.

What this implies is that local sympathy is less than before, though the economy through domestic and international tourism is directly related to TGIE in Dharamsala. This we felt is an unacknowledged part of the discourse. The new narrative in one way is of vested interest of property dealers and national security who may like to oust the refugees and grab the property which is in prime location now.

**Some views of Tibetans :** Interaction showed that there was a split opinion on citizenship. The TYC and the TGIE are not keen on it. Some local Tibetan desired it. It was clear that there is an ongoing struggle on Tibetan nationalism with freedom struggle. One recurring discourse was that all

Tibetans were very respectful and thankful to India. Some American student-interns from Miami University were appreciative of India for their gesture to preserve a civilization (soft power).

### **PART 2 TIBETAN REFUGEES ESTABLISHMENT AT CHOGLAMSAR (LEH, JAMMU AND KASHMIR), SEPTEMBER 2008**

Discussion with Mr Damdul Jingirpon, Chief Representative Officer, Office and Assembly Hall, The Local Tibetan Assembly, Sonamling Tibetan Settlement, Choglamsar

He estimates that there are about 7000 Tibetan refugees settled in the place. He is from the first generation of refugees. In his 38 years of service, he has served with establishments all over India like Zero in Arunachal Pradesh, ), Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Shimla and Solan(Himachal Pradesh). He has been responsible for the distribution of agricultural land to refugees. The gist of our talk:

- (a) The help given by India was acknowledged with gratitude.
- (b) The history of Tibet was traced as a sovereign country. He emphasised that during the II World War, Tibet was neutral, which proves its sovereignty. Tibetan people also include Tamangs, Gurungs, Sherpas and Khampas (riders). Ladakhis also have Tibetan names.
- (c) All sects flow from one to another and are meshed, Nyigma to Kagyup to Saskya to Gelukpa. The

crux is the "Nalanda School", based on the work and philosophy of Indian gurus in the past. In his perception the difference between Hinduism and Buddhism is that the Buddhists pray for tomorrow, while the Hindus pray for the present.<sup>4</sup>

- (d) Some with wealth manage to acquire Indian citizenship. Tibetans are free to travel within India, for example, even in Ladakh some trinket shops have been set up by Tibetans,.
- (e) Some lama training is going on in the TAR.
- (f) Very few new refugees are coming. Most refugees in India are those born in India. They are well educated and have been internationalised. He gave the following important stages in the condition of the refugees :
  - (i) The first stage was from 1959 to 1989 (a dark period till the 1980s)
  - (ii) January 1990 onwards there has been improvement in their status.
- (g) The Dalai Lama is unlikely to die soon. He will sort out matters for the scenario that will follow his demise.
- (h) In Tibet, communist China is equally harsh on its own Han

people when required. The karma has now shifted to Tibet.

#### **Discussions with Mr. Tenzin, the Tibetan Shop in-charge, in the camp**

- Job opportunities in India are limited.
- Unlike some Western countries, citizenship is not given in India, which poses obvious constraints for the new generation in this globalized world.
- A new university is coming up at Bangalore which is being set up by the Dalai Lama's sister. The one at Varanasi was founded by the Government of India.
- There are some problems related to the Ladakhi language and identity.
- The Shugden sect is opposed to the Dalai Lama.

One impressive refugee initiative in Ladakh is the Krama Dupgyod Choeling, Tibetan Monastery, Choglamsar. It is a massive open ground where a grand stand has been set up with an impressive row of stupas.

#### **PART 3- MUNDGOD, KARNATAKA, JANUARY 2009**

A most impressive mirror image of the Tibetans in exile is the Drepung Loseling Monastery, Lama Camp, number 2, PO Tibetan Colony, Mundgod, Karnataka. The nearest railway station is Hubli or, alternatively,

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<sup>4</sup> He probably was relating to the long-term future of Tibet which he envisions.

Alnavar Jn. This is typical "Malgudi" country of R.K. Narayan and the heart of the vocalists of Hindustani classical music like Mallikarjun Mansur, Gangubai Hangal and Bhimsen Joshi.

This visit was undertaken on the urging of a charismatic Indian, Lama Tashi, the principal of the Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies, Dahung, Arunachal Pradesh. He had been the principal chant master to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. He was educated as a monk at Mundgod, which he compared to Harvard. He recommended that no study of Buddhism can be complete without a visit to Mundgod. How the refugees got this land is not covered in this report, but the policy planners' vision in allotting this land has been remarkable indeed.

Being a holiday, the top managers could not be met, but a walk through the establishment was sufficient to convey the aura and ambience. Lay Tibetans were seen shopping in the marketplace. The local grocer and cobbler spoke fluent Tibetan. This is not surprising if one remembers that in Bodh Gaya, due to Sri Lankan dominance, shopkeepers and beggars speak Sinhala.

The new Assembly Hall is impressive and so is the Buddhist Institute where chanting lessons were on with an assembly of about 400 to 500 student monks or so, including children. A Buddhist delegation (probably from Japan or Thailand) was also being shown around. Two monks at the entrance greeted us (taxi owner Shri Kale, driver Hanif and self), and

introduced themselves as belonging to Himachal Pradesh. They could have been easily mistaken for Tibetans - which is the general impression of the people of the plains. The Indian monk trainees took pains to tell us that they are Indians and many students are from other Indian Himalayan states.

The most popular photograph of Mundgod is of a group of monks in front of the monastery, which is distributed to all visitors. The local café in-charge, where we had gone for a quick bite, proudly introduced himself as a Khampa and also tried to explain what was Tibetan Buddhism and Gelugpa, etc.

Surprisingly, the owner and the driver of the taxi which was hired from Alnavar, both in their mid-forties, were visiting the monastery for the first time. They were thoroughly impressed and showed a keen interest in listening to how states such as Himachal Pradesh has made such exile locations good tourist attractions not only for foreigners but domestic travellers.

Visitors report that other refugee establishments in south-west Karnataka (Bylakupe, Hunsur and Kollegal as shown in the map in Roemer's book) are like a mini-Ladakh in their landscape, with a majestic ambience full of spiritual and cultural treasures.

Social harmony prevails in the area. In fact, the monastery stood out as a jewel in the pristine terrain. The roads are in a sorry state. If the soft power is to be fully exploited, the roads leading to the monastery must be improved and

regional publicity must be given for the local tourists to visit this place. Strengthening this conclusion is the fact that the taxi crew vowed to bring their families to see the place at the next opportunity.

#### **PART 4- SARNATH AND BODH GAYA, MARCH 2009**

##### **Sarnath**

Besides the temples and the museum, the main focus was to see the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies which has been alluded to in Chapter Two. The most senior Tibetan faculty had proceeded to Delhi to participate in the "Thank You India" event at IIC. The campus was well maintained and presented a highly professional look. Prof D.R. Singh (economist and the registrar) was very helpful. He introduced me to Lama Wangchuk Dorje Negi from Himachal Pradesh. He further guided me to the examination section where Shri S. Bhattacharya briefed me. In short he mentioned that (1) there are sufficient number of aspirants to seek admission. Candidates must have knowledge of Tibetan as a prerequisite; (2) there are about 400 resident students; (3) training in chanting is not given (from a Tibetan lady in his office I could gather that even at Sampuranand Sanskrit University (SSU) this is not being given). The syllabus includes:

- (a) High school/Permadhyam (9, 10) Tibetan and Sanskrit, both are compulsory. Hindi or English is optional.
- (b) The Buddhist Philosophy or Mul

shastra which has Bon, and four streams of Buddhism (Nyigma, Gelukpa, etc). Optional subjects are Economics, Political Science, History, Pali and Tibetan History.

For Class 11 and 12 (called Uttar Madhyama) the course is for two years and Shastri (like BA) is for three years. Specialization like astrology takes nine years.

At the computer section I met Mr Jampa Chopel, a third-generation Tibetan, born and brought up in Karnataka at Mundgod. He now teaches Tibetan astrology. He explained that student distribution is 40 per cent Indians from the Himalayan belt, including Nepalese and a few Mongolians. 60 per cent students were Tibetans. All modern subjects are taught by Indians and traditional subjects by Tibetans.

##### **Bodh Gaya**

Bulk of the Buddhist devotees thronging the place are from Sri Lanka and Thailand. So much is the influence of Sinhala that shopkeepers and even beggars speak that language. The most serious devotees appeared to be Tibetans doing penance like circumambulation and bending/stretching and going around by lying flat, getting up and inching forward around the Bodhi tree temple. At other places mostly Tibetans (with a sprinkling of Western Buddhists) were engrossed in bending and stretching on the mat for hours and days as part of the ritual. This was also common at Nalanda and Rajgir.

Bodh Gaya has many temples of

Buddhist nations. It is likely that Mongolia will get land soon to have its own set-up.

**PART 5 - - TIBET HOUSE, AND THE  
TIBETAN PARLIAMENTARY AND  
POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE,  
NEW DELHI, 2009<sup>5</sup>**

**Tibet House**

Tibet House was established by the Dalai Lama in 1965 with the aim of preserving the unique cultural heritage of Tibet and to provide a centre for Tibetan and Buddhist studies. The House emphasizes intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and ecological responsibility from a Buddhist perspective.

The museum has old and rare art objects such as scores of Thangka paintings, hundreds of gilded bronze, copper, brass, black stone and sandalwood statues as well as other religious and ritual implements, objects of war and household use, and jewellery. Most items were taken out of Tibet by the exiles.

The collection at the library is modest. But it has rare religious scrolls like Tanjur and Kanjur and other materials. There are old records, news letters, correspondence and some journals and magazines of historical importance.

**Interaction with Librarian Yeshi Jigme**

Mr. Yeshi Jigme is 26 years old, with

education as Shastry. Shastry is equivalent to post-graduation. He came from Tibet 10 years ago in search of a better future and followed his educational career while living in a monastery in Varanasi. He earns a salary of Rs. 5000-6000 per month. In his view, career prospects are limited for Tibetans in India. Back home, he has his parents and siblings. His father works at a grocery shop owned by a Han Chinese. His brothers work on casual basis. He is satisfied that he has obtained an education but now his top concern is to get a decent job, save some money and send or take it with him to Tibet and do some business there. But he is also scared of going back as the Chinese authorities track the India-returned Tibetans.

Economically, Tibet has progressed over the last few decades but the benefits accrue to the Han Chinese. This is a deliberate policy of the Chinese administration.

The Chinese keep a tight vigil on religious practices, particularly worship of the Dalai Lama. Tibetans who return from India are well received by the society. Monks are well respected and sometimes they also propagate secretly the messages of the Dalai Lama among the Tibetans.

A combination of persuasive diplomacy and international pressure could bring some relief to Tibetans in China. India could play a more proactive role.

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<sup>5</sup> This survey was done by Dr Zakir Hussain

If the Chinese provide good economic opportunities and education to the Tibetans, would most of the Tibetans go back there? His answer to the question was a mixed one. Many would like to go back and take advantage of the better economic and educational opportunities there, but very few would forget the cause of Tibet and Dalai Lama.

Is it possible that the Chinese government would declare a provision of refugee allowance? What would be its effect on Tibetan refugees in India? He was dismissive of such a suggestion. In his view, all those who are loyal and true to the cause of Tibet would never be wooed by such moves.

Is it possible that Tibetan refugees in India might become a threat to Indian security? He cannot imagine such a possibility, which would clearly imply ingratitude on the part of the Tibetans.

He is of the view that the Tibet movement lost a historic moment on the eve of the Beijing Olympics. Dillydallying by the West encouraged the Chinese government to come down heavily upon the protesting Tibetans.

### **Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre (TPPRC), April 2009**

The TPPRC, formed in 1991, is a joint project with Friedrich-Naumann Foundation, a public-funded German institution which broadly champions the cause of liberal democratic ideals and is engaged in strengthening pluralist developments. The institute is engaged in seeking support of the global masses in favour of the Tibetan

freedom struggle as well as inculcating democratic ethos among the Tibetan people.

Broadly, the Institute's objectives are:

- To promote the political agenda of the TGIE
- To promote the political image of the TGIE
- To strengthen the democratic process and institutionalisation of democracy among the Tibetan people
- To strengthen the non-violent nature of the Tibetan movement
- To examine the developments in their socio-economic and political context and to bring matters of concern in the international area to the notice of the ATPD.

*Members of the group: Group Photo of TPPRC Governing Council*



### *Interview with Mr. Choechung Wangchuk, Executive Director, TPPRC*

- He is concerned about the declining Tibetan population in India. Some of the contributing factors to this decline are the new education system, career consciousness

resulting in delayed marriage, the one-child norm and the monastic orientation of sending them to become bhikus and bhikunis.

- The Tibetan parliament is not properly understood by the older generation; they see it as a division of power and authority of the Dalai Lama.
- The new generation of Tibetan refugees need some pro-active leadership which could provide a continuous back-up and educate them on the latest policy developments. This would probably prepare and sustain them for the future of the movement. He agreed that the movement is passing through a dilemma.
- He was also equally concerned about the education of the present generation.
- He expressed concern about the ongoing continuous flow of Tibetans from mainland Tibet to India.
- Overall, he is optimistic about achieving the Tibetan goal of autonomy. They fully repose their faith in the Dalai Lama and his policy of the TAR.
- He expects a more proactive and meaningful cooperation from the

Western countries. He also thinks that the Indian government should mediate in materializing the TAR agenda.

## **PART 6- DELHI : 2008 TO 2011**

### **Delhi University**

The Department of Buddhist Studies, Delhi University, was visited a number of times to learn about Buddhism as in the Himalayan belt.<sup>6</sup> Prof Gangnegi emphasized the importance and deep impact of the work of Rinchen Zangpo (period prior to Atisa) in Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh. The region has made good economic progress. Mane walls have been constructed prominently and cultural shows are organized in a big way.

An Indian student doing PhD research on the expulsion of Buddhism from India in the twelfth century was of the view that the new generation of Tibetans (about 300 or so are put up in a hostel at Rohini, Delhi) are not very keen on Tibet: they are more interested in cars, mobiles and a good life.<sup>7</sup> A professor at JNU who deals with China noted, however, that though the youth may have a modern outlook, the traditions are very much alive and surviving.

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<sup>6</sup> I thank Dr Hira Paul Gangnegi, Professor at DU (who hails from Himachal Pradesh) and his colleague Dr Kelsong in explaining the nuances of Buddhism . Dr Gangnegi also came as a discussant at IDSA in a seminar on Buddhism in the Himalayan Belt. In February 2011, Dr Arvind Kumar Singh, Assistant Professor, was kind enough to give me a pictorial run down of his visit to Lhasa by road from Nepal which he undertook in 2010 with a team of academics .

<sup>7</sup> Such aspirations are natural to any youth and the Indian youth was probably biased.

### **Some Excerpts from Seminars, Meetings and Tibetan Cultural Events**

In Delhi, Tibetan activists (both exiles and Indians), scholars and researchers conduct a number of events regularly. Some points of key importance and the message conveyed are as under:

- (a) The Seminar on China's Disregard for Environmental Concerns in the Himalayas organised by The Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, New Delhi at India Habitat Centre on June 29, 2007. Executive programmer was Mr Acharya Yeshe Phuntsok of Tibetan Parliament and Policy Research Centre. The chairman was Dr N.K. Trikha, journalist. Presentations were done by glaciologist Syed Iqbal Hasnain, Air Vice Marshal R.C. Routela (retd), noted mountaineer, Khiren Rijju, MP from Arunachal Pradesh (BJP) and Mr Tenzin Tsultrim, Head Environment and Development Desk (EDD), Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). Their thrust was on Chinese designs to divert Yarlung Tsangpo, how India needs to be cautious and proactive, and ecological degradation of Tibet by the Chinese economic model.
- (b) Prof. M.L. Sondhi, Institute for Asian Pacific Affairs, seminar on 1914 Shimla Convention Agreement and Consequences on July 4, 2008 at IIC Annexe. Some chairs/presenters were Amb. C.V. Ranganathan, Amb. Ranjit Gupta, Rajiv Vora, Naresh Kumar, advocate, Supreme court, Dr Anand Kumar of JNU, Lt Gen J.F.R. Jacob (retd), Maj Gen Vinod Saigal (retd), Dr Parshotam Mehra, author.
- (c) The Tibet Study Group's open debate on "Five Questions on Tibet" at Constitution Club, Rafi Marg was held on November 3, 2008. Important Indians who spoke or chaired sessions were Prof P. Stobdan, Amb. Sudarshan Bhutani, Prof. Mira Sinha, Shri Ravi Bhoothalingam, Amb. Ranjit Gupta, Colonel Manmohan Sharma (retd), Colonel Virendra Sahai Verma (retd) and Major Johri (retd). On the Tibetan side there were Mr Tempa Tsering, representative of the Dalai Lama in New Delhi and Mr Acharya Yeshe Phunstok, executive programmer and member, Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.
- (d) International Conference on Contribution of Tibetan Culture to Global Understanding: Progress and Prospects, held from December 18-20, 2009 was an international gathering of scholars at the initiative of Tibet House, held at the India International Centre. The event had participants from the Government of India, former bureaucrats, Indian academics and international scholars. The sessions were devoted to cultural events, oral and textual heritage, medicine and healing, responsible human action, art and architecture, role of institutes and spiritual

practice. Not all representatives were Tibetans. Representatives of Tibet House from Russian Federation were Russians. Papers from Tibet House were presented by heads from Spain, Germany, Italy and Mexico, amongst others. The conduct of such events with voluntary participation by Indian intellectuals shows how, besides India, the idea of Tibetan Buddhism has spread to the world.

Two spiritual-cum-cultural events were also attended to gain further knowledge. The first was Tibet Study Groups at IIC annex organized by Colonel Virendra Sahai Verma: "Answers to Your Questions on Tibetan Culture and Religion" by His Eminence Tai Situ Rinpoche (teacher of Karmapa) on January 20, 2008. Unlike the seminars which had the familiar strategic community, these events were attended by the religiously inclined. Middle-aged and elderly Western foreigners were in maximum attendance. The discourse was spiritual, including blessing a newly married couple (wife Brazilian and husband, a Non Resident Indian).

The second was on December 16, 2008 at IIC organized by the Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It was an exhibition of paintings by artist Dremey and chants in Sanskrit from the Mahayana Canon by Vidya Rao, followed by Durga chants. The last item was 21 Tara chants in Tibetan by Tibetan monks. The relationship between Sanskrit and Buddhist chants was very powerful. Buddhist chants in a way

resemble the ancient Dhruvad tradition of Hindustani classical music.

The Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama also conducts lectures on problems facing humanity such as global warming. Dr John Stanley is working on an ecological Buddhist project. He is a Senior biologist and Researcher at McGill University (Canada), a Nyigma practitioner. In November 2008 he talked about "Climate Breakdown at the Third Pole: Effects of Global Warming on China, Tibet and India" and urged to replace the US \$ 3 trillion global oil industry with biofuels and other non conventional means. His discussant were none other than firebrands environmental activists such as Vandana Shiva and Sunita Narain with TV anchor and Tibetologist Rajiv Mehrotra in chair.

The Tibet Study Group also is active in organising lectures and facilitating the Karmapa to visit New Delhi for lectures. A discourse by Gyawang Karmap (the Seventeenth Karmapa) at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library on "Compassion in Every Day Life" was attended on April 30, 2011. In such teachings the devoted attendance by lay Tibetans is commendable. Even small toddlers as a cultural habit prostate themselves as a show of respect.

### **Vivekanand International Foundation(VIF), New Delhi.**

On 6 and 7 September 2011, the VIF organised a conference on 'Tibet in the Aftermath of Devolution of Political

Authority'.<sup>8</sup> The conference was designed to address topics like Tibetan politics and new leadership, Chinese and Indian perceptions of Tibet problem, Chinese policy in Tibet and strategic implications for India and other related themes. The VIF put together an array of eminent strategic experts, including Tibetan stakeholders for the conference who deliberated upon a range of complex issues. His Excellency Dr. Lobsan Sangay, the Kalon Tripa of the Central Tibetan Administration (CAT) delivered the key note address at the conference - his first formal interaction in public since he assumed the high office on August 8, 2011. In his keynote address, Dr. Sangay drew a cultural, political and environmental map of Tibet. He spoke passionately about challenges that the new responsibility has bestowed upon him. Dr. Sangay elucidated what the devolution of power means in general and to him in person. Defining the geographical setting of Tibet, he said that Tibet's area comprises parts of Chinese province of Yunnan, Sichuan, Qinghai, and small parts of Gansu. Talking about Tibet's geographical significance, Dr. Sangay said it is a major source of fresh water for a number of countries in Asia, especially for countries in Southeast and South Asia. Dr. Sangay expressed his deep anguish at China's continuing dam construction activities over Tibet's major rivers. The ecological balance

which the Tibetans have so assiduously preserved through the centuries stands threatened due to China's dam constructions activities on such a massive scale. On the issue of devolution of political authority, the Kalon Tripa said it is a serious issue with major implications. The Kalon Tripa also made it amply clear that His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is not setting a new precedent by handing over his political authority to a new incumbent. Devolution of political authority of Dalai Lama is in fact the continuation of a political process which was established a long time ago, precisely with the Fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century. The March 2011 declaration of the Dalai Lama however signifies the separation of political and spiritual authority of the institution of Dalai Lama. His Holiness was keen to shed his political authority to a new leadership so that he could devote more time for global peace and harmony. Defining his own role as the Kalon Tripa of the Tibetan Government in Exile, Dr. Lobsang Sangay mentioned that he would energize his effort to ensure that Tibetan people are able to stand on their own feet and take the movement forward. He would also strive to fulfill the vision of His Holiness of creating a secular democratic society.

In the valedictory session, Mr. Lalit Mansingh, former Foreign Secretary

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<sup>8</sup> See seminar report at <http://www.vifindia.org/event/report/2011/09/15/A-Report-on-Seminar-Tibet-in-the-Aftermath-of-Devolution-of-Political-Authority>

and India's Ambassador to US, reflected on the need to revisit India's foreign policy, especially against the backdrop of past achievements and failures. Mr. Lalit Mansingh not only recounted India's consistent failures on Tibet front, but he also spelt out a series of measures which are needed to recover lost ground. Suggesting a new policy approach towards Tibet, Mr. Lalit Mansingh said that India should look for a reciprocity-based approach towards China and remove restrictions on activities and movements of Dalai Lama and the Karmapa. He also urged that India should completely identify itself with Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism and associate the Dalai Lama with the Nalanda University Project. He stressed that "friendship with China is a desirable goal, but it can not be

allowed to override our concerns for Indian security or Tibetan autonomy."

### CONCLUSION

The response, activities and elite attendance at events show how entwined Tibet, its religion, culture and history are with India. The national TV channel Doordarshan regularly airs interviews of the Dalai Lama by Rajiv Mehrotra, the well-known anchor and author. It is important to know how issues of Tibet are deliberated on in democratic India. It is surely a silent soft power with India. In all events attended, Tibetans were seen to be highly cultured and respectful.

Not only the state, but also the society, thus, has a stake in the matter.

## THE CHINESE APPROACH TO THE TIBET QUESTION

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter assessing the Chinese approach to the Tibetan question is in two parts. Part I is based on interviews conducted in China in July 2009. Part II includes Sino-Tibetan dialogues and views of some Chinese scholars.

### PART I TIBET'S FUTURE: A VIEW FROM CHINA<sup>1</sup>

*Is China constructing an economic Tibet?*  
To counter the current crisis in Tibet, the government has launched a number of massive investments to preserve 22 historical and cultural relics in the southwest Tibet Autonomous Region. As for the latest reports, the Chinese government along with the regional administration of the Tibetan Autonomous region have spent 340 million yuan (\$53.6 million) especially on the Tibet's cultural facilities in the

last five years.<sup>2</sup> According to Xinhua, this amount is almost six times more than the total investment made to the Tibetan Autonomous region from the year 2000-2005.<sup>3</sup> Interactions with several experts from the SASS, SIIS, CIIS, CASS suggest that these developmental programmes are intended by the Chinese to underscore the proposed Chinese initiatives in Tibet, to heighten the government's image in the region through development, and to consolidate its hold on the isolated region through some attractive investments.

These investment or financial plans have not really helped the cause of Tibet or the Tibetans. A Tibetan who works in a Shanghai grocery says, "These Chinese policies of pursuing economic growth and generating FDI have the status of Tibet as an 'autonomous region' at stake". He faces many difficulties in China being a Tibetan.

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<sup>1</sup> This assessment is based on interviews with select scholars, government officials and a Tibetan in Shanghai. Most were reluctant to go on record.

<sup>2</sup> "China invests \$54million in Tibet's future", *Xinhua*, December 1, 2011, at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-12/01/content\\_14199283.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-12/01/content_14199283.htm)

<sup>3</sup> "China invests \$54million in Tibet's future", *Xinhua*, December 1, 2011, at [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-12/01/content\\_14199283.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-12/01/content_14199283.htm)

The owner of the shop behaves with him very roughly sometimes because he is a Tibetan, and calls him a “national shame”. In short, China’s economic-centric perspective in the region seems vague, without political reforms to accompany this process in Tibet. As a result, social tension is rising in Tibet. Liu Jiawei, a scholar from the Sichuan University says in a personal discussion that the majority of the Tibetan population is from rural areas and does not have adequate healthcare and medicines; hence; the government tries to bring necessary policy reforms.

Educational facilities and opportunities for the Tibetan children are minimal; many parents cannot afford their schooling. Local Tibetans, who struggle for their identity and rights, see little prosperity and growth, while ethnic Chinese who have migrated to the region have become highly wealthy. An influential Chinese think-tank scholar in Beijing suggests that the population of Tibet as per the 2008 data is 2,870,800, and the population of Tibetans has increased from one million to 2.7 million. He says that as per the government’s eleventh Five-Year Plan (2006–2010), the regional government in Tibet had planned to finish building new houses and buildings for 219,800 households involving 1,252,000 farmers. Similarly, another scholar is of the view that by the end of 2008, the region had invested more than seven billion yuan to help 200,000 families, or about one million farmers and herdsmen to build houses.

Today, Tibetans are increasingly being marginalized as their economy and

their population of 1.3 billion becomes integrated with that of China. Under the Communist regime’s “Western development strategy” which was launched in 1999, the Tibetans are losing their grip over the region both geographically and culturally. According to one Shanghai Academy of Social Science scholar, Tibetans are worried that the Chinese government’s fast-track economic policies in Tibet are heavily linked with its political agenda. These Communist initiatives are of the most serious concern for the survival of Tibet’s unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity. The “Western development strategy” is a massive Chinese political undertaking, affecting more than 70 per cent of China’s total land area and almost a quarter of its vast population, including Tibetans, Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang region and other national minorities.

Prof. Wang Dehua says in the same official Chinese view is that economic investment has catalysed Tibet’s development as a region. The current action plan on Tibet is to bring all-round development both for the Tibetans and the Chinese. He admitted that it has led to unexpected negative consequences in governance also. In his view economic development and national integration are two separate and probably conflicting issues. As a result, economic development and integration may not proceed at the same pace. Conventionally, a higher level of economic development implies greater opportunities for education and prosperity. Ethnic consciousness and identity will depend heavily upon the level of education.

Similarly, another Chinese expert (name not disclosed under request) accepts that it is a great challenge to strike a balance between economic development and environmental protection. According to him, the central government has always made environmental protection its top priority in promoting development in Tibet. He asserts that natural reserves account for 15 per cent of China's land territory, higher than the average international level of 10 per cent. The ratio in Tibet, which boasts more than 40 various natural reserves, is about 30 per cent.

He also adds that on the environmental protection issue, the government is currently following a plan titled "Protection and Construction of the Ecological Security Screen in Tibet" (2008–2030). The government pursues a "felling by quota" policy and strictly controls the scale of tree-felling. The government has also implemented a rotation system for lumbering bases, so as to help restore vegetation. A project for the protection of natural forest resources on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River in Tibet has been implemented in the three counties of Jomda, Gonjo and Markam, which has a weighty bearing on the ecology of the lower Yangtze Valley.

China increased investment in accordance with the Tibet Autonomous

Region's Project Scheme in the eleventh Five-Year Plan (2006–2010). According to the 2006-2010 scheme, 77.88 billion yuan was to be invested in Tibet for the construction of 180 projects. When these are completed, the total investment will exceed 100 billion yuan.<sup>4</sup> Such an enormous investment will maintain Tibet's economic growth at a relatively high level, providing the region's economic development with promising prospects. However, another scholar from the SAAS, Shanghai says that the only solution to the Tibet crisis is that the Dalai Lama should correct his mistakes and get closer to the central government and do something beneficial for the people, including the Tibetans. He fears that some of the refugees settled in India, particularly from the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), are having strong extremist and terrorist linkages.

The proposed projects in Tibet up to 2010 included an airport in the northern Ngari Prefecture and extending availability of drinking water, electricity and telephone lines to herding communities. Strategically, these will help China in any future border confrontation in the region. Further, it hastens absorption of Tibet by massive Han Chinese migration into Tibet. Xinhua recently reported that China has started constructing a new airport in the North-western Qinghai province to

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<sup>4</sup> "Conclusion: Prospects for Growth and Development", Report on the Economic and Social Development of Tibet, *China.org.cn*, March 2009, at [http://www.china.org.cn/china/tibet\\_democratic\\_reform/content\\_17522143\\_8.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/china/tibet_democratic_reform/content_17522143_8.htm)

establish linkage with the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.<sup>5</sup> According to Yang Yang, the deputy chief of the provincial development and reform commission, the airport known as Huatugou airport in the Mongolian-Tibetan Autonomous prefecture of Haixi, is one the three main new airports that Chinese government has planned to built in Qinghai before the year 2020.<sup>6</sup>

However, the region remains one of the poorest parts of China, with annual per capita income less than the equivalent of \$100 per year. The current investment agenda has raised incomes for a few locals but it has also brought about a substantial increase entry of migrant Chinese labourers having dominance over the Tibetans. Previously, the central government subsidies and investments went either to the extractive industries or to the Chinese administrators and settlers. Broadly, the outline of China's programme of developing its western region is designed at exploring local resources in Tibet on behalf of China's overall economic expansion. This gives enough scope for foreign investors who counterbalance the human rights groups critical of China. The attractive packages and proposals from the international companies and investors are helping the government agenda in taking full charge of Tibet's mineral and other natural wealth and ensuring its control over the Tibetan people.

Party officials in Beijing and Shanghai argue that an improved investment environment has attracted increasing overseas capital to the Tibet Autonomous Region. There are fresh economic measures in the pipeline to build a "Tibet of Chinese style". There is hardly any doubt, however, that the current Tibetan protest manifests the result of several years' hard-line political as well as economic policies of the government in suppressing Tibetan autonomy.

On the political front, the government has been limiting free expression by arresting academics, closing newspapers and magazines, strictly controlling Internet content, and utilizing a refurbished "strike hard" campaign to circumvent legal safeguards for criminal suspects and alleged separatists, terrorists, and so-called religious extremists. There has been a severe official campaign to eradicate Falun Gong. Imprisonment of political opponents, journalists and groups that do not come under the party's specified norms or are critical of the government has been common. The press is tightly controlled; so is religion. The constitutional norms in China, particularly Article 4, affirm the equality of the country's 55 ethnic groups and require the state to adopt policies advancing their "special characteristics and needs". Not only does the constitution prohibit

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<sup>5</sup> Xiong Tong, "China builds new airport in Tibet Plateau", *Xinhua*, December 31, 2011, at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2011-12/31/c\\_131337116.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2011-12/31/c_131337116.htm)

<sup>6</sup> Xiong Tong, "China builds new airport in Tibet Plateau", *Xinhua*, December 31, 2011, at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2011-12/31/c\\_131337116.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2011-12/31/c_131337116.htm)

discrimination, it also guarantees minorities the same freedom of thought, expression, assembly and religion as the majority Han Chinese enjoy.

Whatever may be the consequence of the current protest movement in Tibet, the world is witnessing the emergence of a Chinese design of an "economic Tibet". Three interrelated policy measures: the open backlash against the Tibetans' economic marginalization, the rising Han Chinese presence in the Tibetan region and the government's regular policy assault on Tibetan ideology, culture and ecology will help in constituting a "Chinese made Tibet", which will heavily be a Communist construct to accentuate China's political base in the region.

Economic development is clearly visible in Tibet. New buildings and roads have changed the look of both Lhasa and Tibet as a whole today. The region is also heavily guarded by soldiers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The region is awash with Chinese flags and political messages about the progress of Tibet under China. The common people of the region, however, have not changed much. They dress in the traditional Tibetan style, prefer Tibetan food and maintain the same old lifestyle. Young Tibetans seem to have found a balance in preserving their

identity while living fully in the modern world. They are still deeply religious. They are more articulate and political, combining traditional skills with internet/new tech savvy attitudes. They are well informed, analytical and critical. They understand better what it means to be united in a region where military and politics dominate everyday life. They are travelling outside Tibet for better jobs. To maintain their identity as Tibetans, there is an element of distinctness they maintain in their lifestyle.

## **PART II**

### **SINO- TIBETAN DIALOGUES AND VIEWS OF SOME CHINESE SCHOLARS**

#### **Sino –Tibetan Talks**

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama's representatives till February 2011 have held 10 rounds of talks with the Communist Party's United Front Work Department. The talks began in 2002.<sup>7</sup> Talks of February 2011 had no result or worthwhile outcomes.

In an interview to *The Hindu*, the Chinese Ambassador to India, Mr Zhang Yan, mentioned that talks between the central government and the Dalai Lama may continue if he gives up his separatist proposition, recognises that Taiwan and Tibet are "inalienable"<sup>8</sup> parts of China and stops

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<sup>7</sup> In November 2008 Mr Lodi Gyari led the Tibetan team for eight round of talks. He was the lead person designated by the Dalai Lama to commence negotiations with the Chinese government. See Lodi Gyari, "China and the Future of Tibet", *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, Vol.12, No.2, Spring 2009, pp.4-8.

<sup>8</sup> Manjeet Singh Pardesi, Visiting Fellow IDSA, in an interaction had pointed out that he has never found the use of the word "inalienable" by Indian officials. We acknowledge his insights.

violent activities; the Dalai Lama, however, is pushing for greater Tibet; his Middle Path is nothing less than Tibetan independence.<sup>9</sup> In another interview the Ambassador mentioned that the door for negotiations with the Dalai Lama was still open. In 2008 three meetings had taken place. The Ambassador complimented India for providing security to the Chinese diplomatic premises, preventing protestors from reaching there.<sup>10</sup>

In March 2009 on the occasion of the Serfs' Emancipation Day, the political and religious leadership like Nema Tsering, Vice Chairman of the People's Congress of TAR and Living Buddha Tsemonling Tandiz Trinic expressed the opinion that the activities of the Dalai Lama are aimed at splitting the country rather than furthering autonomy.<sup>11</sup>

Official organs of the state like *Beijing Review*, *News from China* or *People's Daily online* regularly feature articles and news items which reiterate that Tibet is part of China and how the cultural and ecological aspects are being taken care of as Tibet develops. Scholars from Chinese think-tanks write likewise and shift the blame to the period of the Cultural Revolution as 10 disastrous years. Accusations of China indulging in Sinicisation, secularisation and ecological degradation are countered.<sup>12</sup>

The Chinese Strategy could be based on the logic that with the end of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, the Tibetan struggle will fade away. However a few Chinese academics warn that the window of opportunity exists while he is alive and it is prudent to negotiate now. The evidence of the revolts of 1987 or 2008 ethnic Tibet cannot be just explained as some designs of the Dalai Lama. In 2011, about 2,500 monks were in revolt in Kirti monastery in Sichuan.

On the issue of reincarnation, the Chinese government has made it clear that it has the final say in choosing his successor. They then elaborate that the Dalai Lama cannot abolish the institution of reincarnation. This is possible due to various contingencies that the Dalai Lama has been hinting at, of which he had also suggested that it may end.

### Views of Chinese Scholars

Beijing writer Wang Lixiong and 338 others have given 12 suggestions for dealing with the Tibetan situation after the March 2008 demonstrations. These include: (1) stop one-side propaganda (2) support the Dalai Lama's appeal for peace (3) provide proof of the Dalai clique's activities (4) avoid foul

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<sup>9</sup> *The Hindu* (New Delhi), April 9, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> *The Hindu*, March 3, 2009. Till mid-2009 six Sino-Tibetan meetings had taken place.

<sup>11</sup> *The Hindu*, April 1, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Ma Zongshi, "Eyewitness to Change in Tibet over Half a Century", *Contemporary International Relations*, 19(2), March – April 2009, pp. 1–31.

language for the Cultural Revolution<sup>13</sup> (5) provide evidence of riots orchestrated by the Dalai Lama (6) take officials to task if the phenomenon of government-instigated "popular revolt" is true (7) hold trials as per law without the motive of revenge (8) allow credible national and international media (9) appeal to the Chinese people and diaspora to be calm and tolerant (10) introspect on mistakes having led to the situation (11) allow freedom of religious beliefs as per the constitution (12) eliminate animosity and bring about national reconciliation.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, although the government has central authority with a rigid stand, these voices indicate that there exists considerable space for manoeuvre and accommodation due to public perception.

An Indian psychologist has suggested that the Tibet conundrum can be solved not through grandiose structural changes, but through small, local, and creative innovations which reduce risk and sit well with traditional practice and culture .<sup>15</sup>

Wang Lixiong and other scholars pleaded through the internet to end the one-sided Chinese government propaganda to stir up inter-ethnic animosity. They suggested a number of measures, which included holding dialogues.<sup>16</sup> This is probably the first of its kind and shows how public perception may be changing for reconciliation. In the view of Pico Iyer,

Part of unusual fascination of the China-Tibet issue, after all, is that it seems to suggest a larger question beyond geopolitics: How much can anyone live by bread alone, and to what extent does some sense of inner wealth either triumph or at least make sense of all material riches we might gain? It's no surprise, perhaps, that 100,000 Han Chinese have already taken up the study of Tibetan Buddhism, and their numbers are rising quickly.<sup>17</sup>

Wei Wang looks at the situation of Tibet and the position of the Dalai Lama from the standpoint of Confucian ethics and the Buddhist Middle Way in order to find a solution to the problem. While

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<sup>13</sup> On the use of diplomatic language for the Dalai Lama, Indian author Virendra S. Verma similarly has appealed that China should reign in its party cadres to be polite and use acceptable language for a person who is one of the most respected and admired leader in the present world. See Virendra S. Verma, "Post – Dalai Lama Situation and the Middle Path: Discussions with Chinese scholars in Beijing", *China Report* 45: 1( 2009), 75-87.

<sup>14</sup> "Twelve Suggestions for Dealing with the Tibetan Situation, by Some Chinese Intellectuals", *The New York Review of Books*, May 15, 2008, p. 62.

<sup>15</sup> Ravi Bhoothalingam, " Lateral Thinking and the Tibet Conundrum", Paper presented at a workshop at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies , New Delhi, May 13, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Wang Lixiong et al with 338 others , "Twelve Suggestions for Dealing with the Tibetan Situation, by Some Chinese Intellectuals", *The New York Review of Books*, May 15, 2008, p. 62.

<sup>17</sup> Pico Iyer, "A Hell on Earth", *The New York Review of Books*, 56(6), April 2009, pp. 6–10.

acknowledging the legitimate grievances and aspirations of Tibetans, he argues that the outside world plays an often negative role by seeking to interfere on the basis of subjective opinions and unverified assumptions. He urges the Chinese government to reach an agreement with the Dalai Lama so that he may come back permanently to his country.<sup>18</sup>

### **Fiction or Factual Scenarios?**

Even before 1959, the Chinese were suspicious of India's involvement in the unrest in Tibet. The Chinese government regarded Kalimpong as a focal point of the revolt where conspiracies were hatched.<sup>19</sup>

In an age of scenario planning and risk management, fiction can also be made to look like a possible scenario (high impact, low probability). Humphrey Hawksley in his popular *Dragon Fire* has

the novel begin with how Tibetan commandos attempt to rescue a jailed Buddhist monk at a prison in Lhasa using aircraft and resources of the Indian military by hijacking a military helicopter and an AN-32 transport aircraft. This episode leads to a Chinese response and a war which turns nuclear.<sup>20</sup>

Courtesy al Qaeda and LTTE, any covert force is likely to evoke the worst case scenario by the adversary and the Chinese are no exception. They are possibly going to link it with extreme radical terrorism.<sup>21</sup> As has been mentioned at Chapter Three, scholars see the Tibetan Youth Congress as having the potential of turning violent. This, however, is mere conjecture. Ever since the US initiated and led the global war on terror launched in 2001, the blanket term terrorism and terrorist has been loosely used.

**Note:** Data's and Information for this chapter are collected from interactions with Chinese scholars and various open sources like *China Daily*, *Report of the Economic and Social Development of Tibet (China Tibetology Research center)*, *China.org.cn*, *People's Daily* and other news and media source.

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<sup>18</sup> Wei Wang, "Confucianism and the Solution to the Tibet Problem", *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues*, 13(4), Winter 2009, pp. 168–80.

<sup>19</sup> Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino- Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*, Lanham, MD, University Press of America, 1994 as quoted by Steve Hoffmann, 'Rethinking the Linkages between Tibet and the China- India Border Conflict: A Realist Approach', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 8(3), Summer 2006, pp. 165–94.

<sup>20</sup> Humphrey Hawksley, *Dragon Fire*, London, Macmillan, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> In an interactive session at the IDSA of June 15., 2009, Mr James Clad, Senior Fellow and professor Near East and Middle East of the National Defence University, USA, felt that the Chinese have "wild ideas" about the Uighurs in Xinjiang. Similarly they could have ideas about Tibetans.

## Chapter 7

# INFLUENCE OF THE MONASTIC ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING THE DALAI LAMA'S INSTITUTION ON THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER QUESTION AND TAWANG

### MONASTERIES IN EXILE

There are 208 monasteries (with over 27451 monks) and 17 nunneries (which have more than 1696 nuns) established in exile. In addition there are six cultural centres for the study of spiritual and secular tradition.<sup>1</sup>

Tibetans with Indian support have set up mirror images of monasteries of their homeland. Also, historically Tibet was the source of power and head lamas were appointed at the behest of Tibetans.

The Indian monastery at Tawang is now headed by an Indian (who succeeded a Bhutanese). Tsona monastery set up by exiles at Bomdila, interestingly, is under an Indian. About the historic Hemis monastery in Ladakh, local Ladakhi Buddhists of prominence have blessed the appointments of the clergy.

To place this in perspective it needs to be noted that in Ladakh the Kagyupa has two prominent

sub-sects which are non-Gelugpa. The Changpa nomads of Durbok follow the Dri-Gungpa sect and those of Nyoma block follow Drugpa sect. Examples of monasteries under sub-sects are: Dri-Gungpa – Lamayaru, Phiyang, Shachukul; Drugpa – Hanle, Hemis, Chemrey, Stakna. The overall picture is not very clear on the nationalities of the abbots of monasteries which existed before the refugees came to India. There is a considerable overlap. The photo of the Dalai Lama is displayed in all traditions. This probably is his way of unifying the Buddhist traditions.

Overlap is necessary, as explained by Lama Tashi, who is an Indian educated, in Karnataka. The monks in photograph 7 in Chapter 2 comprise both Tibetans and Indian citizens of the Himalayan belt. Similarly, when the Dalai Lama visited Tawang in 2009, the Indian media mentioned that Tibetans had flocked to see him, whereas they were mostly Monpas from Arunachal

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<sup>1</sup> Tibet's Parliament in Exile, 2009, New Delhi, Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, New Delhi, 2009, p.51. Over 140 are in India scattered in refugee establishments and the Himalayan belt.

Pradesh. The media had never reported this properly and hence a lot of ideas in public domain are not supported by research.

The Dalai Lama has a magnetic appeal for most Tibetans. It is difficult to shake off the historical Tibetan influence. A harmonious blend seems to exist. We need to ensure that sections of the Indian Buddhists from the Himalayan belt do not perceive themselves to be marginalized by Tibetans.<sup>2</sup> To that end dialogue may be initiated on procedures and institutions of appointing abbots and other such incarnations both of Tibetan monasteries set up by the exiles and the Indian ones. Currently, due to the charismatic Dalai Lama there is immense trust. This may not be the case when he is no longer on the scene. We need to be prepared for it.

As has been shown in Chapter 2, the Karmapa and his tradition also have a discourse on security implications. Most analysts, who wrote in the New Delhi-based media when the Karmapa escaped to India in 2000, considered that this controversy involves a security risk, as people of Sikkim will be affected as they follow this sect. However, most Sikkimese are followers of the Nyingma

tradition. What security impact the Karmapa struggle will have thus may not be that serious for the locals. Interaction with the Principal of the CIBS at Ladakh also revealed that in Ladakh there is no impact on the society in Ladakh of politics related to the Karmapa.<sup>3</sup>

#### **THE STATUS OF TIBETAN REFUGEES IN INDIA – THEIR RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS**

Tibetan refugees are not affiliated with any Indian political parties. This position basically emanates from their status: neither do they hold refugee status nor citizenship. Without suffrage, they become politically less significant. At the same time they have maintained cordial relations with all political parties and more particularly with the current ruling one. Our field surveys at two important Tibetan settlements, Dharamsala/McLeod Gunj and Dehradun convinced us that the Tibetans themselves are not interested in increasing their political connections. Their leaders have good relations with political leaders. This gives them leverage in managing their affairs at local levels. The local administration generally treats them well. The higher

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<sup>2</sup> Our interaction with Indian monks, academics from Himalayan belt and abbots outside Delhi showed no animosity or jealousy against the exiles. Most felt that some Indian intellectuals have over politicised this issue in the past.

<sup>3</sup> According to media reports of 2008, the Indian government had not allowed the Seventeenth Karmapa Ogyun Thrinley Dorje to visit Tibetan Buddhist dominated areas close to the border of the TAR due to its sensitive nature. However, in September 2008 he did visit Leh (Ladakh) and due to heavy snowfall was even rescued by military helicopters on the Upshi Manali axis beyond Barlachla pass. He is presently in a temporary abode at his monastery at Sidhbari near Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh. Recent events (2011) regarding the Karmapa are included in the epilogue.

levels such as the Dalai Lama also have a good understanding with almost all the political parties.

Beyond the Himalayan belt, wherever they have their settlements they have maintained their exclusive Tibetan culture and religious identities. Generally, they do not mix up with Indian Buddhist centres but are respected in Indian society. The tenets of Buddhism such as non-violence, rejection of consumerism, self-restraint and peaceful coexistence are cherished in India and are very much a part of life in India. Hence, the Tibetan refugees are not regarded as aliens. Their own way of living in India has also been exemplary. Over a long period of almost five decades, these Buddhist monks and senior persons have maintained a disciplined, cordial and peaceful life in India which is well appreciated in Indian society.

### **TAWANG**

India's position on Tawang and its ethnicity has been covered in detail in Chapter Two. India undoubtedly is in a dominating position as regards Tawang. The Indian military is well integrated with the civil population. Civil-military relations are well developed. So also is domestic tourism. The Indian military has well adapted to Buddhist practices and aesthetics in its monuments and surroundings. This needs to be further

integrated by formations deployed in those areas.

### **SOME CHINESE VIEWS.<sup>4</sup>**

While most experts and scholars do not want to talk too much on the post-Dalai Lama scenario, they are trying to link the Tibet issue with Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh quite strongly now. In fact, China is increasingly becoming obsessive over Arunachal. It is mainly interested in Tawang, the place which borders Tibet and Bhutan. In the Chinese contention, it historically belongs to Tibet, and wants India to return it in order to settle the border dispute. Many refer to the issue of Arunachal Pradesh as a "complex historical chapter". Most Chinese experts refer to the fact that the sixth Dalai Lama hailed from Monyul in Arunachal Pradesh. In the Chinese contention, three parts of this region – Monyul, Loyul and Lower Tsayul – were under the Tibetan administrative and jurisdictional control. Though it has officially claimed time and again 90,000 sq. km. of land in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, Beijing's primary interest is limited to Tawang. A leading expert in Shanghai asserts that "historically, Tawang belongs to Tibet; and India should realize this fact quickly in order to avoid a situation like 1962."<sup>5</sup>

Public opinion in China is keen on taking a firm stand on Arunachal once

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<sup>4</sup> Recorded by Jagannath Panda in China in August 2009.

<sup>5</sup> A piece has been written on this issue at the website. See, Jagannath P. Panda, "China's eagle eye on Arunachal", July 10, 2009, at [http://www.idsa.in/strategiccomments/ChinaseagleeyeonArunachal\\_JPanda\\_100709](http://www.idsa.in/strategiccomments/ChinaseagleeyeonArunachal_JPanda_100709)

again . In the wake of India's strategic planning in the North-East, Chinese experts rue their government's mistake in not gaining control of Arunachal Pradesh during the 1962 War. A scholar in Shanghai points out, for example, that "it was a costly error on the part of China" to have declared a unilateral ceasefire on November 21, 1962 without gaining control over the region. To this day, China calls Arunachal Pradesh as Southern Tibet and lays claim on this territory.

### CONCLUSION ON TAWANG AND RELATED ISSUES

Chapter Two has covered India's position. In brief it can be said that:

- Just because the Sixth Dalai Lama was born in Tawang does not mean Tawang belongs to the PRC. With this logic China should also claim Mongolia as it was the birthplace of the Fourth Dalai Lama. In any case the Chinese had tried to delegitimise the Sixth Dalai Lama for his behaviour and he died very young (probably poisoned or killed). However, Tibetans revered him.<sup>6</sup> The regent had kept the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama a secret. The Sixth Dalai Lama had already grown up by the time he was discovered.

He was a poet and lover of . The Chinese saw it as an excuse for intervention and stirred up rumours against him.<sup>7</sup> Lhabсан Khan, Gushri Khan's grandson, assumed the title of King of Tibet in 1697. He set out to restore the political authority which his grandfather had yielded. This placed him in direct confrontation with the Tibet regent who wanted no Mongol influence. Lhabsang announced that Tsayang Gytsso was not the true Sixth Dalai Lama and with the approval of the Qing emperor sent him into exile in Beijing; the Dalai Lama died en route. The monks then turned to Geluk's Mongol followers, the Dzungars, for aiding in overthrowing Lhabsnag Khan who in the meanwhile had installed a fake Dalai Lama. In 1771 the Dzungar cavalry aided by Tibetan monks and laymen quickly defeated Lhabsang Khan.<sup>8</sup> The Chinese are now trying to construct a narrative on the Sixth Dalai Lama whom they themselves had rejected. This fact of history has not been highlighted forcefully by India.

- India should not be apologetic on the ethnicity of the people of Tawang to include Tibetan stock.

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<sup>6</sup> Tibetans tended to be more tolerant and termed his behaviour as "pure vision" of tantric ethos. See Matthew T. Kapstein, *The Tibetans*, Malden, Blackwell, 2006, p.142.

<sup>7</sup> Thubten Jigme Norbu and Colin Turnbull, *Tibet: Its History, Religion and People*, London, Penguin Books, 1972, p. 294.

<sup>8</sup> Melvyn C. Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama*, Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1997, pp. 11-12. Also see Inder Malik, *Dalai Lamas of Tibet*, New Delhi, Uppal, 1984.

- Counterclaim for Minsar and revival of Pemako and Chendru who had petitioned to join India may be revived with archival research.
- Tsona Gonpa leadership at Bomdila is now with Indians. This does not mean that India can lay claim to Tsona in Tibet.

# TIBETAN REFUGEES AND INDIA'S SECURITY

As discussed in Chapter One, the layers and perception of security need to be placed in context.

Incidents that occurred in Himachal or Arunachal were purely local, and not part of any grand design by Tibetans. The local aberrations also have to be seen in the growth of tourism and livelihood for locals as in Dharamsala. However, it is better to have regular dialogue with refugee establishments through local officials and also central government officials in charge of security. There are no weapons with the refugee establishments.. Therefore, to say that they can use weapons like terrorists is not correct.

There is a possibility of Chinese spies infiltrating, but that is an issue for counterintelligence.

As regards mood swings and intra-Tibetan conflicts, post-Dalai Lama or struggle over the Karmapa, there is a probability of violence and unpleasant events. However, the probability of its impact on Indian Buddhists of the Himalayan belt is very low. We need to shape both the Dalai Lama politics and the Karmapa politics.

Tibet will remain an issue in India's foreign policy with China. India's stand is consistent and is based on

humanitarian grounds. As an emerging world leader and an ancient civilization, India has elicited admiration from the world on its handling of the Tibetans. Soft power is inherent and refugees in a paradoxical way allow us to demonstrate our soft power.

The Chinese are not likely to let go this issue. They will get their own Fifteenth Dalai Lama. They will equate Tibetans with al Qaeda and will charge India with harbouring terrorists. They will orchestrate a stance on Tawang by their scholars, think-tanks, diplomats and others. All possible attempts will be made to project that India is weaker than China and is on the defensive. For India, abandoning its stand on the refugees is not a strategic option. The ghost of 1962 is to be exorcised; then a renewed and vigorous debate and dialogue must be allowed to happen in India on this issue.

### THE KARMAPA

When the Karmapa escaped to India in 2000 many saw it as a security risk, in the perception that the people of Sikkim follow this sect. The fact however is that most Sikkimese follow the Nyigma sect and are not likely to be affected by the Karmapa struggle. Interaction with the Principal of the CIBS at Ladakh also

revealed that there is no impact on the society in Ladakh from politics related to the Karmapa.

The late Tashi T. Tobden, when asked about the Karmapa and the people of Sikkim, noted:

- (a) Most Sikkimese are of Nyimga sect. Factions within the sub-sect may try to get support.
- (b) The Karmapa controversy is very much a Tibetan problem. The Fourteenth Karmapa was very strong. He spread the sect all over the world. Unlike Christians or Hindus, Tibetans were not initially as well organised. Now like other religions, they are flush with funds.
- (c) Post-Fourteenth Dalai Lama period till the Fifteenth Dalai Lama comes of age, the Karmapa may be the head. This is the current situation. The future is not easily predictable.
- (d) It was a conscious decision to put this region in exile in 1959 . Most of these refugees were from Kham. Thus they were located at Sikkim and the Dalai Lama at Dharamsala.<sup>1</sup>

### ASSESSMENT

Our assessment is that the Tibetan refugees are not likely to be a threat to Indian security. Their number itself is minuscule. Tibetans themselves are strongly against any kind of activity

which may be interpreted as a threat to the security of India. India should adopt a gradual but definite plan to nurture the Indian version of Buddhism in this region, so that the epicentre of the Buddhist soft power remains in India. India needs to invigorate the historical past. For instance, the Indian legacy carried by Padmasambhava to Tibet and visits of various other scholars to Tibet from time to time should be brought into focus all over India in general and the Himalayan belt in particular. India needs to rejuvenate its cultural diplomacy in the Himalayan belt.

### SHORT ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It is now possible to give short answers to the research questions presented in the Preface.

*(a) What is the influence of Tibetan Buddhism on the Indian Himalayan belt?*

The influence overlaps with Theravada Buddhism as practised by Indians in the Himalayan belt with Vajrayana as practised in Tibet. Both overlap and are inclusive. The political influence is not overwhelming.

*(b) What is the status of the Tibetan refugees, their religious status and political affiliations in India ?*

The status is well respected and is a demonstration of India's enduring soft

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<sup>1</sup> Interview of Shri Tashi Tobden, IAS, Advisor Government of Sikkim by P.K. Gautam in Gangtok in October 2008. Tashi Tobden tragically died in a motor car accident in 2009.

power.

***(c) What would be the scenario after the Dalai Lama passes away?***

India will have to facilitate assumption of leadership role by the Prime Minister of the TGIE. The Task Force strongly subscribes to this position and fears risk of division of Tibetans over the Fifteenth Dalai Lama, which in any case will have a Chinese version like the Panchen Lama.

***(d) What influence do Tibetan refugees wield in the Indian socio-political environment?***

Benign.

***(e) How do Tibetan refugees factor in Sino-Indian relations?***

Historically, refugees from Tibet were central to Sino-Indian relations. Now economy and trade may appear to be overtaking it as the first concern, but in soft power terms, India giving shelter to them is inherent to our strategic culture based on soft power.

***(f) How much influence do the monastic organisations, including the***

***Dalai Lama's institution, have on the Sino-Indian border and Tawang question?***

In Arunachal Pradesh, Indian (Tawang) as also important monasteries reconstructed by exiles (like Bomdila) are under Indian monks. Ladakh presents a mixed picture. Data are not available and more information needs to be collected on the authority and practise of appointment of heads of monasteries by organs of the state having resources and mandate to collect it.<sup>2</sup> Indians have great trust in the Dalai Lama, which may not endure for his successor. For this, a dialogue with the TGIE needs to be initiated.

***(g) Are Tibetan refugees a threat to Indian security?***

No. Concerns of Tibetan nationalism leading to violence by the TYC are exaggerated. We seem to be keener to impress the Chinese with the "Nepali model". Bringing in an analogy of the demand for Gorkhaland indicates a niggardly attitude unbecoming of India's civilisational character. This fear is unfounded.

<sup>2</sup> The India connection is very vital. Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltzen (1895-1977) also called Negi Lama was born in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh. The 14th Dalai Lama was his student. See Robert Thurman, *Why the Dalai Lama Matters: His Act of Truth as the Solution for China, Tibet, and the World*, New York, Atria Books, 2008, p.80. Secondly, His eminence, the 102nd Gaden Tripa : Rizong Se Rinpoche Thupten Nyima Lungtok Tenzin Norbu is the supreme spiritual head of the Gelukpa. He is from Ladakh. In the history of Gaden Tripa, they are not only supreme spiritual heads of Gelugpa but they were tutors and spiritual advisers to young Dalai Lamas and regents of Dalai Lama during his absence.

# CONCLUSION AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS

### EXCERPTS FROM SOME RECENT POLICY-RELEVANT WRITE-UPS BY INDIAN SCHOLARS , ON THE TIBET QUESTION

*S.D. Muni:*<sup>1</sup>

- The March 2008 uprising, in the year when China was to host the Olympics, was the third. The first was in 1959 when India allowed the refugees into its territory. The second, in 1988, was not very serious. India did not react in 1988 as it was planning to initiate the process of normalisation. The March 2008 uprising was in support of Tibetan autonomy and cultural rights. This was unlike the earlier events. The Chinese were ruthless in the use of force. This placed the Indian government in a dilemma as India's relations with China had improved. The Tibetan issue was a big humanitarian obligation and concern for India. The position of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGIE) had been sympathetic to India's position on the McMahon Line and Tawang. India's response was to play

safe in order to preserve the cooperation momentum in its relations with China. The government was also cold towards the Dalai Lama. His appointments and meetings with Indian officials and even the Vice President were cancelled, marking a clear break from the past bonhomie. However, the Chinese were still not happy with continuing demonstrations in India by Tibetan refugees. The Dalai Lama was also not happy with India's "overcautious approach".

- India still has a vulnerable North-East which can be exploited by China. There is nonetheless a lively debate in India if the Tibetan cause for autonomy can and should be abandoned unceremoniously.
- Regarding China, Indian policymakers are hesitant to have a forward policy on issues like Tibet.

The author captures the trend well, but does not suggest clear-cut policies.

*Rajiv Sikri:* The work has policy focus. The author points out that "The more

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<sup>1</sup> S.D. Muni, *India's Foreign Policy: The Democracy Dimensions*, New Delhi, Foundation Books/ Cambridge University Press India, 2009, p. 107.

repression there is, the less credible is China's claim to 'peaceful rise'.<sup>2</sup> The author strongly suggests that in the repressive regime of China in Xinjiang and Tibet, India must stand up to China and assert itself. China's Tibet policy has been a failure. Sikri welcomes the remark of the Indian Prime Minister that India does not endorse the harsh and vituperative official Chinese denunciations of the Dalai Lama. He is waiting for the Indian government to give its Tibet policy a clear strategic direction.<sup>3</sup> On the policy on population settlement he suggests that the areas that are opened up by road must also be settled with people; otherwise, China could create unpleasant ground realities in these areas.<sup>4</sup>

We do not subscribe to settlement of population. This policy has a domestic dimension problem. Settling people for fear of Chinese claims later is unfounded. Ladakhi or Arunachali population in any case is less. The inner line and identity of minorities in the belt must be maintained.

**P. Stobdan:** The Chinese-occupied land of Jammu and Kashmir of Aksai Chin is also directly related to Tibet. In Ladakh, Chinese settlements have

reached much closer to the LAC as compared to 10 years ago. They have been constructing infrastructure in disputed areas and have now begun to settle population opposite Ladakh in the disputed territory in a swath of Ladakhi traditional pastureland. As Indian nomads urbanize and migrate to cities, the Chinese nomads encroach on India's claim in the Ngari region. The ramifications of Chinese advance into Ladakh are serious.<sup>5</sup> In the past, according to a very practical opinion, it was presumed that in any package deal in future, India may well exchange Aksai Chin for Tawang as Tawang has a large population settled and Aksai Chin had none. This settling of population in Aksai Chin, if true, leads to the possible conclusion that the Chinese will continue to harden their stand to even claim Aksai Chin on settled population basis.

**Prem Shankar Jha**, a leading journalist and author, spoke in the "Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal Memorial Lecture" at the Centre for Air Power Studies in March 2009 on India's Tibet problem.<sup>6</sup> He argued that the Sino-Indian border war of 1962 was because of the Chinese anxiety over Tibet. China also blamed

<sup>2</sup> Rajiv Sikri, *Challenges and Strategy: Rethinking India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi, Sage, 2009, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 100-101.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 105.

<sup>5</sup> P. Stobdan, "Is China Desperate to Teach India Another Lesson?", *Strategic Analysis*, 34 (1), January 2010, pp. 14-17.

<sup>6</sup> Prem Shankar Jha, "India's Tibet Problem", *AIR POWER*, 4(2), Summer 2009, April - June, pp. 9-22.

India for the March 2008 uprising. China's deeper worry stems from the fear that its policy of assimilation is failing because India has enabled the Tibetans to keep their culture, religion, and state structure alive. China regards the Tibetan presence at Dharamsala as an existential threat with the younger Tibetans becoming more vocal and, in its assessment, violent. Whatever excuse New Delhi had of not understanding China's predicament in Tibet should have disappeared when Chinese think-tanks and internet sites launched a tirade of accusation against India of conspiring with Tibetan "splittists" to endanger China.

Implicitly the Chinese have hinted to New Delhi to stop the TGIE from functioning out of India altogether. As long as India remains a democracy and so long as the Tibetan movement remains non-violent, no Indian government can accede to this demand. India can thus help in facilitating Sino-Tibetan dialogue. For the Dalai Lama, three amendments are suggested as a blueprint for genuine autonomy:

- (a) Drop the demand to create greater Tibet and limit proposals to the TAR.
- (b) Reduce the number of subjects to be developed upon the administration of the TAR from the present eleven to four: religion, culture, education, and personal and customary law.
- (c) Drop the demand for an immediate shift from the present system of "government from above" to "government from below" and propose a timeframe to carry it out.

## CONCLUSION

From the academic discourse it is clear that competition with China is intense. Both hard power and soft power will continue to play important roles.

Buddhism is embedded in the Tibetans in exile. In spite of the age of realism, this religious and cultural magnanimity of India has made the Tibetans thankful to India. It is good strategic thinking to keep the flame of Buddhism alive for the Tibetans and have this as a pressure point to allow Tibetans to return voluntarily to the PRC in an accommodative agreement such as that of Hong Kong. At no time should India be seen as niggardly over the fate of over 100,000 refugees. To that end administrative procedures for issue of documents need to be made more professional, departing from the 'inspector raj attitude' which creeps in at lower levels of bureaucracy. Local meetings of Tibetan exile leaders with police and district administration must be held regularly.

Wherever trouble with the locals has taken place it is because political generosity has failed to percolate down to the popular level when those involved are faced with the realities of competition for livelihood. If the 1959 influx leading to the 1962 war was the first era, today we are in the second era and present and future generations of policymakers and those in the delivery mechanism of dealing with Tibetan refugees need to be made aware of this complex issue in its new form.

Post-Fourteenth Dalai Lama, the movement for Tibet may fizzle out and splinter. It may lack charismatic

leadership, but Buddhism will definitely survive. This suggests that from treating it as a leadership issue, India needs to reinforce institutionalization of the faith. A Tibet with its indigenous people provides greater security to India than a Hanised Tibet. The best option is to be prepared for all contingencies. For this a dialogue must be initiated with the TGIE. A joint scenario exercise must be played out, if not already done. Decentralized leadership of refugee establishments must be incorporated so that the post-Fourteenth Dalai Lama era is accepted with calm, fortitude and further cohesion among the Tibetans. The exiled Prime Minister will play a central role. The preferred option is a peaceful one.

Literature classifies three types of security problems that refugees may pose to the receiving country: strategic security may be threatened if they get armed; structural security may be threatened if they compete for scarce resources; regime security may be threatened if they vote in domestic politics. None of this applies to the Tibetans in exile. However, at times an impression is created in some visitors to Dharamsala – where the atmosphere has become cosmopolitan and international – that the Tibetans no longer bother to respect Indians and are not grateful any longer. On the contrary, the Tibetans did hold a function in March 2009 called “Thank You India” in Delhi to express their gratitude. More of such activities, without expecting them to be servile, may be encouraged by Tibetans in various exile establishments to revive the strong

bonds which they share with India. The message to the TGIE on this account must be communicated by officials diplomatically.

A step-motherly treatment has been reported towards the Chakma and Hajong refugees. This has more to do with the lack of a clear refugee policy. These issues are possibly highlighted by pro-China elements.

The various claimants to the title of the Karmapa have led to a fierce competition within the sect. In our work we found that most of the official government establishments were influenced unduly by the camp of the rival Karmapa (Than Trinley Dorje) claimed by Shamar Rinpoche who oppose the Karmapa (Ogyen Trinley Dorje selected by Tai Situ and Gyltab Rinpoches).

A hypothesis regarding the Karmapa as a Chinese agent also exists. This is a weak and insensitive argument, more a result of the competing Indian TV channels for catching public attention, with no sensitivity to religious sentiments of cornered exiles. A European diplomat was amused to comment that adolescents and teenagers are not capable to internalise the nuances of espionage training. It is only possible for matured adults who are professional spies. Surely in India, if professional intelligence agencies have evidence, action needs to have been taken. The issue is over 10 years old, long enough for some solid evidence. Good counterintelligence is in any case a principle of security. Belittling the Karmapa in TV bytes is not counter intelligence.

It is said that Mao used the imagery of the palm of the hand (Tibet) and five fingers (Bhutan, Sikkim, NEFA, Ladakh and Nepal). It has never cost China anything (apart from a communiqué from the Xinhua news agency) to claim these areas as theirs. Further, the Chinese rightly thought that these claims could be extremely useful in the future.<sup>7</sup> As a counter, Nehru rushed through a series of defence treaties with Bhutan (August 8, 1949), Nepal (July 31, 1950) and Sikkim (December 5, 1950).<sup>8</sup> The study of Ladakh, Sikkim and Tawang indicates that this sort of an argument by the Chinese has no foundation. It must be admitted nevertheless, that the palm-and-five-fingers symbol is a powerful simile reminding us of our defeat in 1962 and the deeper designs of the Chinese.<sup>9</sup> Much more effort and psychological understanding is needed in India to get rid of such notions. India has at last started building roads (earlier the pet theme was: do not build roads as they will favour the Chinese attackers). We need now to construct narratives and discourse that will neutralize this palm-and-fingers analogy. This is best done by the soft power of religion and culture. The Indian Himalayan belt is

rather like Indian skin in the Himalayas nourished by Buddhism.

Ethnicity in the Himalayan region as shown in Chapter Two is complex and needs more research. India should not be apologetic about Indian citizens being ethnic Tibetans. India in any case is a mixture of many races, religions and people. Rather, we also need to take up the issues of the people of Pemako and Chimdru (now in Tibet, who had petitioned to join India). This also could be better researched as a counter to China by India. Reclaiming ownership of Minser enclave, composed of several villages located inside Tibet in Mount Kailash region needs a fresh look. Minser was a sovereign part of India until the mid-1960s.

The influence of Indian Buddhists is appreciable. The leadership provided by Lama Tashi in Dahun as head of the CIHCS has great promise and potential. Similarly, Bomdila monastery under Indian charge and the little publicized influence of Tsona Lama are innovative Indian realities. Overall the Buddhist people residing along the "skin" or outer cover of India of Ladakh, Himachal, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh are very

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<sup>7</sup> V. Sundaram, "Abject Story", *News Today*, November 6, 2006, <http://newstodaynet.com/2006sud/06nov/1811ss1.htm> (accessed October 26, 2008); Abanti Bhattacharya, "China's Inroads into Nepal: India's Concerns", IDSA web commentary of May 18, 2009. Both authors refer to the palm-and-fingers analogy. L.L. Mehrotra also alluded to the fact that "Mao had long ago called Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh and NEFA as fingers of the Chinese palm; see *India's Tibet Policy*, New Delhi, Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, 1997, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> Dawa Norbu, "India and Tibet" in Foreign Service Institute, *Indian Foreign Policy Agenda for 21st Century*, New Delhi, Konark, 1998, pp. 256-76.

<sup>9</sup> One good example is G.S. Bajpai, *China's Shadow over Sikkim*, New Delhi, Lancer, 1999.

nationalistic. Sensitivity to overdoing Operation Sadbhavana (activates to win hearts and minds of insurgent by civic action in Kashmir valley with some overlap in Kargil and Ladakh region) and Sindhu Darshan (over-exaggerated Hinduisation of the river) which threatens Buddhist identity must be exercised.

An Indian counter to Chinese claims and designs should be put in place. Diplomats, academics, military officers, scholars and citizens must be educated on the complexities of the issues. All ranks in military units must be educated and trained to comprehend the nuances of the problem. More Indian scholars need to be encouraged to research on the people to know them better and to get rid of the 1962 war propaganda and anti-Mongoloid attitudes of mainland Indians. Appendix A has briefly introduced some arguments which need to be developed and refined further.

Granting Mon Autonomous Region status in Arunachal will benefit both the people and ensure the so-called nurturing of Buddhism in this belt on the Sino-Indian border. Similarly, Ladakh's case for a Union Territory is more driven to preserve religious identity and must be accommodated in some form. As regards Gorkhaland, if it includes Sikkim, even the existing Buddhist identity of Sikkim will get overwhelmed. This will have many disadvantages as it is important to retain the Buddhist identity of Sikkim.

Seeing the interrelated nature of issues, it is suggested that both from the ecological and the Buddhist perspective,

inner line status quo, restricting population and influx by special status be maintained in the Indian Himalayan belt. Tibet's environmental degradation that may result due to China's economic and demographic policies needs to be well understood with scientific evidence. The Tibet-Qinghai plateau is a global ecosystem and water tower of Asia. India must expose the decline and engage in dialogue with China and the international community to preserve ecology with Buddhist values of want limitation.

More frequent civil society dialogue must be maintained in refugee pockets. As joblessness grows in India with population growth and rising unfulfilled demands, mob-like behaviour cannot be ruled out by the locals. It is a reality that some refugees now appear to be better off than many poor Indians. Here the TGIE needs to introspect and carry out some changes so as not to lose local support for their ideals as in the past. Urban growth is now closing in to what were considered remote places. Land and property value near refugee camps in Dhramsala, Dehradun and some other places is now exorbitant. Land mafia may also have interest in ousting the refugees and grabbing land. Preventive strategies need to be applied with local modifications. Out of the box thinking is needed.

Though data is hard to get, there is a great heartburn in a section of intellectuals on appointments of Tibetan monks to Indian monasteries. 'Tibetanisation of Himalayas' had been a concern of some. While we the authors may conclude that it is not an

issues, but the TGIE and Tibetans also need to keep sensitivities of the discourse in mind in order not to exacerbate these perceptions. Dialogue may be initiated on procedures and institutions of appointing abbots and other such like incarnations both of Tibetan monasteries set up by the exiles and the Indian ones. At present due to the charismatic Dalai Lama there is immense trust. We need to be prepared for a change when the Dalai Lama is no more on the scene.

Branding anyone with high cheekbones or slant eyes as Mongoloid (thus Chinese in nature or characteristics) is fraught with danger. Mention also needs to be made of wrongly depicting the dragon as evil. This could be an influence of the Judaeo-Christian art form inherited in India during the colonial period. In Western art one may find the devil and the dragon as negative symbols. In the Himalayan belt, Tibet, South East Asia and China, the dragon is a symbol of fertility and not evil. Ascribing negative connotations to the dragon needs a corrective.

Tsona Gonpa leadership at Bomdila is now with Indians. This does not mean that India can lay claim to Tsona in Tibet. As discussed in an earlier chapter, just because the sixth Dalai Lama was born in Tawang does not mean Tawang belongs to the PRC; in any case the Chinese tried to delegitimise him. This fact of history has not been highlighted forcefully by India, which now needs to be done.

In spite of 11 per cent of Nepal being Buddhist with close cultural and ethnic affinity of its people living on its borders with Tibet, Nepal is leaning towards China and is being ruthless with the refugees. India may at least indirectly pursue these issues in Indo-Nepal relations dialogues on humanitarian grounds.

Buddhism in China declined mainly because of the clash between Communism and Buddhism. Buddhism in China has always been under state control. Contemporary governments have, however, made some conciliatory gestures to Buddhism. Buddhism is still a vital force in some parts of China, especially in villages. But government-sponsored projects and study curriculum on Tibet and Buddhism seem to dominate and influence the public minds largely. It is likely that with modernisation more Chinese Han people may have better regard for Tibetan Buddhism than what the Chinese state may offer. India will need to be proactive in not allowing its natural position to sustain the leadership role of Buddhism being overtaken by China in the region of South Asia, South-East Asia and East Asia. Undoubtedly, Buddhism and the role of the monks in society will survive. In the aftermath of the earthquake that hit the Tibetan Qinghai region in April 2010, the spontaneous role of monks in relief and recovery operations has exposed to the Chinese people a new role, in which they may no more be branded as troublemakers.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *The Hindu*, April 24, 2010.

## POLICY SUGGESTIONS BY P. STOB DAN

A number of authors in India have suggested scattered policies on the Tibet question to include Sino-Indian relations, refugees, boundaries, rivers, people on the borders and the like. Generally, the suggestions align to the line of a political party. Anyone aligned, for example, with the right wing parties will have a pro-Tibet and anti-China stance; it is the reverse for the Communists/Left. The second type are scholars who see the entire problem from all aspects and who suggest options. Stobdan perhaps is a rare case in the present times, who has suggested clear bullet-point measures.<sup>11</sup> This chapter will first go into these suggestions critically and then suggest policy measures. Policy measures suggested by Stobdan are:

- (a) India's present ambivalent Tibet policy may risk damaging relations with China and creating mistrust among Tibetans. The decision to retain the Tibet card needs to be decisive and clearly defined.
- (b) While emerging Chinese strategy needs close watch, present-day liberal regime to refugees needs to be contained.
- (c) Refugee laws need to be enacted and measures improved against illegal entry.
- (d) Need to check illegal migration on the opening of Nathula.
- (e) As the Dalai Lama seeks political support base, NGOs supporting the Tibetan cause need to be watched over in Indian states by the Centre.
- (f) Hold of influential Kagyu, Sakya and Nyingam lamas is strengthening in the Himalayas. They have taken over Indian monasteries; government needs to establish how many are under their control.
- (g) The Dalai Lama needs to be told not to interfere in India's internal affairs.
- (h) The Karmapa poses a greater security challenge than the Dalai Lama. He needs to be won over without being given undue importance, as he is unlikely to be accepted as a leader by the majority of Tibetan refugees.
- (i) Post-Dalai Lama contingencies need to be thought out.
- (j) The Tibet question can also be a bridge of moderation in Sino-Indian relations. Asian Buddhist (Mongolia, Bhutan) look to India as the fount of Buddhism. This needs to be treated as a diplomatic asset.
- (k) Tibetan studies need to be encouraged.

<sup>11</sup> P. Stobdan, "Tibet and the Security of Indian Himalayan Belt", in K. Warikoo (ed.), *Himalayan Frontiers of India: Historical, geo-political and strategic perspective*, London, Routledge, 2009, pp. 102–21.

- (l) In light of the above, there is a need to create a Tibet cell to coordinate policy matters with long-term perspective.<sup>12</sup>

### COMMENTS AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS BY AUTHORS

The authors are of the view that suggestions on refugees appear to be very harsh. The monasteries of Tawang and Bomdila are under Indians. Exile monasteries are in any case Tibetan establishments and can have Tibetans without any quarrel.<sup>13</sup> The case of Ladakh is not clear. If the Dalai Lama is in the loop, then surely after him there may be problems and thus, greater engagement and dialogue on these issues with Tibetans in exile by the Indian government is now desirable. As regards the Karmapa, fieldwork has established that there is unlikely to be any adverse impact on Indians. Of course we need to win him over.

We reinforce the suggestions (j) and (k) and it is here that innovation can take place as suggested in Chapter Two. More deliberation, like public and parliamentary debates, needs to be done on refugee law for a decision. The last suggestion, about having a Tibet cell is also welcome. Care needs to be exercised, however, that wrong signals are not sent over this cell to China. More

effort on Tibetan and Buddhist studies by itself will take care of this. It should not in any case be overtly bellicose and jingoistic.

### ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Climate change, as a topic, we find is multidisciplinary. This topic is not only multidisciplinary but trans-disciplinary. Besides issues as above, the following is suggested:

- (a) A survey of all establishments and religious establishments needs to be conducted for fact finding by incorporating the exiles. This will map data so that better informed policies can be made.
- (b) It may be premature to think of giving Indian citizenship to the Tibetans at present. More dialogue with the TGIE needs to be initiated as they themselves are against granting citizenship. Though signing of the convention on refugees is not under the preview of this work, there is a good case for having a refugee policy preferably after a national debate. As regards the flow of refugees, the policy of not permitting inflows by military where it is deployed close to the Chinese border, must be explained to the TGIE so that wrong impressions are not formed that India is sending them back as

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> There are 208 monasteries( with over 27451 monks) and 17 nunneries(accommodating over 1696 nuns) established in exile . In addition there are six cultural centres for the study of spiritual and secular tradition. See *Tibet's Parliament -in -Exile*, 2009, New Delhi, Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, New Delhi,2009, p.51.

a routine. Need for exigencies of military action must be communicated to the Tibetan authorities in India.

- (c) From our interactions and field work there is a sense of unhappiness with issues of RC and IC. The procedures for issue of Registration Certificate(RC) and Identity Certificate (IC) needs to be streamlined. It needs to be undertaken in a professional manner so that the 'inspector- raj' type of tendencies are not allowed to creep up over time. It should not appear that the state is bent on harassing. At the same time better techniques with trained professionals need to be in place to weed out agents and spies. In short, there is a need for sophisticated counterintelligence.
- (d) Tibetan language must be reintroduced as a subject at the National Defence Academy (NDA). A former Chief of the Army Staff has suggested that the shortcoming of language skills at regional level must be overcome and Tibetan must be taught.<sup>14</sup> Diplomats dealing with China and Tibet may also be given adequate language training in Tibetan. Academics with knowledge of Tibetan must be made use of. Buddhist studies institutes must be upgraded with the best of human

resources with Indian faculty. India must be seen by other countries as a centre of Buddhism by active participation in its study and festivals.

- (e) At present there is a dearth of Indian academics in this field. Most academics of Tibetology, cultural studies of the Himalayan belt including anthropology and linguistics are Western. We must encourage Indian scholars to become world class in this field. Finance, resources and jobs must be created for this to happen.
- (f) India should not allow China to assume the leadership role of Buddhism. More than infrastructure, what is needed is a social capital based on Buddhist values. Through the 'Look East' policy and upcoming Nalanda University, India will take its rightful place in the Buddhist world. We need to recall Shashi Tharoor's urging, "...if we are to rebuild it after 800 years, we will need not just money but the will to excellence, not just a physical plant but a determined spirit. A great University is the finest advertisement for the society that sustains it. If we recreate Nalanda, it must be as a university worth its name – and we must be a society worthy of a twenty-first century Nalanda". High calibre and

<sup>14</sup> General Shankar Roy Chowdhury (Retd), "Untapped Potential: ARTRAC is an intellectual force multiplier for the Indian Army", *FORCE*, 7(8), April 2010, pp. 28–9. The former Chief of the Army Staff suggests that other regional languages that need to be taught are Urdu, Sinhala, Burmese, Banhal, Bhutanese, Pashto and Dari.

motivated professionals need to be appointed in the university. Network with Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (Gangtok), Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (Sarnath), Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (Varanasi), Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies (Dahung), Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (Choglamsar, Ladakh), Songsten Library and Centre for Tibetan & Himalayan Studies, Sahstradhara, Dehradun, Delhi University and other universities/institutes in India must be established rapidly. India will need to catch up with Buddhist studies and Tibetology to be on par with many Western universities. Simultaneously, the state must provide maximum help to Tibetan monasteries (like Mundgod) in India to be top class world centres and continue to have products such as the less known India Lama Tashi. High quality documentary film makers may be commissioned by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) to film the achievements of Indians from these institutes.

(g) The government must begin

comprehensive dialogues with the TGIE on various contingencies. Facilitation of democracy and, if need be, de-institutionalisation of the Dalai Lama and related orders may be one option. At the same time, the Dalai Lama could be an instrument of negotiations. To that end, the old practice of the Dalai Lama meeting with the Prime Minister in transit through Delhi must be revived. He should be free to visit any part of India or to meet anyone. To that end, India's rejection of Chinese pressure on the Dalai Lama visiting Tawang in November 2009 is demonstrative of our strength and is welcome. In November 2011 China wanted India to prevent the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama from addressing a Buddhist convention in India organised by the Asoka Mission, founded in 1948 by Cambodian monk Dharmavara Mahathera.<sup>15</sup> The boundary talks in November 2011 also got postponed on that account.<sup>16</sup> The Chinese consulate in Kolkata had officially approached the Chief Minister and Governor of West Bengal not to attend a talk by the Dalai Lama at Indian Institute of

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<sup>15</sup> Shobhan Saxena, "Return of Buddha", *Times of India*, December 4, 2011. 35 Chinese monks did not turn up for the occasion

<sup>16</sup> Sandeep Dikshit, "Dalai Lama's Delhi programme behind border talk postponement", *The Hindu*, November 27, 2011, Jayant Jacob, "India says can't gag Dalai, China stalls border talks", *Hindustan Times*, November 27, 2011 and Ananth Krishnan, "China warns New Delhi against 'providing' a platform for the Dalai Lama", *The Hindu*, November 29, 2011. The objection to Indian joint commercial offshore ventures with Vietnam in South China sea could also be one reason for this postponement of border talks.

Mangement , which was rightly ignored.<sup>17</sup> It is very unreasonable of China to insist on such things. India's stated position is that the Dalai Lama is a "spiritual leader and honoured guest". India's national interests are also have a foundation of national values and rejection of such undue Chinese demands is justified.

- (h) The Ministry of External Affairs could bring out an issue brief to prepare diplomats and others to counter any Chinese claims. India's case on Tawang must be forcefully articulated. Appendix A lists some of these arguments. Based on this with further refinement, special capsules may need to be conducted for military officers and other personnel who interact with Chinese counterparts in Border Personnel Meeting (BPM). However not much of scholarly work seems to exist on oral history and changing attitudes of people before and after the 1962 war. It may be a worthwhile idea to have more number of research scholars

including locals to carry out focused research by living in the region and recording oral history. In the absence of this type of research we may continue to take rumours and stories as authentic data.<sup>18</sup>

- (i) No Indian statement has ever mentioned that Tibet is an "inalienable" part of China. India has only accepted that it is an autonomous part of China. It is important that policymakers revive this aspect. Otherwise, as memory fades, unwittingly Indian policymakers may accept Tibet to be an "inalienable" part of China.<sup>19</sup> Also, there is no need to rename the Indo-Tibetan Border Police: doing that will show weak resolve. It is necessary to insist on reciprocity in dealing with China.<sup>20</sup> Rather, seeing the unreasonable attitude of China, leading scholars of China in India have merit in the suggestion that "India should stop saying Tibetan Autonomous Region is part of China till Beijing accepts Arunachal

<sup>17</sup> Subrata Nagchowdhury, "China to Bengal: Skip Dalai Lama Talk", *The Indian Express*, December 1, 2011.

<sup>18</sup> One monograph on the topic , but mostly on trade which came to notice is by Col. Gautam Das, *Tawang Border Trade: Problems and Prospects*, Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi , Occasional Studies No.11, May 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Recall how Chinese suzerainty changed to sovereignty in the 1950s. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century , to uphold the notion of Chinese' 'suzerainty' over Tibet as a counter to Russian influence . The term "suzerainty" does not exist in international law. See Gerald Schmitz, "Tibet's Position in International Law" in Dagmar Bernstorff and Hubertus von Welck ( Edited), *Exile as Challenge: the Tibetan Diaspora*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, pp. 45-71.

<sup>20</sup> Sujit Dutta, "Managing and Engaging Rising China: India's Evolving Posture", *The Washington Quarterly* , Vol.34, No.2, Spring 2011, pp.127-144.

Pradesh and J &K as integral parts of India".<sup>21</sup>

- (j) The concept of soft power of Buddhism as obtained in India and in the Himalayan belt also needs to be incorporated in the training curriculum of administrators, diplomats and military officers. There may be even a department of soft power studies using our spiritual diplomacy. A coordinated effort needs to be made. In the US they have a Tibet coordinator in the government. In India we need a central point, as various ministries handle the issues. The Department of Rehabilitation of the Ministry of Home Affairs handles refugees; also the Indo Tibetan Border Police works under it; the Department of Culture handles universities and schools in India; universities fund social studies like linguistics and anthropology; the MEA handles visas and related issues; the Ministry of Defence handles operations; while the National Security Adviser attempts to have a holistic picture. At the state level the Chief Minister and the Governor with their staff and other ministers/officials have key roles to play. Finally, the people of the

border region practising Buddhism must broaden the agenda. To have an underlying soft power message, this project could well be called "Padmasambhav" or "Atisa".

- (k) Non-Mongoloid Indians must be educated and trained to get over prejudices against Mongoloid people. This issue concerns how we treat look-alike people from the North-East, Tibetans, Nepali hill folks and Bhutanese.
- (l) A consulate has no political role as per technical definition. It looks after Indian citizens. A case for a consulate in say Kailash Mansarovar region (Lhasa, if there is no suitable city nearby) may be considered if reclaiming Minsar is not possible initially.
- (m) More study is needed on Tibet. While this work has touched upon Tibetology or Tibet Studies, the infrastructure and ecology, and demographics are important drivers of the future security scene. A comprehensive study needs to be undertaken on Tibet in the future. One scenario exercise to include the concerns of Tibetan Buddhism and ecology of Tibet is at Appendix B.

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<sup>21</sup> Sujit Dutta, "China's High Risk India Gamble", September 3, 2010 at [http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/ChinasHighRiskIndiaGamble\\_sdutta\\_030910](http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/ChinasHighRiskIndiaGamble_sdutta_030910)

## INDIA'S CASE ON ARUNACHAL PRADESH AND TAWANG

The boundary issue, of late, has also become more of a territorial issue. The Chinese have not recognized Arunachal Pradesh as a part of India. It calls it South Tibet. They have now begun to have separate pages for visa (stapled visa) to Indian citizens of Jammu and Kashmir – a signal which is extremely rude. The Chinese government appeared very upset over the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Arunachal Pradesh in October 2009 during the run-up to the state elections. Even on Sikkim they are not forthright on it being a part of India. They continue to occupy Aksai Chin and Shaksgam Valley (swapped from Pakistan in 1963) in Jammu and Kashmir and are entering into an agreement with Pakistan for construction of infrastructure and dams in POK. Although the Chinese claim that they do not support insurgents in the North East, the routes for illicit arms and movement via Yunnan and Myanmar are still open.

This appendix must be read in conjunction with Box B on ethnicity in Chapter 2. The key message is that India should not be apologetic in accepting ethnic people from Tibet or Tibetans who migrated in history to India as Indians. It is also a lesson in

overcoming prejudices against people of Mongoloid ethnicity. The Appendix has sections on:

- (a) Argument over Tawang by Parshotam Mehra.
- (b) The Case of Pemako and Chimdru
- (c) Meeting with Buddhist intellectuals and monks, and visit to monasteries .
- (d) Monpas, the 1962 War and the Current Discourse
- (e) Civil-Military Relations

### **PARSHOTAM MEHRA'S BOOK**

By far the best scholarship is by Parshotam Mehra. His account shows that the line suggested by Ivan Chen during the Simla talks of October 1913 would have included Tawang as part of India. But McMahon drew his line on the map after the greatest deliberation in 1914 and that only after Bailey and Morehead had categorically confirmed that Tawang was Monba and not Tibetan in character. The British rulers kept changing their stance while Lhasa refused to withdraw its tax gatherers. The British did not want to offend the Chinese who were their partner in the

global war against fascism. Later, according to Mehra, the Raj's 'Bania' mentality was at play – the acting Governor computed that making a frontier on Sela and Diggien river would cost almost a quarter. Tawang was to be handed over on a platter. Only in 1951 Indian control became effective when Bob Khating made control of Tawang possible.<sup>22</sup>

### **Pemako and Chimdru**

B. N. Mullik had noted:

This big bend of the Tsangpo contained within it Pemako and Chimdru areas, the inhabitants of which were not Tibetans and who had more access to India than to Tibet. Even as late as 1959 petitions were filed by the people of Pemakao and Chimdru to the Government of India to take them under Indian administration.<sup>23</sup>

Tibet is not a monolithic block. The people of Tibet also vary from Amdo,

Kham, U and Stang, etc.<sup>24</sup> The same is the case with regions of south east Tibet close to the Indian borders where ethnic/linguistic boundaries overlap. If the Buddhist people of Pemako and Chimdru had petitioned to join India, they probably did it on a plea of ethnicity. Yet now they are a part of the TAR. This is a good case for review. In a similar fashion, India also has people with ethnic links closer to the Tibetans who remain Indians. In the case of Tawang and Kameng, scholars have argued defensively that Monpas are not Tibetans and China cannot claim the area on the basis of ethnicity or religion. In any case the people of Tawang have no inclination to be part of the TAR.<sup>25</sup> Besides, Tibetan ethnicity is no *ipso facto* logic for demanding territory. In Ladakh, Changpas, both from Tibet and Ladakh, operate freely in the grasslands of Changthang.

Neville Maxwell's account shows how Captain Lightfoot of the Indian Army reached Tawang in April 1938 and

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<sup>22</sup> Parshotam Mehra, *Essays in Frontier History: India, China, and the Disputed Border*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2007.

<sup>23</sup> B.N. Mullik, *My Years With Nehru: The Chinese Betrayal*, New Delhi, Allied, 1971, p. 94.

<sup>24</sup> According to Åshild Kolås, historically, Tibetans have distinguished between three major regions of Tibet: U- Tsang (the central and western part of the TAR), Amdo (the Tibetan area of Qinghai and Gansu, and the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan), and Kham (Diqing, Ganzi, the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, and the Eastern part of the TAR). For some Tibetans these regional identities are mutually exclusive similar to ethnic categories. Visitors from eastern Tibet are called Khampa and not Tibetans. See Åshild Kolås, *Tourism and Tibetan Culture in Transition: A Place Called Shangrila*, Oxon, Routledge, 2008, pp. 82–3. Michel Peissel historically includes the Dalai Lama's territory (area of U and Tsang and three kingdoms of Nagri or western Tibet) in the Tibetan world with the independent Tibetan kingdoms of Ladakh, Spiti, Kulu, Kangra, Mustang, Sikku, Bhutan and Dergue as well as the large principalities of Amdo and the warring kingdom of Kham. See Michel Peissel, *Cavaliers of Kham: The secret war in Tibet*, London, Heinemann, 1972, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> The Chinese in their interactions with Indians say that their Tawang tract claim is due to Tibetan pressure groups, but do not elaborate. Interview of Professor Steve Hoffman, April 8, 2009, at IDSA.

Tibetan officials flaunted their authority by collecting taxes under his nose. After partition, only Walong had a post. The penetration of the Tawang tract was halted at Dirang Dzong: Tibetan administration of the Tawang tract was still unchallenged. Only in 1951 did an India official (Major Khating, a Manipuri Naga from Indian Frontier Administrative Service), move to Tawang.<sup>26</sup> We can write off such an account as irrelevant, but more arguments have to be developed to explain why even though the people in Tawang were taxed it does not make it Chinese territory. Ignoring Maxwell's work, even if biased, does not strengthen our argument. This is best done by historians of the McMahon Line or through a white paper.

**Meeting With Geshe Ngawang Tashi Bapu(Lama Tashi), Principal , the Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies, Dahung, Arunachal Pradesh**

The principal and teachers in an interaction highlighted important issues which need to be attended to. Some being:

(a) Lama Tashi informed us that Upper Bomdila monastery was earlier in Tsona, (now in Tibet) and has an Indian citizen as its head. The present head, His eminence, the Thirteenth Tsona Gontse Rinpoche is also a Congress MLA, who was out of town in connection with the

issue of granting the region "Monyul" an autonomous status as in Ladakh. He has followers spanning India and Tibet. The previous Rinpoche, who is now no more, was Lama Tashi's uncle. He also had to flee Tibet in 1959 and was initially kept at Shillong, by the Indian government. What this meeting highlighted was that Indian citizens from Kameng region had also been in the clergy. Today Upper Bomdila is also headed by Indians. The head Lama of Tawang as was informed is now an Indian. Lama Tashi agreed that there was a lot of confusion in the people's minds over overlaps in cultural and religious practices.

- (b) No concrete answer was given to a post Fourteenth Dalai Lama scenario. He felt that it may be too much of a worry for bureaucrats.
- (c) It was felt that Tibetan refugees do not pose any security threat to India.
- (d) Lama Tashi was of the view that rather than calling it Tibetan Buddhism, Central Asian Buddhism was more appropriate. Tibetan Buddhism is now like a brand name.
- (e) Inner line restriction is very important as it is a sensitive area.
- (f) He sees no option but to continue the tulku (reincarnation system).

<sup>26</sup> Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, Bombay, Jaico, 1970, p. 73.

Democratic means are unlikely to succeed in this aspect.

- (g) The society, more so the youth in transition, was a challenge as consumerism was spreading. It was clashing with Buddhist values. Young minds often got confused. Some students have left the boarding due to absence of entertainment. The jhummas are finding it tough to continue the tough practice of swidden agriculture. People are shunning agriculture, though horticulture is catching on, which is a good thing.
- (h) As regards research on the people, it was mentioned that knowledge is very superficial. The University system and funds provided, do not suffice in studying aspects of the region by Indian scholars as yet. Also, the history of Tawang monastery is at times wrongly quoted as the most ancient, whereas it is of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Discussion with other teachers, revealed that there was a subtle conversion to Christianity in other animist belts, and Gompa like structures had been converted to churches. It was suggested that the NEHU has a good department of anthropology and can do good work. As regards to data on urbanization of Arunachal Pradesh, fixed at 25% by some scholars, looked superficial, as no worthwhile jobs were available. On the charge of Lamas not doing much on ecology, it was mentioned that Lamas are too laid back under present circumstances

and need to be more active. However, this is not a general view, as due to the complex knowledge that they learn and need to transmit, if they dissipate their energies, the focus may well be lost. Society has also a role to perform and must object to environmental degradation.

## MONASTERIES

**A Reason for the Secretive Nature of Monasteries:** In conversation with officials, one perception observed was that the monasteries and institutions are very secretive. They reveal nothing to a casual visitor on subjects like hierarchy, budget and so on. This is probably due to the fact that the religion is highly evolved and esoteric. Much depends on oral transmission. Scriptures are well preserved and one needs to be a scholar of their language to read them. Also lack of language skills and poor basic knowledge of the people and religion may also be contributing to this. Thus sharing information is discouraged or so it appears to visitors. In any case we doubt if other religious organisations provide ready-made data that the lay visitor wants. This desire for not wishing to be unduly disturbed by ideas of growth and modernisation and preferring isolation also exists in neighbouring countries. Bhutan is a clear case of not allowing too many people snooping around and interfering in their deeply religious way of life. The Bhutanese have thus restricted the number of tourists. They would rather have cultural solitude than a crowd of

tourists disturbing their way of life and ecology. Why this is important is that this sensitivity must be cultivated when interacting with these organisations. Due to overlap of devotees and monks, it is common for people mixing up Indian monasteries with those set up by the Tibetans in exile.

**Bomdila: Gontse Gaden Rabgyelling Monastery (Upper Gonpa):** An impressive monastery on a height overlooking Bomdila. It dates back to the year 1965. It owes its inception to the Twelfth reincarnation of Tsona Gontse Rinpoche, who got this monastery built before his death in the year 1966. The monastery of Bomdila is an imitation of the Tsona Gontse Monastery, located at Tsona in Tibet. The main prayer hall of the monastery was added later on by the Thirteenth reincarnate of Tsona Gontse Rinpoche. This hall was later sanctified in 1997 by the Dalai Lama. Apart from the prayer hall, Bomdila Monastery also comprises of a temple of Lord Buddha and residential quarters for the monks. It is also known as Gentse Gaden Rabgyel Lling Monastery.

## TAWANG

Tawang is a national heritage site. The main Buddhist attractions are:

- (a) **Tawang Monastery including Centre for Buddhist Cultural Studies.** This is a dominating structure. It has a museum and a Centre for Buddhist Cultural Studies supported by central grants. The school has both day scholars (locals) and a boarding school with a combination of religious and other academic subjects.
- (b) **Serje Jamyang Choe Khorling Monastery and Buddhist Cultural Preservation Society.** This is the former Sangeling monastery. It also has a Buddhist Cultural Preservation Society. Its abbot was a Bhutanese Geshe Kuenzang Wangdi. He also like others had studied in world class exiled Tibetan seats of learning in refugee establishments at Karnataka.
- (c) **Urgyeling, World Peace Park, Birth place of the Sixth Dalai Lama.** This place is the birth place of the Sixth Dalai Lama. It has a "chandan" tree which is highly revered as it relates to the Sixth Dalai Lama. Here it is important to note that just because the Sixth Dalai Lama was born in Tawang does not mean Tawang belongs to the PRC. With this logic Mongolia also should be claimed by China as it was the birth place of the Fourth Dalai Lama. In any case the Chinese had tried to delegitimise the Sixth Dalai Lama for his behaviour and he died very young (probably poisoned or killed). However Tibetans revered him. The Sixth Dalai Lama's death was under mysterious circumstances. The regent had kept the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama, a secret. The Sixth Dalai Lama was already an adult when he was discovered. He was a poet and lover. The Chinese saw it as an excuse for intervention and stirred up rumours of a mistake and fraud on him, though he was respected

by the Tibetans. Lhabsan Khan, Gushri Khan's grandson, assumed the title of king of Tibet in 1697. He set out to restore political authority which his grandfather had yielded. This placed him in direct confrontation with Tibet regent who wanted no Mongol influence. Bone of contention for Lhabsang Khan was behaviour of 6<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. Lhabsang publicly announced that Tsayang Gytso was not the true 6<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and with approval of Qing emperor sent him to exile in Bieijing where the 6<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama died in route. The monks and populace however continued to consider him as the true Dalai Lama. Monks then turned to Geluk's mongol follower, the Dzungars for aid in overthrowing Lhabsnag Khan who in the meanwhile had installed a fake the 7<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. In 1771 Dzungar cavalry aided by Tibetan monks and laymen quickly defeated Lhabsang Khan. What this shows is that the Chinese are now trying to construct a narrative on 6<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama whom they themselves had rejected. This fact of history has not been highlighted forcefully by India and now needs to be included. Best historians of international repute must come out with historic accounts explaining this issue on why the claim of Tawang and 6<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama has no solid evidence for it being claimed

now by PRC.

- (d) **Thukje Chueling Nunnery.** This is one of the two nunneries accommodating 44 interns.

### **MONPAS , THE 1962 WAR AND CURRENT DISCOURSE**

Indians from mainland India have a very limited knowledge about the people of the remote border regions such as the north eastern Himalayas. Very often they mix up Indians from the region as hailing from foreign countries. History shows the drawback is due to pro- Mongoloid prejudices. Even Sardar Patel in his November 1950 letter to Nehru, when Tibet was occupied by China , had stated that :

The contacts of these areas (northern or north- eastern approaches consisting of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and the tribal areas in Assam) with us, are by no means, close and intimate. The people inhabiting these portions have no established loyalty or devotion to India. Even Darjeeling and Kalimpong are not free from pro- Mongoloid prejudices <sup>27</sup>

Quoting from books by Indian authors such as B.N Mullik (*My Years with Nehru: the Chinese Betrayal*) and D.K Palit (*War in the High Himalayas*), Peter Stephen Rosen in his book on the Indian military titled *Societies and*

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<sup>27</sup> Letter as quoted in Mullik, B.N., *My Years With Nehru: The Chinese Betrayal*, New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1971, p. 118.

*Military Power: India and Its Armies* (pages 240-241) writes:

“The colonial outlook of the Indian Army in NEFA was nowhere better exemplified than in its unwillingness to enlist the cooperation of friendly tribals especially Mompas of Tawang who suffered under Tibetan rule and who, initially were pro - Indians. As a result when crisis arose it was the Chinese who utilised Mompas — — as guides and informers and for providing safe houses.”

How these authors have reached these conclusions remains a mystery. There are no archival accounts in open access to the history of the conflict. This discourse is unfair to the locals.

On a deeper study of extant secondary sources it could be felt that Tibetan porters were confused with the locals in some accounts. B.N. Mullick in his book at page 343 does allude to the fact that the “Chinese had evacuated the population from the frontier in the Tsona- Le Shao sector and had brought Tibetans from the rear areas to assist them”. Later he mentions that Tibetans were used as slave labourers to build roads (page 345).

Refreshingly, the present local discourse makes this above assertion stand on its head. During the inaugural

ceremony of the Maitreya Mela in Tawang in October 2008 senior military officers said that the locals of Tawang had a rather different story to tell about the 1962 war. Firstly they said that unlike the Indian Army, they never ran away thus ‘we the Monpas are truly Indians’. Secondly they observed that all military structure ahead of Bomdila built till date by the military appear to be temporary unlike say in Tenga/Rupa where permanent accommodation has come up implying that the military is still not certain whether it will continue to occupy the area and may withdraw. While these observations are to some extent anecdotal, they bring out one fundamental issue. That is of the assimilation of the people of north-east and the border regions in India has many more avenues and issues. It is well known and recorded how the people of Arunachal Pradesh are integrated with India. They speak Hindi with pride, unlike those in other regions.

Field visits by IDSA scholars in the recent past have shown very positive nationalistic feelings among the locals in Arunachal Pradesh.<sup>28</sup> In March 2011, most people interviewed across the tribes stated that Chinese claim is not validated by history. The monks said that China’s claim is a distortion of history. China is not attractive to the

<sup>28</sup> See Pushpita Das, “Management of India-China Border Area: A Case Study of Arunachal Pradesh”, *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, 3(3), July–September 2008, pp. 92–105 and Namrata Goswami. “China’s Claim on Arunachal Pradesh: Local Perspectives”, *IDSA Issue Brief*, July 7, 2011.

local people.<sup>29</sup> Recent work at IDSA on Arunachal identifies the next three challenges of delivery on governance, (improving infrastructure), riparian issues, and better roads and border security.<sup>30</sup> Besides fear of being in a seismic zone, the common perception is that one area where more work is needed is on construction of dams. The paramount view in local discourse in Arunachal Pradesh is that India is now planning to build dams on Arunachali rivers to counter China's territorial claim.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, according to IDSA Task Force Report on water, establishing the user's right is the only way available for India<sup>32</sup> in not allowing China to build dams or in diverting the Yarlung Tsangpo, else China will legally win a future case to divert the Yarlung Tsangpo. Thus top down and bottom up perceptions need to be matched. In long-term ecological thinking, ecologists and hydrologists may also need to have ecological arguments rather than "user rights" principles. These principles are understandable for vast irrigated area as in the Indus plain, but on Yarlung Tsangpo and Arunachal Pradesh – which is an Indian as well as global biodiversity hot spot, this needs a deeper ecological understanding in the long-term.

## SOFT POWER OF RELIGION AND CULTURE

After the military take-over of Tibet in 1950, all the areas once ethnically connected with Tibet became, for Beijing, a part of the Chinese empire. Mao used the image of the palm of the hand (Tibet) and the five fingers (Bhutan, Sikkim, NEFA, Ladakh and Nepal). One has to understand that it has never cost China anything (apart from a communiqué from the Xinhua news agency) to claim these areas as theirs. Further, the Chinese rightly thought that these claims could be extremely useful in the future.<sup>33</sup> Much more research and psychological understanding is needed to get rid of such notions. We have at last started to build roads (earlier the pet theme was 'Do not build roads as they will favour the Chinese attackers'). We need now to construct narratives and discourse that will neutralise this hand, palm and finger analogy. This is best done by the soft power of religion and culture. The Indian Himalayan belt is rather like an Indian skin in the Himalayas nourished by Buddhism.

## CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

Positive nationalistic attitudes during

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<sup>29</sup> Namrata Goswami. "China's Claim on Arunachal Pradesh: Local Perspectives", *IDSA Issue Brief*, July 7, 2011, p.4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p.3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p.12.

<sup>32</sup> *Water Security for India : the External Dynamics*, IDSA Task Force Report, New Delhi, IDSA, September 2010, p.51.

<sup>33</sup> V. Sundaram, "Abject Story", *News Today*, November 6, 2006, <http://newstodaynet.com/2006sud/06nov/1811ss1.htm> accessed October 26, 2008.

Maitreya Mela in Tawang indicate that from the people's perspective there is no issue at all.<sup>34</sup> The mela of 2009 was enjoyed as much by the locals as by the military.<sup>35</sup> This relationship needs to be publicised.

The respect shown by the locals to the Dalai Lama during his visit to Tawang in November 2009 was phenomenal. Sainly people and religious heads have always been revered in the Indian culture. This is one cultural issue which may not be well understood by the Chinese. For this the case of the Tawang war memorial is important.

**Tawang War Memorial.** This 1962 memorial is impressive and is a tourist attraction. It is a traditional chorten on Buddhist lines and was personally anointed by the Dalai Lama in 1998 . Streams of domestic ( mostly Bengali) tourists in family groups flock the monument . Its upkeep by the jawans of the Indian Army in keeping with

Buddhist traditions is commendable. This bonding of the Indian Military with the Dalai Lama has as great significance for the people of Tawang as for the Tibetans and the military.

**The New Civil- Military Agenda.** The Indian Army has done away with the practice of newly inducted units marching on foot to their operational locations from the railhead. This practice was essential in the 1960s and 1970s. The new way is now to have familiarisation of troops to local culture, religion and customs. This can be done by a short cadre on induction and as a refresher for all ranks, which will go a long way in winning the respect of the inhabitants of the area. This will also generate a new phase of patriotism.<sup>36</sup> The army can give back by ensuring that local language and literature is also revived.

<sup>34</sup> Field trip by PK Gautam in 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Lt Col K.R. Rajkumar, "A Bond of Friendship", *Sainik Samachar*, 57(1), January 1-15 ,2010, pp. 22-3.

<sup>36</sup> The authors are thankful to Dr Nitasha Kaul in suggesting ( during interaction with Professor Dibyesh Anand's presentation on the boundary question at the IDSA on January 15, 2010 ), the need for regular exposure to troops by way of short capsules on the local traditions, culture and religion. A former commanding general of the mountain division while interacting with one of the authors of this report also agreed to it . Some excellent coffee table books have been produced by the military officers posted there on orchids. Future projects must now shift to deeper understanding of the local people.

### TIBET 2030<sup>37</sup>

#### DRIVERS AND ASSUMPTIONS

**Economic Tibet.** China's aim is to have an economically advanced Tibet. Mineral resources that will feed mainland China is the main motivation for this development. Urbanisation, infrastructure building, extension of rail, roads and airports, converting grasslands to farmland will continue.

**Demographic Changes.** Demographic Changes continue by way of settlement of Hans in Tibet. Like in the case of Inner Mongolia or Xingjian, the local will become minorities.

#### **The Status and Role of the Dalai Lama.**

By having the government's role supreme in incarnation, the selection of the future Dalai Lama lies with the state (like it was done in the case of Panchen Lama). No one born outside China can lay claim to reincarnation. This makes

the government in theory more powerful than the spiritual leadership in exile.

**Ecology and Climate Change.** Due to global warming brought about by anthropogenic reasons, "the glaciers in the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau and the Tianshan Mountains would retreat at an accelerated rate, and some smaller glaciers would disappear"<sup>38</sup>. "In particular, accelerated melting of glaciers in western China due to climate warming will further reduce the area of glaciers and glacier ice reserves, thus having significant impacts on rivers and run-offs with sources in glacier-melted water. Future climate change will further increase the vulnerability of ecological systems, diminish the geographical distribution areas of main tree species for afforestation and rare

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<sup>37</sup> Scenario planning although not a tool for prediction was considered yet another way to project trends. The pioneering stand-alone scenario exercise appeared first as an edited chapter. See P.K. Gautam, "Tibet 2030", in Ajey Lele, Namrata Goswami and Rumel Dahiya (Editors), *Asia 2030: The Unfolding Future*, New Delhi, Lancer Publishers, 2011. For a case for treating Tibet as a regional if not as a global common see P.K. Gautam, "Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, Tibet: Implications for Environmental Security in South Asia". *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.34, No.5, September 2010, pp.744-755.

This part (since updated) was earlier published in "Tibet 2030" in Ajey Lele, Namrata Goswami and Rumel Dahiya (Edited), *Asia 2030: The Unfolding Future*, New Delhi, Lancer Publishers, 2011, pp. 200-207.

<sup>38</sup> *China's National Climate Change Programme*, National Development and Reform Commission, the PRC, June 2007, p. 6.

tree species, enlarge the outbreak scope of forest diseases and insect, and increase the frequency of forest fires and burnt-over areas, shrink inland lakes and cause the decrease and functional degradation of wetland resources, speed up the reduction of the area of glaciers and permafrost, and significantly alter the spatial distribution pattern of permanent permafrost of highland ecological system on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and damage bio-diversity. Climate warming would possibly reinforce the drought trend in northern China, and intensify water scarcity and imbalance between water supply and demand. “<sup>39</sup>

Environmental degradation due to climate change is also considered a threat by the Environment and Development Desk of Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Dharamsala. This driver is common to both, the PRC and the CTA. Both admit that there is an onset of an ecological crisis in the Tibetan plateau and the adjoining areas due to climate change.

**Attitudes of the Tibetan People.** Tibetans in exile may continue with their ideas of greater autonomy. Inside Tibet, things are still opaque. However taking a cue from the spontaneous demonstration in March 2008 across the TAR and also from other provinces of China having Tibetans in majority or in sizeable numbers, this driver is important.

## **SCENARIO 1: HANISED AND DEGRADED TIBET**

### **Hanisation and Demographic Changes.**

With Hanisation and Demographic Changes Tibetan Buddhism is likely to be at a crossroad. The Chinese would have their own Fifteenth Dalai Lama by then. While the CTA has not expressed openly many options may happen. Scenarios could be the end of the Dalai Lama process with a democratic system, or a parallel Dalai Lama in exile. Due to internationalization of Tibetan Buddhism and culture, the humanitarian and cultural responsibility to preserve Buddhist culture will not only be shared by India but also by the international community.

**Division Between Traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.** It is possible that attempts of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama to unify traditions would have borne fruit. Although the division of the Panchan Lama of Gelugpa tradition is well known (one selected by China and one selected by the Dalai Lama- who is missing in China), the exiled government under its Prime Minister may be the temporal head. For spiritual head, Tibetans will be split and be thrust under a great transitional struggle. If they follow old traditions then they will be split between spiritual heads of their traditions, who may well be in the PRC. The present Fourteenth Dalai Lama due to his charismatic personality is unlikely to be replaced

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.9.

with a similar lama. The Seventeenth Karmapa who in his teens fled to India in 2000 would have come of age, but it is doubtful if he will be able to the command spiritual and religious power as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. The fallout of the struggle is hazy and complex.

## ECOLOGY

The environmental degradation of Tibet will continue. By the time the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol begins in 2013, business as usual emissions worldwide would have added to the existing stocks of excess green house gases in the atmosphere. The trees, soil and oceans will not be able to sequester them. Scientists are worried that a warming Tibetan plateau will change the dynamics of the Asian monsoons.<sup>40</sup> Glaciers that feed rivers like the Yellow, Yangtze, Mekong, Salween, Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra which are shrinking at an average rate of 7% annually will have great impact on water, food, energy and biodiversity security.<sup>41</sup> About 60 to 190 billion tons of carbon locked up in permafrost may

begin to release accelerating global warming.<sup>42</sup> Extreme weather events then will be a norm.

**Pastures.** The Russian Tibetologist Roerich has mentioned that deprive Tibet of its cattle breeding region and the country would starve.<sup>43</sup> The nomads' positive relationship with ecology will end. Animal products like skins, meat, milk and butter rather than being produced though nomads may be factory produced. Use of pack animals such as yaks, dzos (cross breeds), goats and sheep for trade will decline. Health of glaciers, grasslands and the nomadic life are very delicately balanced with the ecology.<sup>44</sup>

In Sino-Tibetan relations, the different perspectives on the economic path of the PRC and the CTA is unlikely to get resolved as Hanisation, urbanisation, infrastructure building, extension of railway network and roads will increase.

## SCENARIO 2 - A RESPONSIBLE CHINA

A clear vision of China's own identity and the type of society it wants, emerges.<sup>45</sup> Unlike the expectations of

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<sup>40</sup> Michael Zhao and Orville Schell, "Tibet: Plateau in Peril", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. XXV. No.3, Fall 2008, pp. 171-180.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> As quoted by Wim van Spengen, *Tibetan Borders: A Geohistoric Analysis of Trade and Traders*, London and New York, Keegan Paul International, 2000, pp. 98-102.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Zhao and Orville Schell, "Tibet: Plateau in Peril", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. XXV. No.3, Fall 2008, pp. 171-180

<sup>45</sup> Barry Buzan, "China in International Society: Is 'Peaceful Rise Possible'?", *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol.3. No.1, Spring 2010, pp.5-36.

realists, China promotes a peaceful international society based on its domestic foundation. China's peaceful rise of the last 30 years is carried forward even more peacefully in harmony. Compelled to be an important world power, China carries out reforms to cater for autonomy of Tibet. It encourages greater religious freedom and some democratic freedom in China. In Tibet it controls Hanisation and agrees to change the capitalistic mode of growth and development by keeping in mind the people's traditional preferences. Tibetan is made the official language with priority over Mandarin to help the people. With open policies it permits return of Tibetans in exile and allows the Dalai Lama to be a spiritual leader. It accommodates the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in its political structure. In some ways it follows the Hong Kong model for Tibet. This results in manifold increase in international tourism simultaneously taking care of ecology. These policies also permit China to have the world's leadership role in Buddhism. It improves foreign relations with the Buddhist countries of East and South East

In ecological matters traditional practices of nomads are revived to sustain healthy grasslands. Ecological concerns top the policies, as by 2030 adverse impact of climate change would be peaking. A realisation would have dawned on public and political leadership that solution lies in cooperation with neighbours and respecting traditional ecological knowledge.

### **WILD CARD SCENARIO**

Internal forces make China implode. With capitalistic policies the society becomes brittle. Societal and cultural moorings get uprooted. Restrictions and rigid state high-handedness by the state, expectations for freedom of speech and choice which is denied, creates tensions in Chinese society. Disparity between the rich and poor increases. The economic growth bubble based on GDP bursts with chronic and irreversible environmental degradation and pollution of rivers and cities. Climate Change exacerbates the situation with negative impact on snow and glaciers of Tibet. Water and soil stress lead to massive shortages in food. China loses its manufacturing advantage and joblessness grows. Reforms in China reach their limit. This leads to revival of Maoism (like Naxalism in India) with Chinese characteristics of the Great Leap forward and the Cultural Revolution. Mainland China sees shades of the Warring Period re-emerge.

People of the regions in the periphery like Tibet and Xingjian, who for long felt suppressed on top down economic policies and demographic change assert themselves. Scenario could replicate fragmentation of former Soviet Union. The TAR demands Greater Tibet and turmoil takes place in China and its regions.

International community comes to help China with proviso to grant autonomy to Tibet in accordance with the desire of Tibetans as a tool of conflict termination over civil conflict and separatism.

## **POLICIES FOR INDIA**

### **Policies to Cater for Scenario or to Help Shape Scenarios**

One question that must be asked is, "Are the policies meant for the scenario which unfolds or are the policies meant to help shape or facilitate scenario?" If we continue to base our behaviour on the Cold War and pre-Cold war thinking, then it appears that a realist model based on fear and greed will dominate the thinking.<sup>46</sup> The ideal may be if scenarios are conceptualised and efforts applied to achieve them with a liberal view. However, it needs to be noted that "how little we understand, and how we control even less".<sup>47</sup>

With having written scenarios based on imagination and literature survey, it is hoped that these policies may be acceptable to the Chinese, Tibetans and Indians. Rather, it may motivate both China and India to address the question of Tibet.

### **Tibetan Buddhism**

The first policy suggestion is on Tibetans and Buddhism. India needs to take initiative to facilitate a dialogue between the CTA in exile in India, and the Chinese. Misperceptions that led to the 1962 border war need to be removed. India is a plural society and

Tibetans have been given shelter for religious, cultural and humanitarian reasons. Real Tibetan Autonomy does not mean break up of China. It means religious and cultural rights, and growth and development on Buddhist values, and not ruthless capitalistic modes which attempt to dominate or rule nature. It is unlikely that in Scenario 1, the Tibetans will give up their external struggle even in the post Fourteenth Dalai Lama scenario. Rather, post Fourteenth Dalai Lama there may be no leader of stature for China to engage. The situation may become worse with young Tibetans shunning the path of non-violence. The ideal is scenario 2 though India will need to work hard to retain its top position in Buddhism. Scenario 3 will test India's foreign policy and diplomacy. It is unlikely that India will act like a predator, rather India will need to further cooperate over the water resources emanating from Tibet. India as a responsible power with regional and global influence will be pivotal in conflict resolution.

### **Ecology of Tibet**

Tibet is a global ecosystem and a climate crankshaft similar to the Amazon rain forests. It is the source of all major rivers to South and South-

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<sup>46</sup> With wise hindsight, some scholars mention that break up of Soviet Union was planned when the Star War initiative was launched in 1980s. This led to the Soviets imploding due to unsustainable high defence expenditure

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Homer Dixon, *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity, and the Renewal of Civilization*, Washington, Island Press, 2006, p.29.

East Asia. Narrow sovereign thinking on Tibet will do more harm than good. It is linked to the Indian Himalayas. Thus the time is ripe for the countries of the region to conduct, consolidate and record scientific studies on the degradation of the ecosystem, both due to man-made economic policies and due to climate change. The countries of the region must reach a positive conclusion and understanding of both adaptations and mitigation. This will be the first step based on hard facts and scientific evidence. India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), mentions two things. It says that available monitoring data on Himalayan glaciers indicates that while recession of some glaciers has occurred in some Himalayan regions in the recent past, the trend is not consistent across the entire mountain chain. In its National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, it "seeks to understand whether, and the extent to which, the Himalayan glaciers are in recession and how the problem would be addressed. This will require the joint effort of climatologists, glaciologists, and other experts. India will need to exchange

information with South Asian countries and countries sharing the Himalayan ecology".<sup>48</sup> For '2030 studies' such initiatives must now be implemented. There should be joint deliberations on the common rivers according to international norms of water sharing.

### **NOMADS**

The third policy suggestion is for a relook on the nomads. The time to call them primitive is now over. Traditional ecological knowledge has been their basic tool. That must be preserved. Pastures and grasslands must be allowed to flourish.<sup>49</sup>

### **MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

The fourth policy suggestion is mitigation of climate change. Both the Himalayas and Qinghai-Tibet plateau are unique eco-systems. They need unique global help. Here India, China and countries dependent on the Tibet ecosystem must argue for the developed countries to limit emission to avoid tipping events.

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<sup>48</sup> NAPCC, p.15 and 5.

<sup>49</sup> Tibet is 70 per cent grassland and its health is fundamental to survival of one million nomads with a population of 70 million domestic animals such as sheep, yak and goat. See Robert Thurman, *Why the Dalai Lama Matters: His Act of Truth as the Solution for China, Tibet, and the World*, New York, Atria Books, 2008, p.198.

## EPILOGUE AND POST SCRIPT

As is usual in writing and publishing, there was a delay in offering the report for publishing. In this period, besides accretion of literature,<sup>1</sup> and a first of its kind, media interview of the Karmapa on September 20, 2009<sup>2</sup>, the following events happened :

- (a) There was a very embarrassing event in connection with the Karmapa and his organisation in January 2011 which was then played down.
- (b) There was an impetus given to the process of democratisation by means of election in the exile community for the Kalon Tripa (Prime Minister) in March 2011 followed by results and parliamentary sessions.

We give below a brief summary with a

conclusion which has a bearing on our work.

### THE KARMAPA (UGYEN) EPISODE OF 2011

The temporary abode of the Karmapa is at Gyuto Ramoche Tantric University, Sidhbari near Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh. He visited the US once in 2008. In September 2008 he visited Leh, Nubra and Changthang on his Dharma tour. Due to heavy snowfall, he was even rescued by military helicopters on the Upshi Manali axis beyond Barlachla pass. He was denied permission to visit the US in 2010. He visited Bodh Gaya in December 2010 and made short trips to Delhi. In January 2011, the local police apprehended some money being ferried by Indian businessmen

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the new generation of Indian scholars being Reena Marwah and Sharad K .Soni, "Tibetans in South Asia : a research note", *Asian Ethnicity*, Vol.11, No.2, June 2010, pp.263-268, Preetika Rathee, *The Tibetan Diaspora in India and their Quest for the Autonomy of Tibet*, Manekshaw Paper No.24, New Delhi, Centre for Land Warfare Studies /Knowledge World, 2010, Bhavna Singh, "A Paradigm Shift? : Elections to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile 2011, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies Special Report, No.105, New Delhi, June 2011 and Sana Hashmi, "Dalai Lama and Devolution of Political Authority in Tibet," *World Focus*, No. 383-384, November-December 2011, pp.875-871. At the IDSA a number of young researchers started work on the issue of Tibet and wrote web comments. See Pranamita Baruah, "Resolution of Tibet , a will –o- the – wisp", April 13, 2009, Gunjan Singh, " The 51<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Tibetan Struggle: What is the future?", March 12, 2010 and Prashant Kumar Singh, " Decoding the Dalai Lama's Political Retirement", March 14, 2011. Another unique work was a survey done by a yong budding. Tibetan scholar after interviewing more than 150 refugees at Dharamsala in 2011. This is probably a first article done by a Tibetan. See Chok Tsering, "Socio-Political and Economic Conditions of Tibetan Refugees in India: A Case Study of Dharamsala", Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi at <http://www.vifindia.org/article/131>

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A.

purported to be linked to illegal land deals and monetary transactions by the organisation where the Karmapa was residing. Issues highlighted by the English language media in particular, being :

- Acquisition of Benami (purchasing property in the name of someone else) land
- Detection of foreign currency and not following procedures for its accounting
- Accusation of his being a Chinese “spy”

The Tibetans, including many Buddhists from the Himalayan belt, organised protests and carried out candle light marches. Later by mid February 2011, the central government gave the incident a clean chit and the matter was almost forgotten, but the injury had been done.<sup>3</sup>

The media was very crude, to the point of being rude. They also gave false information without admitting to the error in mentioning that the Karmapa had travelled to Hong Kong (whereas it was not the case. The anchor being Arnab Goswami of *Times Now* TV). In sum, media demonstrated its uncultured and ugly face to grab viewership based on Television Rating Point (TRP)<sup>4</sup> and sensationalism. This

“media lynching” basically accusing him of espionage and treating him as a hawala don, a la Bombay underworld, hurt the sentiments of almost all Tibetans the authors interacted with. A Tibetan student wrote :

I was very hurt. After the Dalai Lama, the Karmapa is the next important Lama for us (as the Panchen Lama’s whereabouts is still unknown). About the large amount of money that was found at his office. I’m not surprised at all. All Tibetan lama’s receive large donations from their disciples the world over. The Karmapa being such an important lama obviously has scores of followers who are more than happy to donate money to their guru. The previous Karmapa (16th) also had a huge number of followers from foreign countries, and I was always aware of the immense wealth his monastery possessed.

This money does not go for evil designs but for sustaining hundreds of monks and their religious education. Monasteries in India are the seat of Tibetan cultural preservation.

I, as a Tibetan, have immense respect for any decision taken by the Dalai Lama. As the Dalai Lama himself recognised the 17th Karmapa, I have

<sup>3</sup> A political war of words however continued between Virbhadr Singh, Union Minister who called it an unfair accusation and pointed out their shoddy ways of probe. He was countered by the CM of HP, Shri Dhumal. See, *The Tribune*, New Delhi, February 5, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> TRPs, are an audience measurement criterion that indicates the popularity of a television channel or programme. The TRP measure is very useful for advertisers, who use it to help them decide which TV channels and programmes to place their advertising in.

no reason to believe he has anything to do with the Chinese government. I believe he is totally innocent.....as for the money...it is not a big deal..all lamas receive thousands and thousands of rupees, which is spent well in religious studies. All this is for the betterment of the society...to spread the message of peace and humanity throughout the world. I think it is very irresponsible on the part of the journalists to spread rumours without proper verification.

Mr Choekyang Wangchuk , Member, the fourteenth Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Executive Director , Tibetan Parliamentary & Policy Research Centre, New Delhi made the following points:

- *Astha* (belief) not considered by media
- There is a lot of voluntary donation
- Media baron (who controls the media in question) Murdock's wife is Chinese, so this smear is no surprise.

- Does not agree with TV show argument by former officials such as Ranade and Poonapa that the Karmapa has not criticized China openly – hence is pro- China .<sup>5</sup>

The Chinese called it “ mistrustful attitude of India”. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama had brushed it aside. He blamed attendants and wisely asked for an inquiry. One reason given by Isabel Hilton- author of *The Search for Panchen Lama* was that a section of Indian intelligence was suspicious of him and of his supporters.

The English language print media carried a series of opinion editorials (Op-eds). In summary :

- (a) **C Raja Mohan**<sup>6</sup>: Giving a new lease of life to an old issue in public reflects poorly on India. There is a need to show sophistication and maturity.
- (b) **B Chellaney**<sup>7</sup>: This episode is a forerunner to two dueling Dalai

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.timesnow.tv/Debate-Grand-Chinese-design-1/videoshow/4364093.cms>.

Former Officials who were on the Times Now TV channel Debate made the following points:

- (a) Shri J. Ranade, formerly of R and AW: Since the Karmapa does not criticize the Chinese , he may be their agent.
- (b) Leela Poonapa, former Deputy National Security Advisor:
  - (i) Government of India does not determine reincarnation and there are four claimants to the 17<sup>th</sup> Karmapa.
  - (ii) Refugees are incumbent to obey laws of the land. Many facilities have been set up by hosts for the refugees. People in Himachal Pradesh are hurt when such reports come out against their guests.
  - (iii) He was silent about the pre-Olympics turmoil.

<sup>6</sup> C. Raja Mohan, “Chinese Takeaway: Karmapa Trouble”, *Indian Express*, February 2, 2011

<sup>7</sup> Brahma Chellaney, “Sceptre and altar: the Karmapa case”, *Live Mint, The Wall Street Journal*, February 2, 2011 at <http://www.livemint.com/articles/2011/02/02201747/Sceptre-and-altar-the-Karmapa.html>

Lamas in future. The Dalai Lama is an asset. India must have a plan to positively influence succession rather than be at the receiving end as in the Karmapa affair.

- (c) **Youdon Aukatsang** (Member, Tibetan Parliament in Exile)<sup>8</sup>: Most Tibetan institutions in India continue to face repeated rejection from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in obtaining papers relating to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 (FCRA) in order to receive donations legally.
- (d) **Dibyesh Anand** (IR Prof Westminster University and author)<sup>9</sup>: The Chinese must be laughing at the Indian media circus. Another let down of the Tibet cause by India. Exiled Lamas provide stability. Do not malign him.
- (e) **Claude Arpi**<sup>10</sup>: What is the truth? Is Ugyen a victim of high intrigue in his own monastery? Arpi felt that that the Chinese government has been benefiting the most from these frivolous charges of spying and poor accounting. The last thing that Beijing wants today is to see the Dalai Lama designate a spiritual successor.
- (f) **Tsering Shakya** (author and Prof University of British Columbia)<sup>11</sup>: Suspicions make it seem as if Tibetans are more loyal to their spiritual leader rather than the cause of Tibet. Protests in 2008 were manifestation of Tibet's freedom. Other lamas are also not as vocal in anti-Chinese speeches as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. So why brand the Karmapa's lack of utterance as evidence? The stage-managed escape story is misguided. It shows failure of the Chinese policy. As it relates to cash, the problems in cash dealings etc is an open secret. Tibetans have greater access to global remittance and donations now. Even China is suspicious of the donations.
- (g) **Sunanda K. Datta-Ray**<sup>12</sup>: Author pointed out the recurrence of the bungling traditions of civil servants tying rings around politicians. Datta-Ray blames the Director General, Indian Police Service, for trying to grab media space with conjectures, and meddling in state craft. Officials are attacking him from behind a cloak of anonymity. There should be proper channels and forums for dealing with such issues. To accuse

<sup>8</sup> Youdon Aukatsang, "Karmapa does not deal with donations", *The Times of India*, February 4, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Dibyesh Anand, "Buddha's not smiling", *The Hindustan Times*, February 2, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Claude Arpi, "The Karmapa Mystery", *The Pioneer*, February 2, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Tsering Shakya, "The Karmapa Conundrum", *The Wall Street Journal (Asia)*, February 2, 2011

<sup>12</sup> Sunanda K Datta-Ray, "Targeting the Karmapa", February 11, 2011 and "Slandering Karmapa", *Deccan Herald*, February 9, 2011.

him of being China's agent is unethical.

- (h) **Col Virendra Sahai Verma**(Retd) ( former military intelligence officer)<sup>13</sup>: We have swallowed fabrication about the Karmapa's Chinese connection. Writer had visited Tsurpu in 2008. He pointed out that the terrain /layout indicates that escape was possible - much easier than the Dalai Lama's escape in 1959. We have too much faith in Chinese security.
- (i) **B Raman**<sup>14</sup>: The escape story is doubtful. This is a sensitive issue which could have an impact on relations with China and could hurt the feelings and sensitivities of the followers of the Karmapa. We should carry out a vigorous investigation, keeping the Dalai Lama in the picture, and await the results of the investigation as suggested by the home minister. We should avoid speculation that could prove counter-productive.
- (j) **Karma Topden** (Former MP from Sikkim and spokesperson)<sup>15</sup>: How can he be a Chinese spy? He was the one who exposed Chinese suppression and pressure on him to denounce the Dalai Lama.
- (k) **Tenzin Tsundue** (Tibetan Writer and

Activist)<sup>16</sup>: India's first line of defence should be to capture the loyalty of its Himalayan population. People from Ladakh, Lahaul, Spiti, Kinnaur, Sikkim, and Tawang protested the allegations by the media. The Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and the Karmapa are the Sun, Moon, and Star for Tibetans. So after the Dalai Lama, the Seventeenth Gyawang Karmapa will be our leader and will become the spiritual guru of Buddhists across the world, including the scenario when Buddhists in China are given freedom to practise their faith. It is thus in India's interest to host such an avatar as a refugee rather than hand the sceptre to a triumphant China.

Finally in May 2011, the Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje broke his silence over the recent developments. He issued a press statement.<sup>17</sup> The main points being that he is not a Chinese spy, he is grateful to India for her courtesy and hospitality and the Dalai Lama is his spiritual and temporal leader (The Press Statement is at Appendix B).

This episode which we call the "Karmapa trigger" assumes importance as it tells us that both, the spiritual and temporal leadership

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<sup>13</sup> Virendra Sahai Verma, "When Security Hawks Swoop" , *The Times of India*, February 11, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> B . Raman, "Why the Karmapa issue could hurt Indo-China ties" , February 1, 2011 at <http://www.rediff.com/news/column/why-the-karmapa-issue-could-hurt-indo-china-ties/20110201.htm>

<sup>15</sup> Interview by Nidhi Mittal " He is No Spy", *The Pioneer*, February 6, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Tenzin Tsundue, " In a muddle kingdom", *Hindustan Times*, February 23, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> E mail from Karma Chungyalpa, General Secretary, the Karmapa Office of Administration.

being held by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, will be missed in the near future. This is an issue which not only the Tibetans in exile but also those in Tibet need to come to grips with. Thus democratisation was a great historic step to which we now return below.

### ELECTIONS TO THE PARLIAMENT IN EXILE

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama began democratisation soon after reaching India. In 1963 he presented a draft constitution which called for democratic governance through a Parliamentary system. In 1991 he redrafted the constitution to enhance the status of the elected Parliament. In 2001 he further democratised it by introducing a directly elected Prime Minister who was answerable to the Parliament.<sup>18</sup> A Charter was adopted by the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD). Election of Kashag (cabinet), with ministers (kalons) and kalon tripa (prime minister) were held in 2001. Prof Samdong Rinpoche was the prime minister of the fourteenth Tibetan Parliament in Exile from May 2006 to May 2011.

Elections for the fifteenth Parliament in exile were declared on April 29, 2011.

There were three candidates and Lobsang Sangay<sup>19</sup> was elected.

The Dalai Lama in his addresses to parliamentarians, and to Tibet support groups in Europe had made it clear that he intends to democratise.<sup>20</sup> On February 26, 1992 he set forth "Guidelines for Future Tibet's Policy and Basic Features of the Constitution". The gist being that Tibet should have a multi-party system of parliament with three organs of the government—legislature, executive and judiciary. Tibetans in Tibet shall bear the main responsibility in running the affairs of the state. As for himself, the Dalai Lama has made up his mind that he will not play any role in the future government of Tibet.<sup>21</sup> He has also outlined the nature of the interim government to be formed when Chinese forces withdraw from Tibet during the transition period. In his farsighted thinking he has made it clear that during this period Tibetan officials presently working there under the Chinese should be ready to assume full responsibility. It will be the responsibility of the transition government to form a Constitution Assembly with representatives from all parts of Tibet.<sup>22</sup>

But as the first step, there is a need to

<sup>18</sup> Vijay Kranti, "A Master Stroke from Monk Statesman", *Border Affairs*, April- June 2011, pp.14-20.

<sup>19</sup> Born in Darjeeling of refugee parents. Alumni of Delhi University Hans Raj College and Campus Law Centre. Fullbright Scholar and a senior fellow at Harvard Law School.

<sup>20</sup> "His Holiness the Dalai Lama said...", *Tibet's Parliament in Exile 2009*, New Delhi, Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, 2009, pp.3-4.

<sup>21</sup> "Future Plans", *Tibet's Parliament in Exile 2009*, New Delhi, Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, 2009, pp.59-60.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, pp.59-60.

put an end to both the spiritual and temporal powers being held by a religious head in exile. This is not easy. When the Dalai Lama proposed to step down as the political head, the first reaction of the Tibetan Parliament in exile was to ask the Dalai Lama to reconsider his proposal. The Kashag, the cabinet urged him to continue. But the elections were held. Lobsang Sangay was elected, with the parliament slated to begin session in September 2011. Thus the elections of 2011 to elect a new Prime Minister is considered the key for sustaining the TGIE in future. Not all countries supported this exercise of democracy by the exiles. Nepal did not permit voting, thus sending a clear pro one-China policy signal.

Dr Lobsang Sangay in his inaugural address on August 9, 2011 during the oath taking ceremony said:

The result of this election should send a clear message to the hardliners in the Chinese government that Tibetan leadership is far from fizzling out. We are a democracy that will only grow stronger in the years ahead. And we are here to stay. I pledge to strengthen and sustain our movement until freedom is restored in Tibet, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama returns to our homeland.<sup>23</sup>

On 6 and 7 September 2011, the Vivekanand International Foundation

(VIF) New Delhi organised a conference on 'Tibet in the Aftermath of Devolution of Political Authority'.<sup>24</sup> His Excellency Dr. Lobsan Sangay, the Kalon Tripa of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) delivered the key note address at the conference – his first formal interaction in public since he assumed the high office on August 8, 2011. In his keynote address, Dr. Sangay drew a cultural, political and environmental map of Tibet. He spoke passionately about challenges that the new responsibility has bestowed upon him. Dr. Sangay elucidated what the devolution of power means in general and to him in person. Defining the geographical setting of Tibet, he said that Tibet's area comprises parts of Chinese province of Yunnan, Sichuan, Qinghai, and small parts of Gansu. Talking about Tibet's geographical significance, Dr. Sangay said it is a major source of fresh water for a number of countries in Asia, especially for countries in Southeast and South Asia. Dr. Sangay expressed his deep anguish at China's continuing dam construction activities over Tibet's major rivers. The ecological balance which the Tibetans have so assiduously preserved through the centuries stands threatened due to China's dam constructions activities on such a massive scale. On the issue of devolution of political authority, the Kalon Tripa said it is a serious issue with

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<sup>23</sup> Varinder Bhatia, "Will sustain movement till Tibet is free, Dalai Lama returns home", [indiaexpress.com](http://indiaexpress.com), August 9, 2011.

<sup>24</sup> See seminar report at <http://www.vifindia.org/event/report/2011/09/15/A-Report-on-Seminar-Tibet-in-the-Aftermath-of-Devolution-of-Political-Authority>

major implications. The Kalon Tripa also made it amply clear that His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is not setting a new precedent by handing over his political authority to a new incumbent. Devolution of political authority of Dalai Lama is in fact the continuation of a political process which was established a long time ago, precisely with the Fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century. The March 2011 declaration of the Dalai Lama however signifies the separation of political and spiritual authority of the institution of Dalai Lama. His Holiness was keen to shed his political authority to a new leadership so that he could devote more time for global peace and harmony. Defining his own role as the Kalon Tripa of the Tibetan Government in Exile, Dr. Lobsang Sangay mentioned that he would energize his effort to ensure that Tibetan people are able to stand on their own feet and take the movement forward. He would also strive to fulfill the vision of His Holiness of creating a secular democratic society.

In the valedictory session, Mr. Lalit Mansingh, former Foreign Secretary and India's Ambassador to US, reflected on the need to revisit India's foreign policy, especially against the backdrop of past achievements and failures. Mr. Lalit Mansingh not only recounted India's consistent failures on Tibet front, but he also spelt out a series of measures which are needed to recover lost ground. Suggesting a new policy approach towards Tibet, Mr. Lalit Mansingh said that India should look for a reciprocity-based approach towards China and remove restrictions on activities and movements of Dalai Lama and the Karmapa. He also urged that India should completely identify itself with Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism and associate the Dalai Lama with the Nalanda University Project. He stressed that "friendship with China is a desirable goal, but it can not be allowed to override our concerns for Indian security or Tibetan autonomy."

## Appendix A

### MEDIA INTERVIEW OF THE KARMAPA, SEPTEMBER 20, 2009

Probably the first print media interview was given by the Karmapa to Rashmee Roshan. His answers give a fair idea of his thinking. Some extracts are given below.

*Question:* Is India being diplomatic enough to and about China and vice versa?

*Answer:* Obviously I can't speak from the perspective of a politician who is active in these communications. Obviously the government of each country has its own interests in the ongoing conversation. They are doing what they can to advance their own interests. I'm not able to comment on what those interests might be. But if I were to make some observations and guesses from my own vantage point, it seems to me that the Chinese government is acting somewhat deliberately in attempts to slightly irritate the Government of India.

Because of this the neighbourly relationship has suffered a little bit. India has always been a relatively peaceful country, a country that has always had a reasonably good record of valuing peace, India does not seem interested in pursuing any type of

conflict. However, India is on the rise in the world and perhaps the Chinese government feels some type of impulse to blunt this rise somehow. Perhaps that is what is causing some of the things we see today.

*Question:* You haven't visited China since your swashbuckling escape to India in January 2000. Have you ever been invited back and what is your relationship with the Chinese authorities?

*Answer:* Relationship! I don't have a particular relationship at all with the Chinese government. When I lived in Tibet, it was of course controlled by Beijing so there was no choice but to have some form of relationship. However, I have left Tibet and now live in India and so I'm completely removed from any type of control exerted by the Chinese government and so there is no communication to speak of, there is no relationship at all.

*Question:* But as the only senior Tibetan Buddhist monk to be recognised by both the Chinese and the Dalai Lama, many say you could be the hinge on which relations between Tibetans and China swing in a new direction. But you sound very angry with Beijing.

*Answer:* No, it's not that I have any anger or aversion to the Chinese whatsoever. Since I am a Dharma practitioner, I try to maintain impartiality and be free from excessive attachment to my own side and aversion to and hatred of others. In terms of where my own interests lie, I'm very passionate about supporting the middle path that has been articulated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In His Holiness's vision of this middle path, there is great benefit for the people of Tibet and also great benefit for the people of China.

If we follow the middle path, both the Government of China and the people of Tibet will be benefited. This vision is something that about 90 per cent of Tibetans support – the vast majority of Tibetans. I simply consider myself one of those Tibetans whose responsibility it is to further the cause of the people. Now in terms of specific opportunities that might arise from me to serve this vision, I'm not so sure.

Right now, the government-in-exile of Tibet has been engaging Beijing in dialogue but perhaps the dialogue hasn't always been fruitful. So, we have to wait and see what kind of opportunities arise.

*Question:* Do you think those 'opportunities' will have arisen by the time you are 50? You're 24 today and Tibetans have already been in India more than half a century. Will Tibetans become totally Indian by the time you're 50?

*Answer:* Due to the kind support of the Indian government and the Indian

people and due to the exemplary leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we Tibetans have been able to preserve Tibetan culture in the diaspora to some degree. Nevertheless, we would obviously rather be preserving the culture of Tibet inside a Tibet that was amenable to us. Obviously, that's not the situation now so that means there's going to be some challenges for us in preserving our culture exactly the way we want to.

Really, if you want to preserve Tibetan culture in the long term, that has to happen inside Tibet. This is why I feel the situation of Tibet is dire and that people in the world need to pay more attention to it. The situation is not one where we can take our time and wait 10, 20, 30 years to see what happens, what conditions might change because the danger is so great that much of our culture could be lost and the chances of restoring our culture greatly diminished.

So it's actually quite a hot potato that we have here. We have to do something quickly. In the language of your question, if we were to wait 50 years, we would be in danger of losing a great chunk of Tibetan culture that could not be recovered.

*Question:* You are young, so you understandably sound impatient. The Dalai Lama is 73, many say you should succeed him because you embody the story of your people – of oppression, escape and exile – and have been coached by the Dalai Lama.

*Answer:* Well, you made some remarks about people perceiving me to have a

special background. I would accept that, generally speaking, I do have some special attributes in my background in terms of my life story and this subject of the future of Tibetan leadership and possible successors to the role of leadership that the Dalai Lama plays, has been a popular topic in the general conversation around the Tibet issue.

However, as I always say, I am just one of the students, the followers of the Dalai Lama and there are a great many Tibetan people who are doing a wonderful job serving the vision of His Holiness and implementing his vision. I try to do my best too but in terms of future roles that I might assume, I'm already the Karmapa, that's my role and it's already one I feel quite weighed down by, it's heavy responsibilities.

For the future, my view is that I will continue as I am now, serving the vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all of us who are serving this vision together will be successful.

**Question:** But if you were asked – by popular appeal – to assume leadership of the Tibetan movement, would you accept? Yes or no?

**Answer:** It's really quite an involved issue. In order for anyone to assume the

role of leader of the Tibetan people, it's important to have historical context or at least an examination of the historical context. For anywhere between 800 and 900 years, the Karmapa has been a very apolitical figure, a person who has concentrated solely on spiritual leadership, not involved in any way with governmental leadership.

So I think it would be very difficult to change that historical pattern overnight and turn the role of the Karmapa into something more than strictly a spiritual teacher. Furthermore, we have to be mindful that the Dalai Lama is enjoying excellent health, he's very active, he's still contributing tremendously to the cause of the Tibetan people, he is the strong leader of the Tibetan people and that will continue.

It's important not to get too far ahead of ourselves. There's a lot of talk about what an authentic Tibetan democracy will look like in the future, who are the leaders going to be, but that's all discussion at this point and we shouldn't try and reach too far into the future.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> "Video war games satiate my feelings of aggression", *Times of India*, September 20, 2009.

## *Appendix B*

# **PRESS STATEMENT FROM THE SEVENTEENTH GYALWANG KARMAPA, OGYEN TRINLEY DORJE OF MAY 2, 2011**

There have been many media reports recently about the Karmapa name and institution. I did not respond to them because I did not want to add unnecessary public controversy while the investigation was at a critical stage.

However, the time has come to make certain fundamentals clear to those who may still nurse any doubts. Let me at the outset state categorically that:

1. I am not a Chinese spy, agent or plant in India.
2. I am deeply grateful to the Government of India for giving me refuge in this great country and for all the courtesy and hospitality shown to me since my arrival here. I am also very moved by the marks of affection that the Indian people have always showered on me. India is my home now and I would never do anything against the interest of the country or her people.
3. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is my spiritual and temporal leader, and I am committed to the well-being of the Tibetan people.

It would appear from media speculation that some people still wonder why I left

Tibet in December, 1999. I have given press interviews on the subject previously. Today, I wish to reiterate that my spiritual education as the Seventeenth Karmapa could not be completed if I had remained in Tibet. I had to receive the oral teachings of the Karmapa Lineage which have been passed down in an unbroken chain from India since the time of Lord Buddha. The origins of my lineage are in Nalanda whose great scholar, Naropa, received the teachings from his teacher, the Mahasiddha Tilopa. Naropa transmitted these teachings to the Tibetan Marpa, who passed them on to his disciple, Milarepa, and thence to Gampopa, from which they passed to Dusum Khyenpa, the first Karmapa. The Karmapa Lineage is thus deeply rooted in India where my illustrious predecessor, His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa, also found refuge in India, and established Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim. All the gurus of my lineage were in India. The Chinese Government would not allow them to visit me in Tibet. I could not live up to the high expectations from my position without their spiritual guidance. If I had stayed in Tibet, I strongly believe I would have had to denounce His Holiness, the

Dalai Lama.

Tibet is under Communist China's totalitarian regime. Unlike democratic India, there is no religious freedom there. Many Tibetans, including the illustrious heads of the different sects of Tibetan Buddhism had to flee to India following the Cultural Revolution. Even today, distressing news is coming out of Tibet regarding the current unrest at Kirti Monastery in the Tibetan area of Ngaba in Sichuan province. On March 16th, the self-immolation of a young monk named Phuntsok reveals the underlying tension that has been simmering for decades due to China's misguided policies addressing the grievances and resentments of the Tibetan people.

Reports say that the ongoing military siege of Kirti Monastery, the arrest of over 300 monks, and the death of two elderly local residents in police beatings have increased fears that if the authorities did not abandon use of force, the situation may deteriorate into full-scale violence costing lives of hundreds of unarmed and innocent Tibetans. I understand there are still some 2,200 monks completely isolated and the monastery is blockaded by the security police; the fate of these monks is still unknown owing to the April 21st official order sealing the Ngaba and Kandze areas to visitors.

Frequent peaceful protests carried out by the Tibetans are symptoms of a broken and wounded people desperately crying out for the restoration of their cultural identity, religious and human rights. Since Kirti Monastery is very important with great

historical significance throughout the Ngaba region, I join His Holiness the Dalai Lama and His Eminence Kyabche Kirti Rinpoche in their appeal to the Central Chinese Government and the international community to peacefully resolve the current crisis in Ngaba.

Tibet was an independent nation from ancient times. It maintained strong religious, cultural and trade ties with India. The common border was open and peaceful, allowing not only the free movement of trade and people but also the flow of the finest thoughts of human civilization. Hindus and Jains revered Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake as places of holy pilgrimage. Tibetans regarded India as the holy land of Lord Buddha and aspired to make a pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya. Buddhism came to Tibet from India. Along with Buddhism came much of the Tibetan language and the Tibetan script which was derived from ancient Indian scripts. We honour Indian saints and sages like Shantaraksita, Padmasambhava, Atisha, and many others who came to Tibet. Scholars and practitioners from renowned institutions of learning like Nalanda and Vikramasila inspired many of our religious schools.

Today, India is our second home. The Tibetan culture and religion has flourished in India's free and welcoming atmosphere. India has given refuge to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to many Buddhist lineage heads who have set up monasteries around the country. Tibetan Buddhism, culture and the Tibetan way of life thrive in India.

I am deeply conscious that India has

not only saved Tibetans and their way of life from extinction but also enabled us to draw inspiration from this holy land of the Buddha and take Buddhism to distant parts of the world where it was unknown previously. I pray that

Lord Buddha's teachings and Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence combined together become a source of peace and harmony for the entire world.

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## TASK FORCE MEMBERS

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