TIBETAN GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE: EXPERIMENTS IN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled, "**Tibetan Government-in-Exile: Experiments in Political Institutions**" submitted by me in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

Keny Kom

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof. Pralay Kanungo	**Dr. M. N. Thakur**
Chairperson	**Supervisor**

Contents

Abbreviations

ATPD	Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies
CIHTS	Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies
CRCT	Central Relief Committee for Tibetans
CTA	Central Tibetan Administration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama
CTE	Council for Tibetan Education
CTPD	Committee of Tibetan People's Deputies
CTSA	Central Tibetan Schools Administration
DIIR	Department of Information and International Relations
EU	European Union
FCRA	Indian Foreign Contribution Regulations Act
GOI	Government of India, New Delhi
IC	Identity Certificate
LTWA	Library of Tibetan Works and Archives
NDPT	National Democratic Party of Tibet
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PWA	Lhasa Patriotic Women's Association
RC	Registration Certificate
RFA	Radio Free Asia
SARD	Social and Resource Development Fund
SFF	Special Frontier Force
TAR	Tibet Autonomous Region
TCHRD	Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy
TCV	Tibetan Children's Village
THF	Tibetan Homes Foundation
TIPA	Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts
TIRS	Tibetan Industrial Rehabilitation Society
TMAI	Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute
TPFM	Tibetan Freedom Movement
TPiE	Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile
TPPRC	Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre
TSGs	Tibet Support Groups
TUA	Tibetan United Association
TWA	Tibetan Welfare Association/Tibetan Women's Association
TYC	Tibetan Youth Congress
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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Introduction

This dissertation will provide a detail account of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Even though the Tibetan Government-in-Exile is structurally represented by Central Tibetan Administration, it is influenced by two other entities- Tibetan Buddhism and the 14th Dalai Lama- which has major implications on the way it functions. It will explore the interaction and relationship of these three entities and the implications it has on the Tibetan community in exile and particularly the Tibetan government-in-exile.

Historical Background

Due to the Chinese invasion of Tibet and the resulting political discontent in 1950; Dalai Lama, the spiritual head of Tibetans, along with 80,000 followers left for India in 1959. What followed was a massive influx of Tibetans into India in two phases- firstly in 1959 and the second in 1980s. The government of India under Jawaharlal Nehru and with immense support from the Indian people welcomes the Tibetans and undertook to resettle them. The land of Gandhi and the land where Buddha once lived, was the best sanctuary Tibetan polity could have found. The Tibetans initially came with the understanding that their plight was temporary and would soon return to Tibet once the discontent in Tibet was over. However, the wait was much longer than they had expected. Today there are about 1,45,150[1] Tibetans all over the world with the majority of them settled in India.

The Tibetans' Buddhist faith had originated in India. However, over the centuries, the Tibetans had evolved a distinctive Buddhist culture, society and way of life suited to their remote surroundings. In exile Tibetan Buddhism will take on a role of trying to unify the Tibetans, fragmented on the lines of religious sects and region identities. It has major influence on the political system in exile. In exile the Tibetan have survived as a cohesive community, committed to retaining their culture and tradition of Tibet, to which they ardently long to return. They have a living, evolving focus for their identity in the form of the 14th Dalai Lama to sustain their hope. From the time the Dalai Lama sought

[1] The Office of the Planning Commission's projected population in 2007, based on the annual percentage growth rate. Approximate world-wide distribution: India **101,242**; Nepal **16,313**; Bhutan **1,883**; and rest of the world **25,712**.

refuge in India in 1959, he has committed himself to the secular education of his people and to the establishment of representative, democratic institutions which will allow them to rule themselves. In 1959, the Dalai Lama outlined a programme designed to introduce to exiles to the practice of democratic self-rule without losing touch with their own traditions.

According to the initiative of the 14th Dalai Lama the Tibetan Government in exile was established in 1959 with Dharamshala as the center of authority. It is also known as the Central Tibetan Administration. In 1961, the Dalai-Lama prepared a draft constitution for the Future Tibet, based on the principles of modern democracy. In 1963, a detailed draft constitution was promulgated. It has been planned and pursued from the start by the Dalai-Lama himself. For him the process of empowering the people to rule in their own right has become a democratic imperative that extends into the future. The Dalai Lama is the head of the state and Kalon Tripa is the head of the government. The government is democratic and is popularly elected through elections held every five year.

The structure of the Tibetan Government in Exile is designed along democratic principles, in an attempt to demonstrate that Tibet is a modernized society, and that the Tibetan Government in Exile could justly rule if it was restored in Tibet. The CTA is divided into three organs- the legislature which is known as Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, the executive which is known as Kashag and the Supreme Court of Justice. The Tibetan Government in Exile includes a full cabinet with officials who focus on issues like education, public service, religion, culture, health, finances, and security. Accordingly as enshrined in the Charter for the Tibetans in exile passed by the 11th Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (now referred to as the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile), in 1991, there is now a separation of power among the three organs of the government-the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. The three pillars of the democratic government of Tibetan exiles were founded on the marriage of the spiritual and political values. However, the CTA is not recognised by the Indian government nor by any other governments in the world.

Review of Literature

I faced some problems while trying to understand democracy in context of the Tibetan government in exile. For understanding democracy happening in exile I read Ardley (1999), Frechette (2007), and Dalai Lama (1989). They bring out the distinct characteristics of Tibetan democracy that does not fit earlier and western understanding of democracy as stated by Przeworski (1986), Rustow (1970), and Huntington (1991/92, 1984). The fact is that democratisation in exile has been led by the Dalai Lama, yet true democracy would preclude him, an unelected leader, from office. However, Weber's (1968) theory of a charistmatic leader is the closest I came across in understanding Tibetan democracy that is brought by the charismatic leadership of Dalai Lama, rather than as a popular demand of the people. The conclusions to the nature of Tibetan democracy vary, but it is clear that the Tibetan concept of democracy is radically different from that of the west. This analysis of Tibetan democracy-in-exile finds many obstacles to full democratisation, including: a lack of competitive elections for the leadership; an absence of political parties in the Tibetan government-in-exile; the conflict of the religious and political roles of the Dalai Lama; a lack of formal opposition; and an unwillingness to embrace diversity within the Tibetan community in exile for fear of harming unity.

For understanding nationalism I read Ernest Gellner (1964, 1983). He stated, "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist". In exile, the Tibetans are attempting to construct a nation relying on a common identity based on a shared history, language, culture and goals. This initiative is taken up by the state, which is considered to be in control of centralized institutions that make and enforce laws, exerting authority over a particular geographical authority and the people who live there. Culturally, they are not united. Their strong association with Tibet as their homeland, however, with a common shared ancestry, does unite them—they are ethnically and nationally Tibetan. It is a common human experience to associate culture with place, to root it in a homeland. Though we take this rooting to be real, it is a practical impossibility. Culture can never remain fixed or be preserved in a single place much less as it is spread throughout the Tibetan diaspora. By Clifford Geertz's definition, culture is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by

means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (1973: 89).

For exile identity I use Edward Said (2000). He said that exile is both a particular phenomenon, referring to the effects upon individuals and collectivities of political struggles, and universal phenomena that captures, in a powerful metaphor, the psychological and emotional effects of loss of that which anchors individuals in space, both literally and figuratively. Exile is also about the loss of roots, the loss of place, the loss of one's bearings in the world. Edward Said (2000: 173) writes that it is "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted." Exile, in this sense, is irreducible to a sociological concept based on a narrow concept of the political, which often reserves the condition of exile only to the "deserving" uprooted person.

There is the sheer fact of isolation and displacement, which produces the kind of narcissistic masochism that resists all efforts at amelioration, acculturation and community. At this extreme the exile can make a fetish of exile, a practice that distances him or her from all connections and commitments. More common is the pressure on the exile to join parties, national movements, the state.

Compared with the little research on governments-in-exile, the studies on Tibet are abundant. I only want to mention the research works that provided me with an overall and lasting introduction to the topic of the exiled Tibetan community in general and the Tibetan government-in-exile in particular. While anthropologists have undertaken extensive research, works on Tibetan exile from other disciplines are somewhat limited. These works concentrate on subjects like education, health or political events of the entire period between 1959 and the present. The most important for my own research were written by Goldstein (1971, 1978, 1989, 1998), Smith Jr. (1996, 2010), Nowak (1984) and Frechette (2004). The accounts on the Tibetan pre-exile times of Norbu (1974), Richardson (1986), S.C. Das (1997) and Michael (1982) provided me with an overview of society, politics and religious life in central Tibet in the early twentieth century. Dibyesh Anand (2000), Helen R. Boyd (2005), Dennis J. Burke (2008), Stephanie Roemer (2008), and Amalendu Misra (2003) helped me in refining the contemporary discussions and debates on Tibetans in exile. The portion on Dalai Lama

was greatly helped by readings from Roberts, J. B., & Roberts, E. A. (2009), Ardley (2002), and Robert Thurman (2008).

Additionally, I want to give importance to the numerous publications of the CTA, especially from the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) that illustrate the official view on exile Tibetan life in the communities and the Tibetans' political struggle and history. But these accounts are not sufficient for a scientific analysis, as they serve the exile Tibetan political objectives, rather than show the conditions in a neutral way.

With regard to the theory on exile governments, most of the materials I used are Yossi Shain (1989, 1991). Yossi Shain, a scholar at the Universities of Georgetown and Tel-Aviv, conducted systematic and far-reaching research on numerous former and still existing exile organizations to find overall characteristics of exile organizations in general and governments-in-exile in particular. His theoretical approach is at present the only existing theory of governments-in-exile in political science. There have not been much limited academic work done on exile organizations, therefore I give high credibility to his research and take his findings on governments-in-exile as a basis for further theoretical developments and the portrayal of exile Tibetan politics.

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Statement of Problem

What makes the Tibetan political system in exile unique is the interaction and relationship of Central Tibetan Administration, Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama. Despite various difficulties and obstacles of being exiled in a foreign land, the exiled Tibetan diaspora under the leadership of the 14th Dalai Lama had initiated some form of organization and structure to the Tibetan struggle. He proposed that Tibet should be structured as a democracy and at the same time, initiated a series of experiments with democracy in exile. He introduce He did this to prepare the Tibetans for a return to Tibet and to facilitate the exile administration's claims to legitimate governance of Tibet in international contexts. This was brought in through creation of a semblance of democratic political institutions like the Central Tibetan Administration.

The CTA performs state-like functions like organizing democratic elections, providing health and education services, creating a voluntary taxation system, direct aid to the desperately poor, employment in the administration, issuing of Tibetan identity documents, and the establishment of bureau offices which act as quasi embassies. Through these functions, the exile administration is able to govern effectively even in the absence of its own coercive apparatus like police, army, courts, and prison system. For the Tibetans in exile, territory is not as physical or legal as it is intended; rather, the notion of territory exists in the imagination and simultaneously in the past and the future: in old Tibet and free Tibet. This was a huge shift from the old theocratic system followed in old Tibet. The CTA is different in the sense that it does not govern over an internationally recognized territory. Even though the government-in-exile is less functionally operational than a territorial nation-state, it is far more institutionally organized than any socially networked diasporic community. The exiled community has transplanted its government structures and democratized them. In the process it has managed to establish a state-like polity in exile.

While in exile, the desire for their nationhood or the right to self determination is produced and sustained through various processes facilitated primarily by the CTA. However the source of Tibetan nationalism is predominantly described by Tibetan Buddhism. The sense of their nationhood is deeply rooted in their religion and culture manifested through the monastic system, symbols, rituals and practices. The sense of distinct cultural community is maintained through healthy interaction of both religious and non-religious or secular institutions and processes.

This dissertation is organized around three fundamental questions. Firstly, what role Tibetan Buddhism play in shaping a nationalistic identity of Tibetans in exile; second, what influence Dalai Lama have in the exile political system; and thirdly how the CTA derive its legitimacy as the representative of Tibetans in exile.

Based on these questions, the main objectives of this paper is to analyze the following hypotheses:

1. Democracy in the exile Tibetan polity came from the top initiated by the Dalai Lama to seek legitimacy and solve the problem of leadership succession.

2. The legitimation of the Central Tibetan Administration is determined by the institution of the Dalai Lama.
3. Tibetan Buddhism helped in constructing a common Tibetan identity in exile.

Research Methodology

The proposed research is analytical and descriptive. The analysis is done of various political developments and changes happening with the exiled Tibetans. The primary source will be studying relevant materials in this field- paper, statutes, regulations and policies published by the Tibetan Government-in-exile and other international bodies. Secondary sources include books, articles published in edited volumes, research journals and newspapers. Internet sources are also used wherever necessary. For collection of materials, I have used libraries in Delhi like JNU and Tibet House Library; and Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA) in Dharamshala, H.P. I have also visited Dharamshala and interviewed officials of the Central Tibetan Administration.

Chapterization

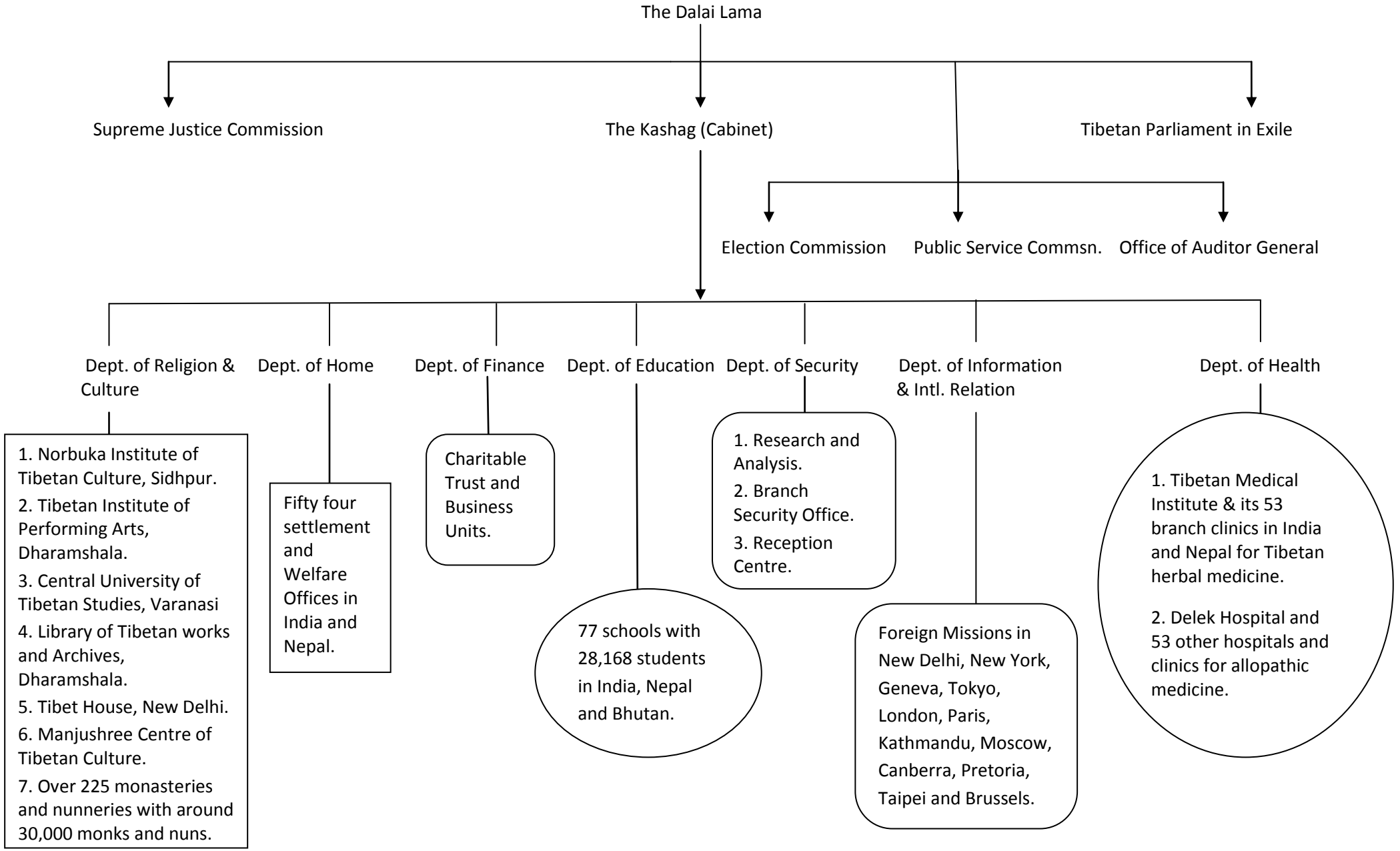
In the first chapter, There was never a pan Tibetan identity in Tibet. However, in exile, the CTA had constructed a nation relying on a common identity based on a shared history, religion, language, culture and goals. Popular expressions of Tibetan identity rely on religious symbolism. This chapter will look into how Tibetan Buddhism provides an important vocabulary for the political discourse of Tibetan nationalism and in the process how Tibetan identity had been constructed in exile.

In the second Chapter, I will examine the role of the 14th Dalai Lama in the CTA. The 14th Dalai Lama is considered as the spiritual as well as the political leader of all Tibetans and is regarded as the representative for the struggle of the Tibetans in exile as well as in Tibet. He initiated changed in CTA (the exiled Tibetan polity) by bringing in democracy. By doing so he had brought in professionalism and new set of modern democratized leaders. On the other hand he had to step down from the political leadership to bring in more democratization. I will look into this new trajectory that the Tibetan movement will undergo with the Dalai Lama stepping down. I will explore if these new changes would complement and supplement the void if Dalai Lama step down as the leader of the Tibetans.

In the third chapter, I will be looking at the political structure of the Tibetan government in exile, how they function, their role and work. In the process I will analysed the change from the old theocratic state to a modern democratic structure and how the issue of sovereignty is articulated by the exile government: its claims to and production of legitimacy, authority and de facto sovereignty; its displaced sovereignty and strategies of territorial governance over non-contiguous spaces in exile; and the mediation of its ambiguous relationship with the host state India through practices of tacit sovereignty.

Appendix 1: Map of Tibet and its neighbours (Norbu, 2001: xv). From *China's Tibet Policy,* Dawa Norbu.

Appendix 2: Central Tibetan Administration: Organizational Structure (CTA, 2009: 54-55)



Chapter One

Tibetan Buddhist Nationalism: Identity, Culture and Religion in Exile Politics

This chapter will focus on the influences of Tibetan Buddhist nationalism on Tibetan identity in exile. Religion, Tibetan Buddhism, rather than secular nationalist ideology provides an important vocabulary for the political discourse of Tibetan nationalism. To understand the implications of the effort to preserve their culture, it is pertinent to present and discuss ethnicity as a social category and culture as a cooperative system of ordering and making one's world meaningful, particularly in relation to identity construction. Cultural and ethnic identity are distinct theoretical concepts, which is vital to the ability to frame identity in the Tibetan-in-exile experience.

The interconnections between religion and politics in Tibet have been the focus of several historical studies (Burman, 1979; Michael, 1982), and writers on Tibetan history commonly recognize the close ties between religion and politics in Tibetan culture. Both traditional and modern Tibetan identity is stated in religious and political idioms. This interconnection between religion and politics will also be covered in this chapter. Although a historical perspective is included in the present chapter, my main concern is to describe how politics and religion are interconnected in the present-day context of the Tibetan independence movement. Subsequently, my aim is to investigate different ways of asserting Tibetan identity, and how in exile Tibetan Buddhism has helped in chalking out a common identity.

Before the relation between Tibetan Buddhism and politics is analysed, it is important to position the Tibetans to their present status of being uprooted from their native country and living in a foreign country. The next section will try to understand what it means to be in exile.

1.1 What Constitute an Exile Identity?

This section will try to give an idea of what it means to be in exile and the identity one possess after being displaced from their natural habitat. The understanding of an exile identity will be necessary in linking it with the identity that the Tibetans have come to acquire while in exile. This will further help us in understanding the dominant role religion and politics play in shaping a common Tibetan identity.

The dictionary defines exile as "the forced removal from one's native country; as banishment or expulsion from home." To exile is to banish, expel or drive away someone from their country or home. An exile is a person expelled by the authorities. Exile, however, can be also voluntary: exile denotes "voluntary absence from one's country; or "one who separates himself from his home." Exile has very specific political connotations, for it presupposes the actions of the authorities towards those they banish, and the actions of those who, given the nature or the outcome of political struggles in their country, either choose or are forced to leave.

In this narrow, political sense, exile is the effect of conscious decisions, by those who expel their enemies, those who are expelled, or those who leave even if the authorities let them be. Whether imposed or voluntarily chosen, exile in this sense is a condition, a real location in the political, social and geographical space. It is not an identity arbitrarily imposed by census officials, or by well meaning social scientists and literary theorists. Those who find themselves thus situated know and embrace exile as their status and their role, as their place in history, because it is their fate, who they are, and they know it.

But just as we seem to have grasped the nature of exile as a political phenomenon, the concrete outcome of political struggles, its complex nature undermines this conclusion, for political exile whether the result of coercion or choice, is just one of the manifold usages of the concept. Both in its political sense and a metaphor, exile has a life as long as recorded human history; it is not just about the social relations that separate people from home and homeland, but a way to capture the suffering that ensues from all forms of estrangement.

A relational, sociological definition of exile resting in a narrow conception of the political that overlooks its necessary connections with the economy and vice versa, has the political implication of denying the legitimacy of the feelings and experiences of those who, for a variety of reasons beyond their control such as racial and ethnic conflicts, wars, famines, the downsizings and privatizations mandated by neoliberal economic policies, droughts, guerrilla warfare, the drug wars, etc., have been forced to leave their homes and homelands perhaps forever, to seek survival in faraway places. Exile highlights the significance of place in the formation of everyone's identities regardless of social class, not just of the privileged, those who disagreed with the dominant politics of their countries or were banished by their governments because of their political resistance.

Exile is both a particular phenomenon, referring to the effects upon individuals and collectivities of political struggles, and a universal phenomena that captures, in a powerful metaphor, the psychological and emotional effects of loss of that which anchors individuals in space, both literally and figuratively. Exile is also about the loss of roots, the loss of place, the loss of one's bearings in the world. Edward Said (2000: 173) writes that it is "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted." Exile, in this sense, is irreducible to a sociological concept based on a narrow concept of the political, which often reserves the condition of exile only to the "deserving" uprooted person.

Much of the exile’s life is taken up with compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule. It is not surprising that so many exiles seem to be novelists, chess players, political activists, and intellectuals. Each of these occupations requires a minimal investment in objects and places a great premium on mobility and skill. The exile’s new world is unnatural and its unreality resembles fiction. No matter how well they may do, exiles are always eccentrics who feel their difference as a kind of orphanhood. Anyone who is really homeless regards the habit of seeing estrangement in everything modern as an affectation, a display of modist attitudes. Clutching differences like a weapon to be used with stiffened will, the exile jealously insists on his or her right to refuse to belong.

There is the sheer fact of isolation and displacement, which produces the kind of narcissistic masochism that resists all efforts at amelioration, acculturation and community. At this extreme the exile can make a fetish of exile, a practice that distances him or her from all connections and commitments. More common is the pressure on the exile to join parties, national movements, the state.

The exile is offered a new of affiliations and develops new loyalties. But there is also a loss of critical perspective, of intellectual reserve, of moral courage. It must also be recognized that the defensive nationalism of exiles often fosters self-awareness as much as it does the less attractive forms of self-assertion. Such reconstitutive projects as assembling a nation out of exile involve constructing a national history, reviving an ancient language, founding national institutions. And these, while they sometimes promote strident ethnocentrism, also give rise to investigations of self that inevitably go far beyond such simple and positive facts as "ethnicity". Exile is not a privilege but an alternative to the mass institutions that dominate modern life. Exile is not a matter of choice: you are born into it, or it happens to you. Most people are aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that is contradictory (Said 2000: 183).

For an exile, habits of life, expression or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environment are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally. There is a unique pleasure in this sort of apprehension, especially if the exile is conscious of other contrapuntal juxtapositions that diminish orthodox judgment and elevate appreciative sympathy. There is also a particular sense of achievement in acting as if one were at home wherever one happens to be. Exile is never the state of being satisfied, placid, or secure. The interplay between nationalism and exile is like opposites informing and constituting each other.

Triumphant and achieved nationalism justifies a history selectively collected together in a narrative form: thus all nationalism have their founding fathers, their basic, quasi-religious texts, their rhetoric of belonging, their historical and geographical landmarks, their official

enemies and heroes. This collective ethos forms what Pierre Bourdieu calls the habitus, the coherent amalgam of practices linking habit with inhabitance (cited from Said 2000: 176). In time, successful nationalisms consign truth exclusively to themselves and relegate falsehood and inferiority to outsiders. While being estranged in a new country, the Tibetans have managed to create a common identity which emerged out of the experience of being in exile out of the necessity to create new affiliations and new loyalties.

According to Yossi Shain, exiles are person who are engaged '…in political activity directed against the policies of a home regime, against the home regime itself, or against the political system as a whole, so as to create circumstances favourable to their return' (1989: 3). This definition implies that political exiles are involved in a struggle to return home from a base abroad; a political involvement that ranges from full commitment to marginal activities who aim to replace or overthrow the present ruler at home (Shain 1991: 3). Exiles organize themselves into organizations to return home. The next section will examine how identities are asserted with regards to the Tibetans. They are referred to as exiles because they have been uprooted from their natural habitat and are involved in political activism directed against the Chinese government. They are against an alien Chinese political system that had been imposed in Tibet and hence have left their home country for settling in a foreign country.

1.2 Tibetans in Exile: Asserting Tibetan Identity

Tibetan national identity is very distinct, based on ethnicity, language, religion, culture, territory, cultural ecology adapted to territory, and a history of direct political administration of Central Tibet and indirect administration of all Tibetan cultural territory. Tibetan national identity so closely corresponds to the Tibetan Plateau that one might say that Tibet is a nation defined by altitude. Tibet had mutually advantageous relationships with pre-twentieth- century Chinese regimes, primarily with conquest dynasties. According to Warren W. Smith Jr.(2010: 250), Tibet's relations with the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1270–1368) avoided a Mongol conquest of Tibet and promoted Tibetan Buddhism. Buddhism was also promoted by the Manchu Qing (1642–1911), while Tibetans had only to tolerate the abuses of a few *Ambans*, the Manchu representatives in Lhasa. A Tibetan nationalist

consciousness was stimulated by the British invasion of 1904, the Chinese invasion of eastern Tibet in response, and then by British support for Tibetan autonomy. Britain recognized China's suzerainty over Tibet, not sovereignty, but China never gave up its claim to full sovereignty over Tibet (Smith Jr. 2010: 250).

Unlike most of the regions of China, Tibet was inhabited primarily by a single ethnic group. Then and now, the Dalai Lama and those who fled into India claim that Tibet was and should remain autonomous from China's rule. China's political rule was under the communist regime of Mao Zedong, who sought to institute major social changes and industrialize China. Zedong sent his armies into Tibet, claiming it to be a historical region of China. He entered as a liberator, freeing the Tibetans from their feudal bondage under the hand of the Dalai Lama's Buddhist regime.

The present Chinese occupation of Tibet is the latest manifestation of a territorial and ideological contestation that dates back a thousand years. This current chapter began in 1949 when tens of thousands of troops from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) occupied the independent country of Tibet in the name of unifying the 'motherland'. The PLA then took over the Kashag (the Tibetan government polity) and installed a puppet government. This colonization systematically attacks most aspects of Tibetan people's lives, from criminalizing religious activity[1] to forcing agricultural settlement upon nomadic pastoralists to mandating Chinese-language and Communist political education classes within the schools and monasteries. The initial zeal of the occupation, compounded by the Cultural Revolution, also led to the destruction of many monastic structures and their religious artifacts.

Arguably, Mao Zedong's social ideology of a classless society was initially exercised in Tibet and ultimately lead to the Cultural Revolution in mainland China. He sought to displace ethnic Tibetans from the social and cultural institutions that distinguished them from groups in other parts of China. Thus, sending Chinese soldiers into Tibet was intended to impede Tibetans from asserting their own cultural identity. As such, ethnicity and culture

[1] Expressing devotion to the Dalai Lama, for example, often results in imprisonment.

have become primary social categories in the Tibetan struggle for a free Tibet. The refugees who fled Tibet wanted to find a place where they were free to continue asserting their 'Tibetanness', to assert that which the Chinese intended to destroy.

Traditionally, Tibet was divided into three provinces: U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. However, in 1965 the People's Republic of China restructured Tibet, demarcating U-Tsang and part of Kham as the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), most of Amdo province with a portion of Kham as Qinghai Province, and merging other parts of Tibet into the neighbouring Chinese provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan and Gansu (TPPRC 2009: 6). Currently, the Chinese insist that Tibet consist of only the TAR and exclude the other Tibetan provinces that had been merged with the neighbouring Chinese provinces.

Since 1959, one of the primary concerns of the exiled Dalai Lama and the Tibetan refugee community has specifically been to preserve the rich cultural heritage of Tibet. This attention to the preservation of linguistic, religious and artistic knowledge through both documentation and education was prompted by two legitimate threats: the disappearance of Tibetan culture in the homeland under Chinese rule and the disappearance of exiled Tibetans into their host societies. The in-exile movement is comprised of those who fled from Tibet into exile and reorganized themselves, rallying around His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to form an organized resistance against the Chinese. Their cause, the struggle for a free Tibet, is oriented with the purpose of reclaiming their homeland and regaining the freedom to live and assert their own perception of Tibetan culture and identity within Tibet.

The freedom to claim and assert an ethnic identity is at the core of the Tibetan refugee experience, including their decision to leave Tibet and the subsequent movement for a free Tibet. A movement to reclaim their homeland is at the same time a movement to reoccupy a space in which the Tibetan people can live and raise their children as Tibetans. Led by the Dalai Lama, Tibetans left Tibet to preserve their culture from those who sought to enact change in their homeland. It is here that the differences between cultural and ethnic identity become salient.

Neither the youth who are born in exile nor those who are born in Tibet and migrate into India are culturally what the founders of the in-exile movement, the original refugees, expect them to be as preservers of the Tibetan identity. Those born in exile face the constant threat of forgetting their true selves. Conversely, those born in Tibet, under the influence of China, and who later migrate to India, are stigmatized and seen as being backward by those raised in exile settlements. Though all are ethnic Tibetans, there are many different varieties of Tibetan culture.

Melvyn Goldstein (1978: 398) on writing about the development of ethnic boundaries operative within and outside of the Tibetan community remarked that the "two critical aspects of the Government of India's policy towards the Tibetan refugees have been 1) the liberal non-assimilative' framework as reflected in the separate settlements and 2) the broad 'delegated' authority of the Tibetan leadership headed by the Dalai Lama over the Tibetan settlements in India." The proposed settlements were a kind of compromise because their envisioned size of three to four thousand was large enough to sustain Tibetan language and other institutions easily.

The GOI further facilitated this cultural preservation effort by allowing Tibetans considerable autonomy and in particular by permitting the Dharamsala administration to exercise administrative control over the settlements. Scholars working on the Tibetan issue in the 70s and 80s unequivocally agreed that Tibetans had been extremely successful in retaining their ancestral way of life in the face of acculturation and constituted a model of good integration with their host populations. These early anthropological studies emphasized notions of adaptation, acculturation and change as the key processes through which a history of Tibetans in exile might be charted.

Despite the issue over the geographical Tibet that should the Dalai Lama return he has to repent for his alleged separatist activities and assume Chinese citizenship. More insidiously, Chinese nationals almost outnumber Tibetans in Tibet's capital Lhasa, collectively building on five decades of occupation and demographic change to purposefully separate the contemporary generation of Tibetans from their cultural heritage. In total, over a million

Tibetans have been killed as a direct result of the occupation and at least 130,000 refugees are scattered around the world. Although escape from Tibet typically involves an arduous journey over the Himalayas, and life in exile demands reconfigurations of daily patterns, the degradation of Tibetan culture and livelihood generates a steady flow of refugees.[2]

This section has shown how the Tibetans have ended up in exile and its related complication that came along with being displaced from their native country. Due to the nature of their displacement, it became important for the Tibetans to assert their identity. The next section will show how Tibetan Buddhism shapes this identity. To understand the relation between religion and politics, a brief history and explanation of Tibetan Buddhism is given below.

1.3 Tibetan Buddhist Nationalism

This section will explore the beginning of Buddhism in Tibet in the first part and the second part will show the influence of Buddhism to the Tibetans and the Tibetan society with special emphasis on the identity Tibetan Buddhism had given to the exile diaspora and its subsequent influence on nationalism.

1.3.1 Tibetan Buddhism: History and Evolution

This section will chart the beginning of Buddhism in Tibet and how Buddhism evolved uniquely for the Tibetans. It will look into the influence it have on Tibetan identity and also into the unique relation Buddhism have with politics.

Tibetan Buddhism is the body of Buddhist religious doctrine and institutions characteristics of Tibet and certain regions of the Himalayas, including northern Nepal, Bhutan and India, beginning in the 7th century CE. Tibetan Buddhism comprises the teachings of the three vehicles or routes of enlightenment of Buddhism: the Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana[3]. In common with Mahayana schools, Tibetan Buddhism includes a pantheon

[2] According to the Director of the Refugee Reception Centre in McLeodGanj, approximately 5,000 Tibetans flee out of Tibet per year,.

[3] Hinayana is considered as the Foundational vehicle, Mahayana as the Great Vehicle and Vajrayana as the Diamond Vehicle.

of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and Dharma protectors[4]. Among its most unique characteristics are its system of reincarnating lamas and the vast number of deities in its pantheon. Tibetan Buddhism is most well-known to the world through the office of the 14th Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual and political leader of Tibet and the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

The introduction of Buddhism into Tibet can be noticed as early as in the 3rd Century B.C. when Emperor Ashoka sent Buddhist missionaries there for the propagation of Buddhism. According to the legends and stories prevalent in Tibet, it indicates that Tibet had constant contact with Buddhist mission in the fourth century B.C. But it was not confirmed that Tibetans became followers of Buddhism (Prem Singh Jina, 2001: 27). Certain Buddhist scriptures arrived in southern Tibet from India as early as 173 AD during the reign of Thothori Nyantsen, the 28th king of Tibet. During the third century the scriptures were disseminated to northern Tibet. The influence of Buddhism was not great in Tibet, however, and was not yet in its characteristic Tantric form, for the earliest Tantras had just begun to be written in India.

According to Diana Finnigan (2011: 26), the full fledged introduction of Buddhism to Tibet began in the 7th century, during the reign of Tibet's first emperor, Songsten Gampo. Major contributions were made subsequently by two later kings: Trisong Getsen (c. 742-797 CE) and Ralpachen (reigned 815-838 CE). It was Songsten Gampo who first unified the Tibetan kingdom and who also first implemented Buddhism within Tibet. Forming strategic alliances with neighbouring powers, he married princess Bhrikuti from Nepal and princess Wencheng from China (Sarat Chandra Das, 1997: 73). Both were devout Buddhists, and each brought with her to Tibet an important Buddhist statue. In order to house the statues, two major temples were build in Lhasa: the Ramoche and the Jokhang, as they are known today. The latter remains the most revered temple in Tibet even today. King Songsten

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[4] Arya-bodhisattvas are able to escape the cycle of death and rebirth but compassionately choose to remain in this world to assist others in reaching nirvana or buddhahood. Dharma protectors are mythic figures incorporated into Tibetan Buddhism from various sources (including the native Bon religion, and Hinduism) who are pledged to protecting and upholding the Dharma. Many of the specific figures are unique to Tibet.

constructed one hundred and eight temples across the territory in Tibet to consolidate Buddhism as the state religion.

Songsten Gampo initiated further steps in the importation of Buddhism to Tibet: the study of Sanskrit and the creation of Tibetan language. Before he assumed power, the vast world of Indian Buddhist literary culture was inaccessible to Tibetans without a script of their own and without scholars who could translate from Sanskrit. Songsten Gampo sent his own minister Thonmi Sambhota (7th Century) to India, where he spent years training with a Kashmiri pandit. He later created the script for the Tibetan language that remains in use today.

For several dynastic generations after Songsten Gampo, Tibet had Buddhist temples, statues and texts, but still no monastic to lend them life. It was king Trisong Getsen who established the Tibetan monasatic sangha and the founding of the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery, Samye, in approximately 780 C.E. The most important event in Tibetan Buddhist history was the arrival of the great tantric mystic Padmasambhava in Tibet in 774 at the invitation of King Trisong Detsen (Finnigan 2011: 27). It was Padmasambhava[5] who merged tantric Buddhism with the local Bon religion to form what we now recognize as Tibetan Buddhism. In addition to writing a number of important scriptures, some of which Tibetan Buddhists believe he hid for future monks to find at the right time, Padmasambhava established the Nyingma school from which all schools of Tibetan Buddhism are derived.

When king Ralpachen took to the throne in 815 C.E., several initiatives were already underway to translate Buddhist texts to Tibetan, to which he lent his royal support wholeheartedly. In what became the standard pattern for translating from Sanskrit to Tibetan, Indian pundits work in partnership with Tibetans in Samye monastery as well as in the Silk Road town of Dunhuang (Finnigan 2011: 27). Ralpachen also invited important pundits from India and instituted a system to ensure patronage for monks in Tibet, with seven households sharing the task of supporting the needs of one monk. Translated work was both sponsored and regulated by the Tibetan kings from Trisong Detsen through

[5] He is more commonly known in the region as Guru Rinpoche.

Ralpachen. In the process, Tibetans developed a literary language that was created to express the Buddha dharma.

Tibetan Buddhism exerted a strong influence from the 11th century AD among the peoples of Central Asia, especially in Mongolia and Manchuria. It was adopted as an official state religion by the Mongol Yuan dynasty and the Manchu Qing dynasty of China. Tibet remained independent until the early 1900s, when it was occupied first by Britain and then China. The Tibetans reasserted their independence from China in 1912 and retained it until 1951, when it was "liberated" by China. Today, Tibet is still occupied by China. The Dalai Lama, the spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people, lives in exile in India.

Tibetan Buddhism spread to the West in the second half of the 20th century as many Tibetan leaders were exiled from their homeland. Today, Tibetan religious communities in the West consist both of refugees from Tibet and westerners drawn to the Tibetan religious tradition. In this section we have seen how Buddhism came to Tibet and evolved into a different tradition of Buddhism called ‘Tibetan Buddhism’. The next section will cover the influence Tibetan Buddhism has on the Tibetan political and social life and how it has helped shape a unique identity in Tibet and most importantly in exile.

1.3.2 Buddhism in Tibetan Society: Influences on Political and Social Life

This section will show the central role Buddhism has played in the day to day life of the Tibetans and the Tibetan society. It will specially emphasized on the identity Tibetan Buddhism had given to the exile diaspora and its subsequent influence on nationalism.

Buddhism defines morality and the fundamental meaning of existence through its core notions of karma, rebirth, and enlightenment. At the same time, it punctuated the daily rhythm of life by engaging individuals in concrete religious practices such as counting rosaries, turning prayer wheels, doing circumambulations, and maintaining altars in homes. Individual Tibetans also made religious pilgrimages to temples, monasteries, and distant sacred locations, and they sent their sons to become lifelong monks in astonishing numbers. Roughly 10 to 15 percent of Tibet's males were monks, and virtually all Tibetans in the

traditional society knew a monk or nun personally as a relative, a friend, or a neighbor (Goldstein & Kapstein 1998: 5).

Tibetan Buddhism in its popular dimension also played a major role in the problems of daily life since it incorporated a plethora of autochthonous deities and spirits. These local gods were easily offended and caused illness and misfortune when angered, so avoiding, counteracting, or placating their potential negative power was a core concern. In times of illness or uncertainty, therefore, Tibetans typically consulted religious specialists for advice on how to proceed, for example, asking monks to perform sacred divination or asking shamans to summon a god and serve as a medium so that they could consult directly with the god (Goldstein & Kapstein 1998: 5).

Tibetan Buddhism was thus a dominant ideological framework for both day-to-day life and the ultimate questions dealing with the meaning of existence and life. Buddhism in political Tibet also had profound meaning as the reason for existence of the Tibetan state, and it was the main source of Tibetans' pride in their culture and country. The Tibetan polity is based on and legitimized by Buddhist religion. Tibetans, in fact, referred to their political system as *chos srid gnyis ldan,* which literally means "both Dharma and temporal", but can also be translated as "dual system of religion and politics."[6] The term implies a distinction between spiritual and worldly affairs, while at the same time emphasizing their interconnectedness.

Under this diarchal political system both religious and temporal authorities wield actual political power but within officially separate institutions. Religious and secular officials might work side by side, each responsible to different bureaucracies. The ideal administration was seen as a balance between two types of officials: monk officials and lay noble officials. This division reflected the accommodation of power between the monasteries and the aristocracy. At every level of administration, the duality of monk clerics and nobles was reflected. The ministers of the cabinet thus included both lay and monk officials (Nicholas 1973: 67). Tibetans traditionally considered their country unique because

[6] Sinha, Nirmal C. "Chhos Srid Gnyis Ldan", *Bulletin of Tibetology,* Vol. 5, No. 3. (November 1968), pp.13-27.

of its "theocratic" form of governance in which politics was intimately intertwined with religion. The Tibetan state was headed by a ruler, the Dalai Lama, who was believed to be a bodhisattva who repeatedly returned to earth to help humankind in general and Tibet in particular.

Nicholas (1973: 67) said that the western notion of the political relies on the dichotomy between sacred and secular, or spiritual and temporal. In other words politics is a secular pursuit different from the sacred or religion. However in Asia and Africa there is a different notion about the political as they incorporates in culture to explain the diversion from the expected western understanding. This cultural component is the structure of meanings that evaluate political symbols and political acts. Of all the things that bind the Tibetan community in exile-culture, religion, heritage, and loss- the Dalai Lama is supreme.

The leading representative of the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama lineage was installed as rulers of Tibet in 1642, and since then their power has grown so that national rather than just sectarian genealogies of religion and politics now validate their rule. In exile, the power of the Dalai Lama lineage has only been further strengthened. Respect and devotion to the 14th Dalai Lama is on both sacred and secular terms but is primarily because of his being an incarnation of *Chenrezig* (in Sanskrit, Avalokiteshvara), the deity who embodies wisdom and compassion. Social prohibitions against critiquing the Dalai Lama extend also to the exile government. Even secular critiques of the government are controversial and widely avoided despite the Dalai Lama's efforts to encourage democratic reform in exile.

With Tibet occupied and fragmented by artificial boundaries meant to prevent any social or political cohesion, and the Tibetan exiles in diaspora spread across 37 different communities, the Dalai Lama is more important now than perhaps ever before in Tibet's history. More than any other figure, the Dalai Lama provides a sense of shared purpose for Tibetans, whose sense of national identity would otherwise be hampered by regionalism. Historically, Tibetans have had a stronger sense of belonging to the regions from which they come—Kham, Amdo, or U-Tsang—than a sense of nation. This is partly because Tibet's

central government was always relatively weak, but also due to the immense distances on the Tibetan Plateau and the difficulty of movement over high mountain divides and barren valleys and gorges filled with whitewater. Their sense of being was rooted in family, village, tribe, and region. Nation came a distant last. Embodying spiritual and secular authority, the Dalai Lama is the main unifying force of Tibetan identity. (Roberts, 2009: 230)

Another important aspect of Buddhism impact on Tibetan society is the practice of monasticism. Monasticism was, and still is, fundamental to Tibetan social and political life. Figures suggest that in 1733 there were over 300,000 monks, and that by 1950 this had risen to 600,000. The Tibetan refugee population in 1992 was around 100,000, of which 23 per cent were monks and nuns (Ardley, 2002: 16). Such an emphasis on a mass monastic population is peculiar to Tibetan Buddhism. Monks enjoyed a special status within Tibetan society because the monasteries were treated as semi-autonomous units, with control over internal discipline. Despite this relative independence the monastic community was nevertheless directly involved in the political life of Tibet.

The *Gelug* tradition held that 'since the Tibetan state was first and foremost the supporter and patron of religion, the needs of religion should take primacy' (Goldstein 1989: 21). Thus they often intervened in government affairs when it was felt that the government was not acting in the monks' best interests. This intervention was, however, mostly limited to Sera, Drepung and Ganden monasteries, the three monastic universities in the Lhasa Valley.

During the nineteenth century, the 'Three Seats' (*densa sum*), as the three monasteries are collectively known, gained ascendancy in the political administration. It is claimed that the Three Seats opposed 'any innovation which seemed to threaten their particular religious interests' (Snellgrove and Richardson 1986: 230). The interesting question is how these monasteries were able to exert such power over the Tibetan government. Their greatest advantage was numbers: between them, the Three Seats in 1951 contained from 16,500 (official figures) to 22,000 monks.

A peculiarity of the monastic system in Tibet was the *dobdob*, or fighting monk. The *dobdob*s were in effect a monastic police force, with access to the guns and ammunition that monasteries typically held. As many as 10 to 15 per cent of the monks of the Three Seats were *dobdob*s, and as such they dwarfed the actual Tibetan army. Goldstein argues that the *dobdob*s 'traditionally afforded the three monasteries tremendous coercive leverage vis-à-vis the government' (1989: 26). As well as forming a monastic police force, the *dobdob*s also acted as bodyguards, escorts or treasurers.

Even though many aspects of monastic life in Tibet are no longer followed, its impact on Tibetan political and social life in exile is still relevant. Many monasteries were established in India, Nepal and Bhutan after the exile. The monks from the five school of Tibetan Buddhism (Gelug, Kagyu, Sakya, Nyingma and Bon) have seats reserved for them in the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Unlike the lay Tibetans the monks have two votes each, one for electing their religious representative and the other for electing a regional representative.

Because of a close link between Tibetan nationalism and religion, most Tibetan national symbols are related to Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan national symbols appear in every Tibetan settlement in the form of colourful prayer flags, pictures of the Dalai Lama, prayer wheels, monasteries and altars. The religious practice is still an essential part of every exile Tibetan's
life. The ceremonial calendar in exile Tibet starts with a three-day celebration of the Tibetan New Year at the end of February or the beginning of March, which is highlighted by a CTA-organized celebration. During the celebration, all CTA offices and Tibetan shops are closed. The lunar cycle, which also determines the dates of the Tibetan New Year, is still in use among exile Tibetans, despite the current Gregorian calendar in India. While the secular events are dated after the host's Gregorian calendar, the numerous religious celebrations are determined by the traditional Tibetan lunar calendar—a practice that refers to the traditional Tibetan context and therefore bridges Tibetan past and exile present.

The New Year celebrations are followed by a national commemoration of the Tibetan Uprising on 10 March, 1959 in Lhasa. The official commemoration takes place in

Dharamsala, while similar celebrations on a smaller scale are organized in all exile Tibetan communities worldwide. The Uprising represents the beginning of Tibetan exilehood and therefore 10 March portrays a central rite of exile Tibetan's patriotism and honours emotionally the Tibetan people's revolt in Lhasa.

In the Tibetan ceremonial calendar the annual birthday celebration of the 14th Dalai Lama is on 6 July. It is celebrated by all Tibetans and their worldwide Western supporters and, in this regard, links the Tibetan nation with the international community. This illustrates the importance of the international community to participate actively in exile Tibetan ceremonies to promote the exile Tibetan struggle (Roemer: 2008: 141). The event is followed by Tibetan Democracy Day on 2 September, the day when the first assembly was founded in 1960. The date is officially celebrated with a central ceremony in Dharamsala organized by the CTA. In the center of this celebration are speeches by the 14th Dalai Lama where he usually stresses the progress of the exile Tibetan struggle and the topic of democratization in the exile Tibetan community.

In addition to these national symbols and ceremonies, there is a dress code for Tibetan officials at all exile Tibetan national holidays. They are obliged to wear the national dress (chupa), since 2005, without fur of wild animals, while the ATPD members are dressed according to customs of their represented Tibetan region or religious sect.

The Lhasa dialect served as the basis of shared refugee language, a regimental banner devised in the 1920s by a wandering Japanese man (which had been displayed at the Asian Relations Conference in 1947), featuring red and blue stripes and a pair of snow lions, became the Tibetan national flag; a song written by the Dalai Lama's tutor Trijang Rinpoche was adopted as Tibet's national anthem; the Dalai Lama's birthday became a day of popular celebration; and an invocation used at the new festival of *Losar*, *'tashi delek'* or 'good luck', was promoted as a favoured Tibetan greeting (French P. 2003: 14,15). The desire for reconstructing a religious culture in exile goes hand in hand with the desire for a secular nationalism. Organizations like TYC, TWA and TIPA attempt to perpetuate aspects of traditional Tibetan culture and also to create a new Tibetan culture.

This section has given us an idea of how important Tibetan Buddhism is to the Tibetan society and had played a major role in shaping a unique identity for the Tibetans in exile. The next section will show how identity has been created in exile to homogenize various other identities that exist in the Tibetan society.

1.4 Constructing Tibetan Identity

This section will show how in exile, the dislocated Tibetans are not simply rebuilding what once existed in Tibet but also creating new ones. In the process, the idea of Tibet as a nation has changed and had greatly influenced the emergence of a homogenized identity that begins to value nationalism while in exile. The old Tibet has been forsaken and instead a new Tibet is being invented in exile.

Ernest Gellner (1964: 64 and 1983: 55) made this point in his theory of imagined communities. He stated, "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist". In exile, the Tibetans are attempting to construct a nation relying on a common identity based on a shared history, language, culture and goals. This initiative is taken up by the state, which is considered to be in control of centralized institutions that make and enforce laws, exerting authority over a particular geographical authority and the people who live there.

In exile, nation-state building occurs without the one condition that has been crucially fundamental in nationalist ideologies, i.e. territory. Yet territory is not completely absent, since nation-building programmes in the diaspora continually centre on the idea of territory and the vision of return. Edward Said has underlined the crucial link between exile and nationalism:

> Nationalism is an assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a heritage. It affirms the home created by a community of languge, culture and customs; and, by so doing, it fends of exile, fights to prevent its ravages. Indeed, the interplay between nationalism and exile is like Hegel's dialectic of servant and master, opposites informing and constituting each of other. All nationalism in their early stages develop from a condition of estrangement. (Said 2000: 176)

Gramsci had argued that the state as government works through coercion or threat but still requires consent in order to rule (Gramsci 1971: 263). Abrams (1988: 76) calls Gramsci's notion of hegemony as an "exercise in legitimation" in which people within the governed territory must consent to the hegemony of the state. For the Tibetans in exile, the Central Tibetan Administration may not have the geographical authority but it possess legitimacy as the continuation of the old government in Tibet along with the charismatic authority of the Dalai Lama, and is capable of constructing a nation based on a common identity.

In the exile Tibetan community, there is an inherent problem of factionalism and division based on region, religion and language. For the community to survive, the CTA first had to establish its legitimacy and then start the process of trying to unify the community. Benedict Anderson defines nation as:

> …an imagined political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (Anderson, 1983: 6)

The imagining of a Tibetan national community, then, is not only a process of remembering but of creating. Friedman supported Anderson's theory when he added, "All identity is expressed in a type of historical process . . . a deeply context-bound process in which the real continuities are present in the form of identities that are constructed in relation to people's immediate conditions and everyday existences (Friedman, 1992: 841). The motivation driving this process, Friedman explained further, is derived from the specific social world the subjects inhabit at the time they are constructing their self-identity.

It is necessary for exiled Tibetans to present their national identity according to their present, displaced situation. In order to regain their homeland, they must produce a history of a united, vibrantly sovereign Tibetan people. The refugees' children, born in India, have never lived in or intimately known Tibet. Yet, to make their parents' status meaningful—as well as their own lives in the Tibetan settlements of India, the children have to carry on their parents' cultural heritage, their parents' intimacy with Tibet as their homeland. The children receive and must accept an account of Tibet as a birthright the Chinese have

imperialistically taken. Therefore, they maintain their connection to a land they otherwise would not know or find emotionally relevant to their immediate environment.

When Tibetan refugees invoke 'traditions' within their lives, strategies of Tibetan nationalism emerged that exist with practices on the ground. Hobsbawm (1983: 4) argues that traditions provide a necessary link to, and an understanding of, history; they are 'a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past'. Tibetan traditions instill a collective sensibility and an accessible, uniform definition of Tibetan identity. Movement into exile forces the reinvention of traditions. Some of these traditions witness subtle transformations while others are consciously reconstructed for their political utility.

Life in exile not only reinterprets the meaning of some traditions, but it also establishes entirely new ones as well, This new tradition, despite creation in exile, holds significant importance; it defines Tibetan culture in opposition to that of the occupiers. Such tactics of resistance to colonial exploitation underpin the hegemonic discourse of Tibetan nationalism.

Nationalism flattens identities in the name of unity, to the extent that Tibetans (who varied by class, age, sex, marital status, etc.) often rehearsed the rhetoric of a singular Tibetan identity, comprised of language, religion and cultural expressions. The nationalist project even tends to submerge previously important regional and religious sectarian affiliations. Prior to 1950 and the exodus into exile, regional identities served as the important basis for individual definition. Similarly, Tibetans used to identify with the Nyingma, Kargyu, Sakya, Gelug or Bon[7] religious sect. The exterior threat of cultural extermination forces Tibetans in exile to re-imagine themselves as united and pan-Buddhist, which paves over Tibet's fractious religious and regional past. Chinese colonization caused exile, thus fostering the process of creating absolute belonging through the narratives of transnational nationalism and nation building in the Tibetan diaspora.

[7] Bon is a remnant of the shamanistic religion that prevailed in Tibet prior to the promulgation of Buddhism. Now, Bons are categorized as Tibetans, and consequently Buddhists by association, as pan-Tibetan Buddhism is the diasporic norm.

Popular expressions of Tibetan identity rely on religious symbolism. Tibetan refugee elites reinterpret these idioms in their own terms while redefining Tibetan identity and culture for the outside world and for refugee themselves. The Tibetans exert their identity in three ways: 1) Tibetans (*bod pa*), 2) Chinese (*rgya mi*) and 3) Western world (*ing ji*). An ethnic/national identity creates a boundary, an "us" and "them," separating and protecting a group's interests based on the sentiment of common heritage which sets it apart from others. In the movement for a free Tibet, the assertion of a unified Tibetan ethnicity is at the same time a nationalist claim. It is an appeal to the past, claiming Tibet as their homeland.

Tibetan ethnicity, or Tibet as a nationalistic, ideological homeland, is a socially constructed identity that came after Tibet came under China's strict assimilationist policy. The threat of assimilation is what spurred the nationalist movement, and the need for the identification and classification as Tibetan. As nomads, the indigenous populations of these three regions (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo) maintained markedly isolated and scattered centers of population.

Contemporary representations of the Tibetan nation leave ambiguous the national place of regions and districts beyond Lhasa. The demand for a greater Tibet is rooted in the politics of displacement. In order to maintain the unity of the exile community, the exile administration developed the idea of a giant, theoretical Tibet. In the early 1960s, after the mass exodus of Tibetans refugees to India, Nepal and Bhutan, it became necessary to develop a pan-Tibetan identity. Its focus was the idea of '*Po Cholkha Sum',* the unity of the historic regions of ethnic Tibet: Amdo, Kham and U-Tsang.

People who had previously identified themselves with a particular region now became consciously Tibetan. A sense of Tibetan nationhood was created deliberately, in exile. Those with a deeper historical consciousness would go on to explain the shifts over time in the number and composition of regions understood to compose Tibet. Despite popular understanding of these regions as constitutive of Tibet, exile discourses of the nation downplay rather than celebrate regional diversity in their focus on Tibetan histories and identities centered on Lhasa and central Tibet.

This section analyzed the creation of new identities in exile to cultivate an idea of Tibet as a nation. In the process, the idea of Tibet as a nation has changed and had greatly influenced the emergence of a homogenized identity that begins to value nationalism while in exile. The next section will show how Tibetans culture as a tool to engage socially. This has allowed the Tibetans exiled in different countries and those in Tibet to collaborate and communicate and at the same time serve as a symbol for national alignment.

1.5 Constructing Tibetan Culture

In India, the exiled Tibetan government emphasizes a united Tibetan identity. Rhetorically, they claim their unity upon cultural terms. More appropriately, this union is conceptually ethnic and not cultural. Maintaining this distinction between ethnic and cultural identities does not suggest that they exist independent and mutually exclusive of one another. Moreover, the distinction becomes significant in the case of a diasporic, dispersed population that seeks to maintain a sense of belonging and singularity among its members, particularly as the group spreads across multiple lands and borders.

Culture is that which enables a people of a specific locality to engage socially. It enables collaborative living that is only possible if a group shares similar meanings within their symbolic world. Tibetans are a global group and in every land in which Tibetans live, they are an ethnic minority, including Tibet, which now hosts more Chinese than ethnic Tibetans. Tibetans who remained in Tibet have incorporated elements of Chinese culture as the two groups have had to negotiate a system of understanding that would allow them to interact and live together.

Likewise, those living and born in India negotiate and integrate a range of elements from the myriad Indian cultures among which they live in settlements across the subcontinent. Tibetan religious identity finds an elevated expression in the Indian topography through its places of worship, common gods, goddesses and certain rituals. This symbiosis prevents a Tibetan from feeling completely alienated in India. In other words, a Tibetan in India does

not feel entirely displaced, rootless or disoriented as is common with many other diasporic communities.

The Indian government's patronage to the promotion of Tibetan culture and religion could be seen in terms of a patron fulfilling his duties. A case in point is the government sponsored Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (a deemed university) at Varanasi, India. This institute not only allows the exile community to gain a form of traditional higher learning but encourages Indian students to achieve mastery in Buddhism and Tibetan studies in order to comprehend the extended domain of pan-Indian culture of the past (Misra, 2003: 201).

Culturally, they are not united. Their strong association with Tibet as their homeland, however, with a common shared ancestry, does unite them—they are ethnically and nationally Tibetan. It is a common human experience to associate culture with place, to root it in a homeland. Though we take this rooting to be real, it is a practical impossibility. Culture can never remain fixed or be preserved in a single place much less as it is spread throughout the Tibetan diaspora. By Clifford Geertz's definition, culture is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (1973: 89).

Culture is simply that which makes social living possible. It is fundamentally connected to place but never fixed to it. Culture enables the people of a particular place a symbolic means of collaboration. As such, it must remain perpetually responsive and flexible, malleable to those for whom it provides a world view imbued with meaning. Culture cannot be treated as if it were a material object to be captured and preserved.

Cultural preservation carries more rhetoric than practicality, though it does serve as a powerful symbol of national alignment—as many Tibetans may agree. In exile, not only the political but the cultural identity of Tibetans is regulated by the host or patron. This inevitably raises the question of whether such a relationship involves assimilation and

acculturation of one by the other. In their exile, Tibetans have positively responded to limited acculturation and at the same time self-consciously resisted complete assimilation.

A few examples will testify to the above argument. Although primary education in India is secular and free, ordinary Tibetans have always preferred a distinct Tibetan education for their children. Similarly, they have refrained from inter-marriage with non-Tibetans. They also remain committed to their spoken language and food habits. These measures have obviously continued to feed feelings of national solidarity, helped promote a sense of nationalism and allowed them to remain as a distinct ethnic community in exile. Yet burdens of material existence have also demanded some assimilation. For example, those in the tourist industry and restaurant business have a greater degree of interaction with locals and are therefore attuned to local customs and ways of life. (Misra, 2003: 201)

The political project of freeing Tibet is an unambiguous collective goal. Essentialized categories of language, culture, religious affiliation and even race provide ready building blocks and templates for this objective. Such homogeneous descriptions of culture and identity do not necessarily correlate, however, with the attributes of actual Tibetan refugee life. On the ground, Tibetans put into practice individual performances of identity that may disrupt tidy, stereotyped scripts and remake the collective Tibetanness conditioned by forces of nationalism and nation building.

Maintaining and recreating a Tibetan identity in exile involves a self-conscious display of Tibetan Buddhist religion and an organized construction of Tibetan culture. Publicly enacted religious expressions enhance feelings of a common purpose within the Tibetan community. Contained within secular institutions, religious expressions become the objects of Tibetan culture which represent Tibetan identity to the outside world.

Within the boundary of Tibetan identity, there exists, therefore, the possibility for significant cultural variation. The exiled Tibetans' efforts to preserve their constructed and reorganized identity has created a standardized, fixed idea of what it is to be Tibetan, outside of Tibet, safely preserved from the grasp of China. This identity is an ethnic boundary that is taught to

Tibetan youth who are raised as displaced refugees. Culturally, however, these youth develop different identities as they are raised in an environment different from their parents and different from one another.

There are over fifty settlements in South Asia with others in Europe and North America. Reconstituting community in a time of national trauma within new and scattered locales is no easy task, yet the Tibetan diaspora has worked hard to create a coherent refugee community. The result is a homogenized "Tibetan refugee" identity produced at the expense of regional or religious affiliations. Tibetan Buddhism, therefore, exemplified for Tibetans the value and worth of their culture and way of life and the essence of their national identity. It is what they felt made their society unique and without equal.

The presentations of exile Tibetan culture which is exclusively focused on Dharamsala has the tendency to reify the story of exile primarily constructed by Tibetan administrators, intellectuals, lamas and cultural performers who are conversant with, and eager to engage in, debates about the construction of Tibetan culture on terms set by Western audiences. Tibetan traditions instill a collective sensibility and an accessible, uniform definition of Tibetan identity. Movement into exile forces the reinvention of traditions. Some of these traditions witness subtle transformations while others are consciously reconstructed for their political utility. Through their position of authority, the Dalai Lama and the government-in-exile become primary authors of these reworkings. The process of democratization may be making positive advances in exile but the lack of reliable communication with Tibet means that those at home are largely oblivious to the situation taking place in exile.

1.6 Problems with Pan-Tibetan Identity

Identity is a problem within the community in exile. Tibetans-in-exile appear to be a homogeneous lot with their unshakeable allegiance to one single authority. Yet, the history of Tibetan diasporic nationalism has witnessed an abundance of intrigue, in-fighting and violent conflict. Pan-Tibetanism does not really exist and the range of sects of Tibetan Buddhism, variations of the language, styles of dress and, importantly, versions of recent history, are not consistent throughout the exile community.

The desire for separation on the part of various sectarian groups was very potent during the early years of their exile. Though ideally Tibetans believe in themselves as one people with the single goal of freeing their homeland from oppression, the reality is that they are from a diffuse range of backgrounds. The diaspora has been applauded for maintaining a peaceful and unified existence but it bears emphasis that they are not without social problems and there are already significant strains on the ideas of unity and non-violence (Denis J. Burke, 2008: 81). The CTA does its best to instill a sense of common ground amongst the refugees but this leads to a lack of recognition of significant differences.

The history of Tibetan independence movement is not uniform. This is due to the western acceptance of Tibetan movement as non-violent and peaceful. One example is the lack of historical recognition of the Khampa uprising, the most significant resistance to the Chinese invasion, or the Chushi Gangdrug resistance army,[8] probably due to the Dalai Lama's policy of non-violence. Carole McGranahan (2005) has recently argued that the current representational climate in the Tibetan diaspora has led to what she calls "arrested histories" of Khampa resistance against the Chinese invasion of Tibet. Both inside and outside of the Tibetan community, stories of the resistance army are almost exclusively limited to narratives of Cold War intrigue.

A deeper, more nuanced consideration of the resistance reveals that unofficial bans on telling this history are as much or more about issues of internal difference and national dissent in the exile Tibetan community as they are about Cold War secrets between governments. As a result, stories of the Tibetan resistance hover about the edges of the

[8] Tibetans from Kham (called "Khampas") decided to join forces with other Tibetans to create an all-volunteer army independent of the Tibetan government.. In 1958, they officially formed the Chushi Gangdrug army headed by Khampa trader Andrug Gompo Tashi. The Chushi Gangdrug resistance army fought against Chinese troops until 1974. Since then, it has operated as a political and social welfare organization in the exile community. The Tibetan government in Lhasa covertly supported the resistance during the 1950s, as did the exile government until 1974. Other governments also gave aid: India provided training and funds and created Tibetan military units within its own forces; Nepal allowed the resistance to use the Nepali territory of Mustang (a semi-independent Tibetan kingdom within Nepal's borders) as a base for operations in Tibet from 1961 to 1974; and the United States provided training, funding, and logistical support through the CIA. Although the resistance was no match for the PLA, they did register some victories, the most important of which was escorting the Dalai Lama on his escape to India in 1959.

recent past but do not enter the mainstream of exile Tibetan history in either popular or governmental narratives. The production—or not—of a history of the resistance is directly linked to the creation and re-creation of certain types of national community and to a practice McGranahan (2005: 571) call "historical arrest."

Historical arrest is the apprehension and detaining of particular pasts in anticipation of their eventual release. As such, arrested histories are not so much erased or forgotten as they are postponed and archived for future use. In the case of the Tibetan resistance, what is acknowledged to have happened, as well as what lies below the surface, remains mired in the controversial murk of historical memory, government secrets, and the politics of community in exile. McGranahan defines historical arrest as "a practice in which pasts that clash with official ways of explaining nation, community and identity are arrested" (2005: 571). She argues that the halting of such histories in the present to be told at another time is a conscious, albeit not always explicitly marked act. McGranahan relates the arrest of Tibetan resistance histories to fear when she writes that:

> This practice is directed specifically at histories that challenge dominant versions of the nation. These challenges trigger fear in individual and collective registers, as well as in karmic, social, and political ones: fears that Tibet will not be regained, that the diasporic community will splinter, harm will come to the Dalai Lama or Tibet, one might be excommunicated from the community or given a "bad name," or harmful actions in this life [...] will negatively affect one's next life. The social and political limits encouraged by such fears work on renegade pasts in tandem with "delayed" time. (McGranahan 2005: 576)

For Chushi Gangdrug veterans, the failure of the resistance to regain Tibet does not diminish its historical importance. Many consider the resistance a key part of recent Tibetan history, viewing their own participation as a defining experience in their lives that should earn them social recognition for their role in that history. In their estimation, the resistance has national importance for defending Tibet against the Chinese and for protecting his holiness the Dalai Lama during his escape. As they tell it, their armed defense of the nation is not counter to the policies of the Dalai Lama but an example of a state of exception in which nonviolence was but one component of the necessary response. Although the Tibetan farmers, monks, nomads, and traders who composed the Tibetan resistance tell different and multiple stories

of this past, they do so in ways that are caught between local cultural practices, the conditions of exile, and international networks of politics and meaning structured around the nation-state.

The state-like Central Tibetan Administration of the Dalai Lama relocates and refunctions memory in the creation of "official history" while arresting "potentially disruptive histories" through social sanctions such as censure and excommunication. Ultimately, the practice is part of the creation of a homogenized "Tibetan refugee" identity which stresses a non-violent Buddhist ethos, in spite of existing regional affiliations such as the Khampa identity with its war-like ethos (Lau, 2009: 86).

Another concern over the homogeneity of Tibetan Buddhism and the contest over political power in exile is exemplified by the Shugden sect dispute. An uneasy lull now pervades the Tibetan community with regard to the worship of a controversial deity Gyel-chen Dor-je Shugden. In the past, followers of this deity enjoyed considerable socio-economic power in Tibet. In recent years, however, in order to create a solid political base in exile, the Dalai Lama has banned the sect and instead courted several other sects within Tibetan Buddhism that are opposed to Shugden's followers (Misra, 2003: 192). In the process, the traditional supremacy that the Shugden sect enjoyed has been undermined. Its followers nonetheless have come to articulate their identity, which is, in effect, a challenge to the absolute authority of the Dalai Lama.

However in 1976 the Dalai Lama announced he was advising against the practice because it was promoting sectarianism, which could potentially damage the Tibetan independence movement. Twenty years later, in 1996, the Dalai Lama went further and announced that members of both government departments and monasteries under the control of the Tibetan exile administration were forbidden from worshipping the spirit because the 'practice fosters religious intolerance and leads to the degeneration of Buddhism into a cult of spirit worship'.

This official prohibition led to religious tensions within the exile Tibetan community which culminated in the killing of a highly respected 70-year-old Tibetan monk teacher and scholar and two of his students in 1997 by Tibetan supporters of Shugdhen practice (Roemer, 2008: 97). Recently when there was a report on the threat to life of the Dalai Lama, fingers were pointed to this sect.[9] The CTA accused the Chinese intelligence agencies of plotting the assassination by using members of the Shugden sect.

The opponents of the ban claimed that the Dalai Lama was restricting religious freedom, applied for Indian citizenship and renounced the spiritual leadership of the 14th Dalai Lama. Even though the criticisms received extensive press coverage, they were only marginal and did not touch the position of the Dalai Lama; the incident exemplarily illustrates the complex involvement of Tibetan politics and religion.

Although all sects within the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon owe their allegiance to the Dalai Lama, some nonetheless enjoyed both limited temporal and spiritual autonomy in the past. The Karma Kagyupas led by the 16th Karmapa, were not entirely in consonance with the Gelugpa order of the Dalai Lama. Similarly, the Nyingmpas, a decentralized order, have from time to time expressed their relative discomfort with the authority of the Dalai Lama's office.[10] While the Tibetan Buddhist Gelugpa sect has been in power since the seventeenth century, which has continued its religious and political supremacy in the exile context, the other remaining Tibetan Buddhist sects, members of the Bon religion and the exile Tibetan Muslims are minor in their authority to decide anything at the high political level. They have built their own monasteries and formed their own communities.

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[9] This threat was widely highlighted in national and international news report during the month of May, 2012. Two of the links are given here.
Kumar, Nareash. "Tibetan govt fears threat to Dalai Lama's life", Hindustan Times", May 20, 2012, http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/Uttarakhand/Tibetan-govt-fears-threat-to-Dalai-Lama-s-life/Article1-858720.aspx.

PTI, "Threats to the Dalai Lama's life being taken seriously: Tibetan govts", Daily News and Analyses, May 20, 2012, http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_threats-to-the-dalai-lama-s-life-being-taken-seriously-tibetan-govts_1691449

Prior to the Chinese occupation, the Dalai Lama enjoyed rather restricted temporal power confined to central Tibet. The rest of Tibet, was under the control of various monasteries, sects, lamas and their orders. In their exile in India and Nepal, these orders have established their own separate monasteries and communes. Monasteries were constructed in India. These monasteries are vital institutions of the exile community, but their role in society has undergone important changes. For example, monastic institutions are no longer the sole keepers of the sacred scriptures and the mainstay of Tibetan medicine, astrology and art. Through a range of new secular institutions, Tibetan culture and identity is defined and standardized. Tibetan textbooks and teachers likewise transmit a curriculum of 'Tibetanness'.

In this chapter we have found out how Tibetan Buddhism had shaped Tibetan identity and nationalism. In the name of preservation and tradition, notions of the 'Tibetan' are being formed and transformed. Reconstituting community in a time of national trauma within new and scattered locales is no easy task, yet the Tibetan diaspora has worked hard to create a coherent refugee community. The result is a homogenized "Tibetan refugee" identity produced at the expense of regional or religious affiliations. Such flattenings of identity or ethnicity are global phenomena generated in part by post–World War II conditions. This approach could be called uniformity for the sake of unity and, though the circumstances are admittedly difficult, such attempts to silence history and ignore regionalism will most likely only cause these issues to further promote discord. Although dislocation does force a new shared refugee identity on Tibetans, this identity does not always trump the power of "local, tribal, and sectarian identities" that have long played "a divisive role in the Tibetan world, [and yet also] presuppose, and so in some aspects also maintain, the very fabric of that world" (Kapstein 1998:145).

This chapter also shows the genesis of current Tibetan diasporic nationalism, which finds root in resisting Chinese colonialism and, as a result, incites a strong transnational account of Tibetan belonging. The Dalai Lama, in concert with institutions that he helped create, sustains these narratives of solidarity. Exiles hear from him that they are unified and thus create ways of being so. Change is generally under-communicated or ignored by exile

administrators, whereas continuity and the preservation of Tibetan culture are recurring themes.

The next chapter will explore the institution of the Dalai Lama as a spiritual and political head of the Tibetans and its role in the transformation of the Central Tibetan Administration. It will look into the drastic change happening in the political system of the Tibetans in exile with the devolution of temporal power of the Dalai Lama and analyze the future of this institution.

Chapter Two

The Institution of Dalai Lama: Dual System of Religion and Politics

This chapter will explore institution of the Dalai Lama as a spiritual and political head of the Tibetans and its role in the transformation of the Central Tibetan Administration, seen as the direct continuation of the Tibetan Government of the Dalai Lama at Lhasa. When he came into exile he faced two daunting task. Firstly he had to stake claim as a legitimate successor of the government in Tibet by establishing a government in exile to further the movement for free Tibet. On the other he had to rehabilitate the Tibetans who had followed him in exile. He removed all the different religious and regional identities that had existed in Tibet and try to build a common identity in exile. This chapter will emphasize on the 14th Dalai Lama and how the functioning and political legitimation of the CTA as Tibetan government-in-exile is determined by the institution of the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama experimented with various institutions in the process of transforming the CTA. His experimentation was based on the basic foundation of democracy. The CTA is the only capable institution that could homogenize Tibetan identity and keep alive the national identity. The Dalai Lama and the CTA manage to garner sympathies and supports for a return to Tibet. Another important area of focus in this chapter is the devolution of political power by Dalai Lama. This momentous step has brought question to the continuation of the institution of Dalai Lama, line of succession and its impact on the process of democratization of CTA.

The next section will show the evolution of a lama from a simple head of Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism to an entity called the Dalai Lama, which will rule the whole of Tibet as a spiritual and temporal head.

2.1 Dalai Lamas: Emergence of a Power Center in Tibet

This section will stress on the emergence of the Dalai Lama as a new line of power in the Tibetan political system out of the chaotic political situation. The Dalai Lama is the head

of the dominant school of Tibetan Buddhism, the Gelugpa. From 1642 to 1959, the Dalai Lama was the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet. Until the Chinese takeover in 1959, the Dalai Lamas resided in Potala Palace in Lhasa in the winter and in the Norbulingka residence during summer. The current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the 14th in a line of succession that began with Gendun Drub (1391–1475), founder and abbot of Tashilhunpo monastery (central Tibet). He and his successors came to be regarded as reincarnations (***tulkus***) of the bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteshvara.

At first the Dalai Lamas were acknowledged as higher incarnations (*tulku*) of lamas from the Drepung monastery of the Gelugpa school of Buddhism. Tsongkhapa, the founder of this branch of Buddhism, died in 1419. The Regent[1] Gongma Drakpa Gyaltsen took over the reign of Tibet which brought relative peace and stability. After his death in 1432, the political system collapsed and a series of small-scale internal Tibetan wars ensued lasting for about one hundred years. The main conflict was between the governor of the Tsang province, an advocate of Gelugpa school and the governor of U province, an advocate of Karmapa school. The conflict created power struggles between the respective monasteries of the two school. This pattern is characteristic of Tibet's history, which is mired in the power struggles between regions, clans and religious schools or sects.

Through these circumstances, a new centre of power, the line of Dalai Lamas, began to develop. That the Gelugpa school was able to gain political advantage under the direction of the Dalai Lama was the result of the chaotic political situation in the central Tibetan provinces of Tsang and U, and the Mongol Khan's interest in supporting the Gelugpa school.

In 1577, Sonam Gyatso was invited by Altan Khan, the ruler of Tumed Mongols, to his court to take on the role of teacher and to revive the old relationship of patron and teacher between Mongols and Tibetans. As the abbot of Drepung monastery, Sonam Gyatso was a renowned scholar and wields great political influence. The Gelugpa school was badly shaken by the internal conflicts and the decline of their patrons, the Phangmo

[1] The Regents represented the highest political authority in Tibet between the death of a Dalai Lama and the time the next one came of age. During those times, the actual political power was in the hands of the Regents, although the degree of their authority varied greatly from region to region.

rulers. With the invitation Sonam Gyatso had hoped to gain the much needed military support of the Mongols.

Sonam Gyatso reached the Mongolian nomad camp in the summer of 1578 and was welcomed with great festivity by a delegation of the Khan. He instructed the Khan and his people on Buddhism and converted them. Thereupon, Altan Khan exempted the Buddhist monasteries from paying taxes and the monks from military service, and bestowed upon Sonam Gyatso the honorific title of Dalai Lama[2] as well as the title of Dorje Chang (Holder of the Diamond Sceptre). In return, Sonam Gyatso granted Altan Khan the title of religious King, Brahma of the Gods (Bruck, 2003: 25). The predecessors of Sonam Gyatso, Gedun Drub (1391-1475) and Gedun Gyatso (1475-1542) were posthumously awarded the titles of the first and second Dalai Lama respectively. The Tibetans themselves call the Dalai Lama Gyawa Rinpoche ("Precious Conqueror"), Yeshin Norbu ("Wish-fulfilling Gem"), or simply Kundun ("The Presence").

The 4th Dalai Lama, Yonten Gyatso (1589–1617), was a great-grandson of Altan Khan and the only non-Tibetan Dalai Lama. It was the 5th Dalai Lama, Ngawang Losang Gyatso (1617-1682), established, with the military assistance of the Khoshut Mongols, the supremacy of the Gelugpa sect over rival orders for the temporal rule of Tibet. He was able to centralise and use his political and religious power after a long struggle delineated by a clearly calculated political strategy. This consolidation led to a relatively stable period of cultural and economic growth. He is commonly called the Great Fifth. During his reign the majestic winter palace of the Dalai Lamas, the Potala, was built in Lhasa.

The 6th Dalai Lama, Jamyang Gyatso (1683–1706), was a libertine and a writer of romantic verse, not well-suited to his position. He was deposed by the Mongols and died while being taken to China under military escort. The seventh Dalai Lama, Kelsang Gyatso (1708–57), experienced civil war and the establishment of Chinese Manchu suzerainty over Tibet. The eighth, Jampel Gyatso (1758–1804), saw his country invaded by Gurkha troops from Nepal but defeated them with the aid of Chinese forces.

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[2] The original word used was ***ta-le a***nglicized as "dalai". ***Ta-le*** is the Mongolian equivalent of the Tibetan ***rgya-mtsho***, meaning "ocean,".

For two centuries following the death of the 5th Dalai Lama, the next four Dalai Lamas all died young and were weak rulers, caught between the interest groups of the dominant and influential monasteries, the Tibetan nobility and the increasingly potent interests of the imperial Chinese regime. During this time, the country was ruled by regents; and other secular and lay officials. The regents were Lungtog Gyatso (1806–15), Tsultrim Gyatso (1816–37), Kedrub Gyatso (1838–56), and Trinle Gyatso (1856–75). The Thirteenth Dalai Lama reversed the trend of regent's rule and ruled from 1895 to 1933, during which time he exercised considerable power.

The 13th Dalai Lama, Tubten Gyatso (1875–1933), ruled with great personal authority. The successful revolt within China against its ruling Manchu dynasty in 1912 gave the Tibetans the opportunity to dispel the disunited Chinese troops, and the Dalai Lama reigned as head of a sovereign state. He introduced electricity and cars into Tibet in the early twentieth century. Significantly he is known as the 'Great Thirteenth', mainly because he was able to distance Tibet from Chinese influence. His ability to remove the Chinese from Tibet was due to unexpected circumstances: the 1911 Chinese republican revolution. Smith argues that 'had the Ching dynasty not . . . fallen, Tibet would very likely have been incorporated within the Chinese state' (Smith, 1996: 45). China's internal turmoil at the beginning of the twentieth century enabled the Tibetans then to assert their independence; conditions have not been so favourable to the present generation.

The 14th in the line of Dalai Lamas, Tenzin Gyatso, was born Lhamo Thondup in 1935 in China of Tibetan parentage. He was recognized as the incarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama in 1937, enthroned in 1940, and vested with full powers as head of state in 1950. He fled to exile in India in 1959, the year of the Tibetan people's unsuccessful revolt against communist Chinese forces that had occupied the country since 1950. The Dalai Lama set up a government-in-exile in Dharmsala, India (known as "Little Lhasa"), in the Himalayan Mountains. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in recognition of his nonviolent campaign to end Chinese domination of Tibet. He has written a number of books on Tibetan Buddhism and an autobiography[3].

[3] http://www.dalailama.com/biography/the-dalai-lamas

2.2 The 14th Dalai Lama

This section will focus on the position and role of the 14th Dalai Lama. He assumed power at a young age due to threat of Chinese invasion. When the invasion happened in 1959 he escaped to India with his followers. There he set up the Central Tibetan Administration as a continuation of his government in Lhasa. Over a period of time he had brought in changes to the political system in exile and at the same time reduces his role in the government. Most of the discussion here will be centred on the events after exile.

The 14th Dalai Lama is the executive and religious head of the Tibetan government-in-exile. A reincarnation of Avolokiteshvara, he is the bodhisattva ("enlightened being") of compassion, and as a religious leader he commands supreme allegiance. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his search for a non-violent solution to the Sino-Tibetan issue. With an international platform, the Dalai Lama was able to make official changes to CTA policy heard around the world, as was the case when he delivered the Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet to the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus on September 21, 1987 and the Strasbourg Proposal to members of the European Parliament on June 15, 1988. The 14th Dalai Lama has served as the greatest advocate of the Tibetan cause, bringing it to the international stage.

A Dalai Lama would generally assume power at the age of eighteen, although he would have been discovered and declared the holder of the lineage while a small child. The present Dalai Lama assumed power earlier than usual, at fifteen, in an attempt to take some political control during the Chinese invasion. The position of the Dalai Lama was for life. Theoretically his power was absolute, although he was bound by certain customs and was heavily influenced by other monks and lamas. In reality, however, many of the Dalai Lamas tended to leave secular affairs to their prime ministers.

Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th and present Dalai Lama, is a great admirer of his predecessor, Thupten Gyatso. There are many similarities between the two. Both were forced into

exile by foreign invaders[4], and both expressed an unusual – for Tibet – interest in modern technology. A further similarity between the two is their dislike of the protocol that surrounded Tibetan politics: the 13th Dalai Lama abolished procedures regarding the presence of servants, and the 14th Dalai Lama reduced protocol once he was in exile, as he felt it tended to separate him from the Tibetan people. As well as their wish for political modernisation, their pragmatism in the face and threat of foreign aggression is also similar. The 13th attempted to reform the Tibetan army as he feared Chinese invasion, and the 14th's stance on non-violence is, to him, the most effective position to take against the Chinese.

The 14th Dalai Lam's most recent stance on local autonomy for Tibet rather than full independence can be interpreted as pragmatic, given the steadfast determination of Beijing to precondition negotiations with a demand that the Dalai Lama shall not seek independence for Tibet. This is despite the fact that the Dalai Lama's position is opposed by many Tibetans. It is not after all uncommon for political pragmatism to conflict with the idealistic wishes of the people.

Of course the similarities between the successive leaders should be expected, for the Dalai Lamas are held to be reincarnations of the same spiritual entity. They are discovered on the basis of physical likeness and shared personal characteristics, so in theory there is no reason why their political styles should not also be alike. The present Dalai Lama has only one major criticism of his predecessor, for his autocratic rule (Dalai Lama 1990: 37). Again pragmatism can explain why the 14th should not share this: an autocratic ruler would not enjoy Western support and admiration, which is so vital to his cause.

Another difference between the two to which the present Dalai Lama draws attention is their powers of prophecy. The present Dalai Lama says he has none. In 1932 the Thirteenth Dalai Lama left a 'Political Last Testament' which not only predicted his own death but also forewarned the country of Chinese invasion, which would be characterised by 'red ideology'. This is what he predicted:

[4] The 13th Dalali Lama was exiled by the British in 1904 and again by the Manchus in 1910. While the 14th Dalai Lama was exiled in 1959 by China.

> In the future, this system [communism] will certainly be forced either from within or without on this land that cherishes the joint spiritual and temporal system. If, in such an event, we fail to defend our land, the holy lamas, including 'the triumphant father and son' [the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama] will be eliminated without a trace of their names remaining; . . . our political system . . . will be reduced to an empty name; my officials . . . will be subjugated like slaves by the enemy; and my people, subjected to fear and miseries, will be unable to endure day or night. Such an era will certainly come! (Goldstein 1989: 205)

This remarkable statement was used for policy decisions made by the Regency after the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's death, for in between Dalai Lamas or while a Dalai Lama was under eighteen, the role of leader is taken by a Regent.

In exile, the Dalai Lama has attempted to wean the Central Tibetan Administration. As early as 1973, the Dalai Lama said, that

> in political and other fields there are many young Tibetans who can shoulder the work. By concentrating wholly on Buddhist philosophy I may be able to render wider and better serve to my people...It doesn't mean that I would give up the Tibetan cause, but in my opinion the other thing is much deeper and important.[5]

By emphasizing his desire to be a monk first and foremost, the Dalai Lama opened the door for new leadership. However, separating his role from the administration was, and continues to be a difficult task, as the Dalai Lama's power and legitimacy derive from a number of sources. His legitimacy as the leader of the Tibetan people stems from Tibetan mythology which links all Tibetans to the Dalai Lama (Roemer, 2008: 21).

Moreover, the process of reincarnation means that the charisma of the 14th Dalai Lama also rests on the collective charisma of his thirteen predecessors. However, his position as a religious leader is also important: For Tibetan people, regardless of their belonging to a social strata, geographical heritage or religious affinity, the Dalai Lama is the divine leader of their nation. Whatever he says will not be criticized by anyone—a tradition that has become ingrained for all Tibetans since the institution came into existence (Roemer, 2008: 23).

[5] "Interview: Dalai Lama on Lhasa Uprising," Tibetan Review 8, no 4 (1973): 9.

It is this very idea that the Dalai Lama has been slowly trying to remove from Tibetan political life. The ability of the Dalai Lama to inspire and to lead is indisputable. Although it is impossible to remove Buddhism from Tibetan politics, or any other aspect of Tibetan life, the Dalai Lama is trying to remove the role of the institution of the Dalai Lama from the political structure. Yet as he struggles to divide his political and religious roles, it is increasingly difficult to separate the two. As a supreme religious leader, he should also be an infallible political leader. His encouragement of political dissidence is seen by some of his followers as a threat to his spiritual supremacy, the fundamental basis for Tibetan society. Nevertheless, the Dalai Lama encourages more independent activity since, as he said in 1969,

> When the day comes for Tibet to be governed by its own people, it will be for the people to decide what form of government they will have. The system of governance by the line of the Dalai Lamas may or may not be there. It is the will of the people that will ultimately determine the future of Tibet.[6]

The one thread that has remained constant from pre-exile and pre-invasion Tibet to the present day is the Dalai Lama. When it was first established in Dharamshala in 1960, the Central Tibetan Administration was legitimized by the role and position of the Dalai Lama. But once it was established, the Dalai Lama began to deliberately remove himself from its operation. While he originally lent it status, his continued role as an unquestioned leader would ultimately only hurt the argument that Tibetans were seeking self-determination, rather than Dalai Lama determination.

For the time being he is able to provide a stable structure and unite opposing factions of the Tibetan community. But if there are no plans for what happens when he is gone, and without a plan for someone else to assume his past responsibilities, his vision will be lost, and with him, Tibet. The Dalai Lama has highlighted the compatibility of democracy and certain aspects of Buddhism. His embrace of this perspective is important, because the prominent role of Buddhism is unlikely to wane. The Dalai Lama wants democracy to succeed him in the Tibetan community. That does not mean religion will be replaced by politics but rather that Tibetans will be able to exercise the choices they find appropriate.

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[6] His Holiness the Dalai Lama, "Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lamaon the Tenth Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day,"10 March 1969. Available at http://tibet.net/1969/03/10/statement-of-his-holiness-the-dalai-lama-on-the-tenth-anniversary-of-the-tibetan-national-uprising-day-10-march-1969/, Accessed on 15 April. 2012.

On May 6, 1989 the Dalai Lama again emphasized the need for further democratic reforms, and in August of that year the Kashag convened a conference of over 230 participants including ATPD members, government officials, individuals working with NGOs, and others. The conference attendees developed five points for discussion and feedback among Tibetan exiles: (1) whether there should be a prime minster within the existing government structure; (2) if the ministers should be elected or appointed by the Dalai Lama; (3) if a political party system should be introduced to form the government; (4) if any changes should be made to the number of ATPD members and their responsibilities, and; (5) what other democratic changes could be made. These proposals received almost 300 suggestions from Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet.

As part of the effort to further democratize the Tibetan exile community, the Dalai Lama addressed a Special People's Convention on May 11, 1990: "we have to see that during our period in exile, democracy is fully practiced."[7] To that effect, he suggested that the 1963 constitution "be revised so that we can have a total democratic set-up,"[8] and appointed a Constitutional Review Committee which was tasked with drafting a new democratic charter for the Tibetan exile community. His list of suggestions was extensive and covered the election procedure for the ATPD as well as its composition, the practicality of establishing a working committee, and representation for women. He also discussed the creation of a judicial branch and the possibility of an elected prime minister.

While there were possible changes he left open for discussion in the community, like the possibility of two legislative bodies, there were others he was clear about having implemented. For example, with the resignation of all the current *Kalons* on May 9, the Dalai Lama declared "an end to the term of the Dalai Lama-appointed *Kalons."*[9] Instead, future Assemblies would be empowered to appoint the *Kalons*. Addressing previous problems with electing deputies, the Dalai Lama acknowledged that although

[7] His Holiness the Dalai Lama, "Address of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Special Congress," 11 May 1990. Available at http://tibet.net/1990/05/11/address-of-his-holiness-the-dalai-lama-at-special-congress-dharamshala-11-may-1990/. Accessed on 22 January, 2012.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

"elected by the people," the "final selections were done by me."[10] However, he stated clearly that "this practice has to change. From now on, the people's decision will be final. I feel that the Dalai Lama should have no role here."[11] Thus, elected ATPD members would no longer require the Dalai Lama's seal of approval.

Furthermore, the Dalai Lama stressed the "need to change the functions and composition of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies,"[12] and hoped that the next Assembly would be elected within a year so that it could "scrutinize the draft by-law prepared for our exile Administration. The next Assembly will perhaps be a legislative body."[13] To that effect, he dissolved the tenth Assembly, "which has come up through the old procedure,"[14] and called on attendees to "immediately begin the work for the election of the next Assembly." At the end, he reassured attendees that he would "readily contribute my service whenever we are faced with heavy odds," but that "it is important that people are able to act on their own through democratic processes without relying on the Dalai Lama."[15] An interregnum ensued from May 12, 1990 to May 28, 1991 during which many of the changes the Dalai Lama called for were implemented.

2.3 Democratic Reforms under the 14th Dalai Lama

The 14th Dalai Lama wields considerable respect and power among the Tibetans and his followers throughout the world. He inherited an old institution which makes him the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetans. Over a long period of time he had been slowly reducing his political role while giving more roles to the Central Tibetan Administration. This section will show these changes in terms of democratization of the government-in-exile, sometime even to the dismay of the Tibetans who want him to remain as their supreme leader and guide. The unique case of the democracy of Tibetans in exile is that it was introduced by the Dalai Lama and not due to the wishes of the people. The first democratic reform started with the promulgation of a constitution.

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[10] His Holiness the Dalai Lama, "Address of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Special Congress," 11 May 1990. Available at http://tibet.net/1990/05/11/address-of-his-holiness-the-dalai-lama-at-special-congress-dharamshala-11-may-1990/. Accessed on 22 January, 2012.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid
[15] Ibid.

2.3.1 Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile 1991

The new Charter of Tibetans in Exile, adopted on June 14, 1991, embodied many of the sweeping changes the Dalai Lama had suggested. While the 1963 constitution was intended to govern an independent Tibet, it was also adapted for use in exile. However, as its name implies, the 1991 Charter of Tibetans in Exile was specifically written for the exile context, and the "Charter shall be binding and enforceable to all Tibetans under the jurisdiction of the Tibetan Administration in-Exile."[16] As such, it includes provisions for governing settlements and electing local bodies to represent the different communities, but notes that Tibetans should respect the laws of their respective host countries.[17] Additionally, and in an important shift, the charter refers to the government as the "Tibetan Administration in-Exile," rather than the government of Tibet.

Much more comprehensive than the 1963 constitution, the charter establishes the three pillars of democracy—a judicial, legislative, and executive branch. The charter continues to illustrate the complicated relationship between religion and politics, as the Kashag and the ATPD are to elect the Council of Regents, who will be responsible for maintaining the responsibilities of the Dalai Lama and finding his reincarnation.[18]

The 1963 constitution had been promulgated on the authority of the Dalai Lama; signaling another important shift, the 1991 charter states that, "the Eleventh Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies do hereby take over Legislative powers, promulgate and legalize this Charter of the Tibetan in-Exile as their fundamental guide."[19] The charter was passed by the 11th Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies after 15 days of debate, which was its first business after taking the oath of office at the end of May 1991. This shifting basis of authority was indicative of other changes that accompanied the Charter.

Given the increasingly diasporic nature of the Tibetan exile polity, the charter provides for a standing committee, so that all representatives need not reside in Dharamsala year round. The standing committee rotates on a yearly basis and is composed of two

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[16] Central Tibetan Administration,The Charter of the Tibetans in Exile, Chapter 1, Article 2, Unofficial English translation, 14 June 1991; Available at http://www.tibet.com/Govt/charter.html.
[17] Ibid., Chapter 1, Article 6.
[18] Ibid., Chapter 4, Article 31(2).
[19] Ibid., Preface.

representatives from each region, one from each religious denomination, and one of the representatives selected by the Dalai Lama.[20]

The charter outlined the composition of the ATPD, which included 10 members from each of the three regions of Tibet (U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo), two members from "each religious denomination: Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, Gelug and Bon" a representative elected by Tibetans living in Canada and the U.S., two members elected by Tibetans living in Europe, and "1 to 3 members directly nominated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama." Additionally, the selection of members from each of the regions is to be done "without discrimination of sex" and therefore "there shall be at least 2 elected women members from each region to represent that region's constituency."[21]

As a rebuttal to past criticisms that the ATPD was powerless in comparison to the Kashag since it had no real ability to check executive power, the charter specifically states that "in general it [the Kashag] shall be accountable and answerable to the Tibetan Assembly."[22] Nevertheless, legislation still required "the assent of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to become law."[23] On the other hand, while Kalons were previously appointed by the Dalai Lama, the new charter specified that they would be elected by the ATPD, and that the Kalon Tripa would be elected by the Kalons themselves.[24]

In the event that Kalons cannot be elected by the ATPD, "the matter shall be presented to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and decided thereon in accordance with His advice."[25] However, the charter makes it possible for the ATPD to deal with the situation independently, outlining a number of channels that are to be pursued before turning to the Dalai Lama as arbiter. "The 1991 Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile provides," Roemer (2008: 94) notes, "the Dalai Lama with controlling mechanisms to intervene in every governmental affair, reaching from the appointment of key positions within the CTA structure to the requirement that every political decision has to be signed by him before implementation." (Roemer, 2008: 95)

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[20] Central Tibetan Administration, The Charter of the Tibetans in Exile, Chapter 5, Article 42(1).
[21] Ibid., Chapter 5, Article 37.
[22] Ibid., Chapter 4, Article 29(1).
[23] Ibid., Chapter 5, Article 36.
[24] Ibid., Chapter 4, Article 23.
[25] Ibid., Chapter 4, Article 21.

The "14th Dalai Lama is vested to make the final decision about any assembly decision and policy recommendation. All papers need to be signed by him to become an Act. Until spring 2003, the 14th Dalai Lama refused to sign only once. This was in 1991, when the position of the Dalai Lama within the CTA structure was discussed in the draft of the Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile." (Roemer: 2008: 101)

While the new charter governing life in exile was being adopted, the Dalai Lama sought to clarify certain aspects of the political future of a free Tibet in his Guidelines for Future Tibet's Polity and the Basic Features of its Constitution in 1992. The document reflected on what had passed in exile and set forth his goals and expectations for what is yet to come. The significance of this document lies in its outline of what he hopes would happen when Tibet is a self-governing entity.

In order to transition to a new government system, an interim government would be established whose goal would be to create a constituent assembly responsible for drafting Tibet's new constitution. After this is done, elections would be held for the government under the new framework. The crux of the document, however, is that the Dalai Lama would hold no role in the future government of Tibet. Under this outline, the establishment of the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government would leave no political space for the institution of the Dalai Lama.

Although standing on technical aspects of building a new government, much of the document reads like a wish list of peace and prosperity embedded in spiritual values. For example, the Dalai Lama desired that the "Tibetan polity should be founded on spiritual values and must uphold the interests of Tibet, its neighbouring countries and the world at large." (Lama, 1992: 12) The government would adhere to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "be a zone of peace based upon the principles of nonviolence, compassion and protection of the natural environment," and would "not resort to war for any reason" (Lama, 1992: 12)

Although the new constitution would be drafted by the government, through his suggestions and outlines, the Dalai Lama also attempted to leave his legacy, and ideas to remember. The Tibetan Review dubbed the Guidelines for the Future Polity of Tibet the least controversial of the documents issued by the Dalai Lama concerning the future

government of a free Tibet. "The outline of a constitution formulated in 1961, the draft constitution in 1963, and last year's charter for the Tibetan people all met with opposition from sections of the government as well as the people. The reason was understandable. All of them contained a provision whereby the Dalai Lama could be divested of his powers if the National Assembly decided that would be in the best interest of Tibet."[26]

2.3.2 The Reason for Democracy

The Dalai Lama has been committed to introducing democracy into the Tibetan exile polity since he first arrived in India in 1950. It is apparent from his comments at the time that he was influenced by the fledgling democracy in India:

> [A] communiqué was issued on behalf of the Indian Government saying it did not recognise the Dalai Lama's Government in Exile. . . . [M]y wounded feelings quickly gave way to a sense of enormous gratitude as I saw, really for the first time, the true meaning of the word 'democracy'. The Indian government vehemently opposed my point of view, but it did nothing to try to prevent me from expressing it, much less from holding it. (Dalai Lama 1990: 166)

This comment alone suggests that the Dalai Lama's wish to introduce democratic frameworks into the Tibetan government in exile was in reaction to the repression that Tibetans had experienced under Chinese rule. There are, however, several other reasons why democracy is desirable for the exile government.

The efforts of the Dalai Lama to democratise the Tibetan polity have been primarily targeted toward a Western audience. At present the Tibetan government in exile does not enjoy the official recognition of any other government in the world or of the UN. While the obvious reason for this is fear of Chinese disapproval, it is perhaps felt by the Dalai Lama that he must democratise if his government is to be taken as legitimate, or at least modern, by the West. The adoption of legal–rational frameworks by a charismatic regime lends that regime greater legitimisation, at least in the eyes of other legal–rational regimes. Legal–rational domination is, according to Weber, the 'modern "servant of the state" and by all those bearers of power who in this respect resemble him'. [27] If the

[26] "Editorial: Homeward Bound," Tibetan Review 27, no. 10 (1992): 3.
[27] Gerth and Mills 1970: 79, cited in Ardley, 2002: 172.

Tibetan government in exile can resemble a Western democracy, perhaps it can expect Western democracies to be more inclined to assist with the Tibetan struggle.

Further, by embracing democracy, the Tibetan government will be seen as occupying the moral high ground when compared with China. The Dalai Lama's downscaling of the goal of independence in favour of autonomy at Strasbourg in 1988 was a pragmatic appeal to the international community, though it angered many Tibetans. Perhaps because of this the Tibetan people have been reluctant to embrace democracy; they do not perceive it to be primarily for their benefit, though they may accept the anticipated Western attention is desirable.

There are of course other reasons why the Dalai Lama has decided the Tibetan exile polity must be democratic. Foremost amongst these must be his concern for how the Tibetan community will cope in the event of his death. Weber felt that a particular problem faced by regimes where authority is based on charisma is how to deal with the death of a leader (Weber, 1968: 364).
Unusually, the Tibetans have a system for finding a replacement charismatic leader. However, the traditional method of a relatively simple search for a new incarnation is complicated now by the situation of the vast majority of Tibetans living under Chinese jurisdiction. The Chinese government would be bound to interfere in the process of selection, as they have in the selection of the Eleventh Panchen Lama. If the future political leader of the Tibetan people could be elected by democratic means, although at present this would only involve the exiles, then such problems would be averted. However, in the present Tibetan polity there are no means whereby such a leader could be elected, though the Dalai Lama has often expressed his desire for the necessary mechanisms to be put in place.

It can be seen that the process of democratisation in the Tibetan polity is explicitly linked to the Tibetan struggle for independence or autonomy, whether it has been formed out of the desire to achieve legitimacy and therefore support from the West, or so there can be a smooth transition to effective leadership in the event of the present Dalai Lama's death. It is vital that Tibetans have a leader who will be as strong and as able as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama; their sense of direction could be lost if competent leadership is absent. What is clear is that the process of democratisation is as centred on the Dalai Lama as Tibetan

politics have ever been; for this reason it has been suggested that if democracy is to succeed the Dalai Lama must make it perfectly clear he can be criticised personally. Until the religious and political roles of the Dalai Lama can be separated, not necessarily in reality but certainly in perception, then true democracy in the Tibetan polity will be very difficult to achieve (Ardley, 2002: 12).

This section has shown that the process of democratization is to seek legitimacy for the Tibetan polity in exile, hold a moral high ground against the authoritarian Chinese government, and most importantly a preparation for a future without Dalai Lama. The next section will illustrate a Buddhist philosophy followed by the Dalai Lama and its subsequent effect on the Tibetan exile politics.

2.4 The Middle Way position of the Dalai Lama

This section will introduce the Buddhism concept of middle way and its political practices especially in the exile context. The middle way in Buddhism refers to the middle ground, in practical terms, between luxury and asceticism, or in philosophical parlance, between nihilism and absolutism. In political practices of Tibetan in exile it means choosing between a complete independence of Tibet or being under the authority of the Chinese government. This philosophy came to the spotlight with the Strasbourg Proposal made by the Dalai Lama in 1988 concerning him ceasing the demand for an independent Tibet and rather seeking for autonomy within China.

Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, arrived at the position after rejecting both the luxury of his royal background and the extreme asceticism he practised while trying to find a solution to the suffering of humanity. The Middle Way is, therefore, the way to the elimination of suffering; the last of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism. In religious practice, the Middle Way can be achieved by following the Eightfold Path, which has been described as the noblest course of spiritual teaching yet presented to mankind. This consists of pursuing: right understanding; right thought; right speech; right action; right livelihood; right effort; right mindfulness; and right concentration. The fulfilment of the requirements of the Eightfold Path is just one of the many steps that must be taken on the path to enlightenment in Buddhism. In the Mahayana school of Buddhism – the tradition

of Tibet – the Eightfold Path is part of the Thirty-Seven Aspects of the Path to Enlightenment, which are in turn part of the Ten *Bodhisattva* Levels[28].

A *bodhisattva* is one who is progressing towards the state of enlightenment. This is most commonly achieved through ceaseless work on behalf of others, a similar, although not so overtly political, notion to Gandhi's interpretation of the path to *moksha*. In contrast with the Hinayana School, which advocates personal liberation, the Mahayana *bodhisattva*

> Seeks to establish all sentient beings in enlightenment and even takes on their karmic burden . . . *Bodhisattvas* are able to transfer the sufferings and afflictions of others to themselves, and . . . also give their own merit to others. (Powers, 1995: 91)

It is clear, then, that the concept of social action is known in Tibetan Buddhism. The *bodhisattva* follows the middle way in his or her quest for enlightenment, and seeks to understand the way to the elimination of suffering through taking on the suffering of all other sentient beings. The important issue is how this process becomes politicised. To be more specific, how have Buddhist principles been incorporated into the Tibetan independence movement? The most overt example of the influence of Buddhist philosophy on the Tibetan independence movement is to be found in the middle way position of the Dalai Lama. The next section will show the practice of this philosophy.

2.4.1 The Political Implications of the Middle Way

The Dalai Lama follows the middle way in both his spiritual and political worlds. Politically, this has effectively meant relinquishing the Tibetan struggle for independence, opting instead for 'genuine autonomy' within the Chinese state. The middle way is of course the middle way between two extremes. One is totally absorbing Tibetans into China by eradicating Tibetan culture and any sense of difference of personal, radical, religious, linguistic, and cultural identity. The other extreme is breaking Tibet free from china altogether, returning to its age-old independent status all alone. The middle way is to develop the plan for allowing the Tibetans to rule themselves in their own land while preserving and developing their own land as they

[28] The bodhisattva levels are the stages through which one passes to become a bodhisattva. *Bodhisattva* is a Sanskrit term meaning 'enlightenment being'. In Tibetan the term is translated as *byang chub sems dpa*, meaning the 'compassionate one.'

wish, with the help of China and joining voluntarily in a Chinese union (Thurman, 2008: 134). This position was first outlined in a statement by the Dalai Lama in Strasbourg in 1988.[29] While the bulk of the statement is concerned with ending human rights violations, halting China's population transfer and establishing peace in Tibet, the Dalai Lama controversially also announced that

> The whole of Tibet known as Cholka-Sum (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo) should become a self-governing democratic political entity . . . in association with the People's Republic of China. The Government of the People's Republic of China could remain responsible for Tibet's foreign policy.[30]

He went on to acknowledge that the Tibetan people would be disappointed with the 'moderate stand' the above proposal represented. Many Tibetans in fact felt that they had been betrayed:

> [When Strasbourg came] Tibetans were shocked. Unprecedently, there were open protests against the Strasbourg statement from individuals and groups of Tibetans all over the world. Tibetan society everywhere was rife with speculation and rumours as to how such a disaster could ever have taken place. Nearly everyone was of the opinion that the *kashag* was largely to blame for not giving better advice to His Holiness. (Norbu, J. 1989: 87)

Since the Dalai Lama's proposal is supposedly based upon a well-known Buddhist principle of taking the middle ground between extremes, the statement should have been welcomed, at least from a theoretical position. Its aim was, after all, the elimination of the suffering of the Tibetan people, in accordance with the spiritual meaning of the middle way. Perhaps the strongest objections to the proposal came from within Tibet itself. The prospect of giving up the fight for independence was, apparently, viewed with suspicion by those who were suffering in Tibet, despite their continuing loyalty to the Dalai Lama.

The real purpose of the Strasbourg statement was an attempt to reach a middle ground with Beijing, which has always insisted that renunciation of Tibetan independence is a prerequisite of Sino–Tibetan dialogue. It did not work. Beijing described the proposal as a demand for semi-independence or a disguised form of independence and refused to

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[29] The Dalai Lama made an address concerning the future of Sino–Tibetan relations to the European Parliament in June 1988, in the hope that China would agree to open negotiations on the future status of Tibet. His speech coincided with various western leaders' calls for Beijing to speak with the Dalai Lama. The speech can be found in http://www.dalailama.com/messages/tibet/strasbourg-proposal-1988

[30] Ibid.

have any contact with the Tibetan government. As the objective of the statement failed, there would appear to be no justification for continuing with the position. Although the Dalai Lama announced in 1991 that he felt no obligation to adhere to his proposal, not because he felt it was wrong, but because China had not responded positively, it appears still to be the official policy of the Tibetan government in exile (Ardley, 2002: 108).

Since the referendum has been abandoned, the middle way certainly appears, despite its failure, still to be the policy – official or not – of the exile government. As some Tibetans have pointed out, it seems unreasonable to reject independence as a realistic goal when the alternative – compromise on the issue that after all is at the very heart of the struggle – has also failed to move China.

2.4.2 The Failure of the Middle Way

The failure of the middle way in terms of the politics of the Tibetan struggle is that it is seen as coming from the Dalai Lama himself, who continues to be an unacceptable figure for the Chinese regime. This is despite the fact that Beijing's grounds for rejecting the Strasbourg proposal – it being, in the opinion of Beijing, merely a watered-down claim to independence – are false. The Dalai Lama was genuine when he announced that autonomy would be acceptable to the Tibetan people, even though he had not formally sought their agreement. One would expect, after all, that a leader of his standing would not reduce Tibet's historical status to a bargaining counter. However, it is also important to note that opposition to the Strasbourg proposal came not only from China but also from within the Tibetan exile community. Again there is an obvious reason for this; many felt that Tibetan independence was the one issue on which compromise could not be reached.

In the Tibetan exile community there are many differing views among the pro-independence and pro-middle way lobbies. The middle way has not addressed, let alone resolved, such differences. If anything, it has increased the internal disunity that has the potential to be extremely damaging to the Tibetan cause. It has certainly not brought equanimity and has not reconciled extreme attitudes. The penultimate criterion that the middle way should not be too rigid, has also not been demonstrated by the political middle way.

The relinquishing of the goal of independence has placed constraints on Tibetan activists and on those who disagree with the stance within the Tibetan parliament, because it is strictly against traditional protocol to disagree publicly with the pronouncements of the Dalai Lama. It seems that to continue with a policy that has not only failed in its objectives but is also rejected by a proportion of those whom the Tibetan government purports to represent, is as extreme as the positions the middle way theoretically avoids.

This section showed how there had been some confusion since the Dalai Lama announced the middle way in 1988. It is important to analyse this policy in the exile context because of the desire of the Tibetans to go back to a free Tibet. Dalai Lama making the announcement meant that there cannot be much opposition. Opposition is considered to be detrimental to the unity of Tibetans in exile and speaking against the Dalai Lama is not taken easily by so many people. This policy is also important looking at two significant events-devolution of Dalai Lama's political power and the future of the Dalai Lama. These events have major implications for Tibetans on whether they would remain in exile or go back to a free Tibet. The next section will examine these events.

2.5 The Future of the Dalai Lama

Just as the institution of the Dalai Lama has always been central to Tibetan politics, and indeed to the very nature of the Tibetan state, the future of the Tibetan political struggle depends upon the 14th Dalai Lama. He alone must make the decisions that will, it is hoped, lead to the solution of the Tibetan problem. He has already attempted to do this through the Strasbourg Proposal and through the process of democratisation in the exile government, but these measures, particularly the latter, do not go far enough (Ardley, 2002: 173).

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The Dalai Lama is of central importance to any discussion of Tibet. Tenzin Gyatso already celebrated his 77th birthday on July 6, and, though Buddhist philosophy may state that his successor will simply be the next manifestation of this enlightened being, the rest of the world does not necessarily share this belief. As a monk and a leader he has demonstrated enviable statecraft and his prestige is reflected by the lively array of world leaders who have been happy to meet him, but there is no reason to assume that this will apply to his successor(Burke, 2008: 83). What happens after his inevitable passing is of

course only a matter of guesswork and several conditions already in place suggest that this will be a complicated problem.

As far as finding his successor is concerned, there are numerous complications. The current Dalai Lama has already stated that he will be reborn in a free country and, as evidenced by the relatively recent recognition of Lama Yeshe's successor in Spain, it is not impossible that Dharamsala's choice of Dalai Lama may not be ethnically Tibetan. This process will be complicated by the fact that Beijing will almost certainly strive to recognise its own selection for his successor citing historical precedent as justification. History could not be less clear on just what that precedent actually is as Tibet's version and China's version of events are in stark disagreement on the details (Burke, 2008: 83).

3.5.1 China's Role in Reincarnation Issue

The fact of the matter is that the battle to identify the Dalai Lama's rightful successor will be the most critical test facing the Tibetans in the 21st century. There is no question about China's intent.[31] Chinese authorities have long signaled that they plan to hijack Tibetan Buddhism by controlling the successor to the Dalai Lama and other reincarnate lamas (Roberts and Roberts, 2009: 231). In September 2007, China's State Administration on Religious Affairs announced that Tibetan Buddhist teachers, including the Dalai Lama, cannot be reincarnated without the permission of the central Chinese government. To clarify precisely how this bureaucratic recognition is to occur, the Chinese issued Order No. 5, containing 14 articles under the umbrella title of 'Management Measures for the Reincarnation of 'Living Buddhas' in Tibetan Buddhism'.[32]

"It is an important move to institutionalize the management of reincarnation of Living Buddhas," the new law states, "No outside organization or individual will influence or control the reincarnation of Living Buddhas."[33] In a swift response, Tibet's government-

[31] At some stage, at least one Dalai Lama was recognised through a lottery system presided over by representatives of the Qing dynasty. China now claims that on this basis they were able to recognise the child Panchen Lama of which there are now two – one Tibetan-recognised, the other Chinese-recognised. This could very well lead to a situation where two Dalai Lamas will be selected.

[32] State Administration on Religious Affairs (2007), *Management Measures for the Reincarnation of 'Living Buddhas' in Tibetan Buddhism,* Order No.5. Document downloaded from http://savetibet.de/fileadmin/user_upload/content/berichte/Briefing_Papier_Reinkarnationsgesetz.pdf

[33] Ibid.

in-exile rejected the legitimacy of Order No. 5. In a statement issued from Dharamsala, the Tibetans attacked the order as a new weapon employed by the Chinese government to undermine Tibetan Buddhism and to insult and oppress the Tibetan people (Roberts, 2009: 231).

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These new regulations are completely contrary to Tibetan traditions and longstanding religious practices. Nonetheless, Order No. 5 sets the stage for Chinese authorities to take charge of selecting the Dalai Lama's next incarnation. The timing of the order—issued one month before awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the Dalai Lama and on the eve of the Communist Party Congress that appointed Hu Jintao to a second five-year term—heralded a continuation of China's hardline policy toward Tibet (Roberts, 2009: 231)

The Panchen Lama is also a complicating factor. In 1995 the Dalai Lama announced that he had recognised a child as the 11th Panchen Lama, the second most important religious figure in Tibetan Buddhism. The Chinese countered by recognizing their own Panchen Lama. The Dalai Lama's choice was placed under house arrest by the Chinese authorities and has not been seen since, while the Chinese choice has been enthroned by dubious methods. The implication is that it is inevitable the Chinese would try to lay claim to a future Dalai Lama, although it is also inevitable that such a figure would not be seen as legitimate by most Tibetans. In the meantime, the Chinese are attempting to reduce the Tibetan devotion to the present Dalai Lama, through intensive 'patriotic education' in the monasteries (Ardley, 2002: 164).

Without the recognition of the Panchen Lama, as he is under house arrest or dead, the Tibetan choice of Dalai Lama will need the blessing of the next highest Lama, the Karmapa, who has yet to demonstrate that he is entirely on Dharamsala's side and who has not, in this incarnation or a previous one, been called upon to legitimise the choice of a successor. Indeed, at the beginning of 2000, Ugyen Trinley Dorjee, the 17th Karmapa (the head of the *Karma Kagyu* sect of Tibetan Buddhism), made a dramatic escape from Tibet into India, apparently due to the renewed crackdowns on Tibetan Buddhism. His defection to Dharamsala was especially embarrassing for the Chinese authorities, for they had been grooming the Karmapa as a patriotic religious figure who would legitimise their programmes in Tibet (Ardley, 2002: 164). This confused line of succession will not

make it easier to legitimately claim that the exiles have selected the right child who will later become the Dalai Lama.

3.5.2 The Choice to Reincarnate and Devolution of Political Power

For some, the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is beyond question. But this certitude is misplaced. The belief that the Dalai Lama will reincarnate is more of an assumption, and a hopeful one at that, than a foregone conclusion. The Dalai Lama himself has said on numerous occasions that reincarnation is a choice, unlike rebirth which is a reality (Roberts, 2009: 239)

Reincarnation, Dalai Lama says, is the power granted to certain worthy individuals, like the Buddha himself, to control their future birth. In an effort to thwart a repeat by the Chinese of the episode with the Eleventh Panchen Lama, in November 2007 the Dalai Lama declared that he is considering a referendum on how to pick his successor before he dies. This announcement came two months after China issued Order No. 5. In a shameless twist, this time it was the Chinese who denounced the Dalai Lama's statement about a referendum as a violation of religious practice (Roberts, 2009: 239)

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The concept of the referendum is similar to the approach used with the Tibetan Charter. First, Tibetan Buddhists would be polled on whether they preferred to maintain the Dalai Lama as their spiritual and secular head. If a majority supported the Dalai Lama system, Tenzin Gyatso said he would reincarnate—but his reincarnation would either take place outside China or he might choose a new Dalai Lama before his death (Roberts, 2009: 239).

The transition from the 14th Dalai Lama to his successor has many possible variations. If the search for the successor has a similar outcome to the search that found Tenzin Gyatso, there will be a period as long as two decades in which the next Dalai Lama will not exercise full powers. It may take several years to locate the child who is the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. He or she will then undergo spiritual training and secular education. Only after passage of key monastic exams does the new Dalai Lama exercise full spiritual authority and the assumption of secular authority as head of state comes on maturity. In the past this always led to the appointment of a regent and, once again, the logical choice in this case seems to be the Karmapa. This could go either way;

he may finally represent an acceptable leader for both Beijing and Dharamsala (Misra, 2003: 196).

It cannot be ruled out that he would prove to be too much in Beijing's favour or he may simply pass on the opportunity to take political power, which may well be in keeping with the current Dalai Lama's drive towards democratisation, leading to a power vacuum. No matter in what way this situation is examined, Tibet will suffer confusion, power play and weakness for a period following on from the 14th Dalai Lama's death. What this means is that there may be a vacuum of leadership in Tibetan Buddhism during the succession period (Roberts, 2009: 239). In terms of political leadership, any void will be filled by the democratic mechanisms that Dalai Lama established for the Tibetan government-in-exile. On March 10, 2011 he announced that he is handing over his political power to the Kalon Tripa. Also, the Tibetan Charter specifically provides for an orderly transfer of power. The Dalai Lama has even laid out a transition plan for the eventuality, however remote, that China gives autonomy to Tibet.

On March 10, 2011 during the commemoration of the Uprising Day, the 14th Dalai Lama announced that he is relinquishing his role as a political and administrative head. He stated that

> In order for our process of democratization to be complete, the time has come for me to devolve my formal authority to such an elected leadership… No system of governance can ensure stability and progress if it depends solely on one person without the support and participation of the people in the political process. One man rule is both anachronistic and undesirable. We have made great efforts to strengthen our democratic institutions to serve the long-term interests of the six million Tibetans, not out of a wish to copy others, but because democracy is the most representative system of governance.[34]

The Dalai Lama had repeatedly argued for the need for political change previously and reiterated this in his statement in March 2011 saying, "the essence of a democratic system is the assumption of political responsibility by elected leaders for the popular

[34] Message of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Fourteenth Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies on March 14, 2011. Available at http://tibet.net/2011/03/14/message-of-his-holiness-the-dalai-lama-to-the-fourteenth-assembly-of-the-tibetan-peoples-deputies-2/

good" and maintained that even the continuation of the Dalai Lama is for the people to decide.[35]

The Dalai Lama would continue to be the sovereign head of state – in so far as he can be in exile – as well as the leader of the Tibetan religion, but political leadership is now be in the hands of the Central Tibetan Administration particularly the *Kalon Tripa*.

In effect, Tibetan politics in exile is beginning to be fully secularised, in readiness for a full transition to free and democratic government in Tibet. Ironically, the present Dalai Lama has made very similar proposals. He has indicated he would prefer a simple religious life outside of government affairs:

> I will not play any role in the future government of Tibet, let alone seek the Dalai Lama's traditional political position in the government. . . . I think I will be in a better position to serve the people as an individual outside the government. Moreover, if Tibet is to survive as an equal member of the modern international community, it should reflect the collective potential of all its citizens, and not rely on one individual. This means the people must be actively involved in charting their own political and social destiny. It is, therefore, in the interests of the Tibetan people . . . that I have come to this decision, and not because I am losing interest in my responsibilities.[36]

He has also indicated he believes his leadership to be an impediment to the development of democracy. Due to reticence on the part of the government in exile, however, the Dalai Lama has had to confine his wishes to plans for a future Tibet. Along with his preference for a multi-party system, as discussed above, a purely religious Dalai Lama belongs to a future free Tibet, not the exile polity. It cannot be overstated how important it is for such measures to be adopted while in exile. The Indian experience at the very least should give Tibetans an indication of how long the process of achieving their independence could take; democratic institutions need to be put in place now. People should begin to have more faith on the institutions and its leaders. It was important for Dalai Lama to step down at a time when he is growing old and the issue of succession is in disarray. The only institution that can continue the struggle remains the CTA. This would allow for a party and leader to emerge in the Tibetan exile polity who are dedicated to the independence movement.

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[35] Ibid.

[36] From the preamble to the Tibetan constitution, available at the website of the Tibetan government in exile: http://tibet.net/about-cta/constitution/

2.6 Challenges Ahead

It is clear that Tibetans face an enormous challenge if they are to free themselves of Chinese rule. International circumstances do not favour them; Tibet's freedom is not in the strategic or commercial interests of any other country, and China has no reason to relinquish its hold on Tibet. Furthermore, there does not seem to be a specific strategy for independence – or even autonomy – with which Tibetans can become engaged. The Dalai Lama asserts that Tibetans should free Tibet by peaceful means.

The strategies Tibetans have employed until now have been detailed above, and the success or failure of each has been assessed. All the methods used by Tibetans have serious implications for the formalised relationship between religion and politics, a relationship of which the Tibetan state is often cited as an ideal example. Whereas the introduction of the religious into the political is primarily viewed as a negative force in global terms – repressive Islamic states such as Afghanistan under the Taliban, or right-wing Christian politics in the US, for example – in Tibet the traditional 'Shangri-la-ist' perspective is viewed positively. The widely held view is that in Tibet religion brought harmony and peace (Ardley, 2002: 164).

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A commonly held assumption is that this peace and harmony had developed because the people had not lost sight of the importance of spirituality in all aspects of life, including politics. However, the crucial issue now, as Tibetans began their sixth decade under Chinese rule, is whether this emphasis on religion is appropriate for a modern independence movement. The question to be asked is: has the infusion of spirituality in Tibetan political life helped or hindered those struggling to free Tibet? This will be a prospective future course of study.

This issue, of the Dalai Lama's dual religious and political role, is central to the Tibetan independence movement and constitutes one of the most profound obstacles to its progress. While religion does not have the potential to be as divisive in the Tibetan community – given there is only one major religion – the placing of political events in religious contexts is a hindrance for the Tibetans. That is certainly not to say that Tibetan Buddhism is detrimental; on the contrary, it has a great deal to offer, such as its emphasis on compassion, altruism, and non-violence. The crucial question here is how far this

emphasis upon Buddhist values is appropriate for a modern independence movement, and whether in fact it may be an encumbrance to the progress of that movement (Ardley, 2002: 170).

Although the Dalai Lama has insights and sympathies, his message does not overwhelm every Tibetan. In recent years, a section of the exile community has questioned the very essence of his Middle Path approach to the Tibetan question. While the respect for the spiritual authority among the diaspora remains undiminished, the former's grip over temporal matters is no longer uncontested. What is certain is that there is a growing uncertainty among Tibetans about the way their political aspiration is channelled. Since the moral position of the Dalai Lama and his popularity in the West has not produced any concrete political outcome, there is a growing disenchantment with the government-in-exile's nationalist policies. However, this remains to be seen if the devolution of power by Dalai Lama will lead to a strong CTA which will move out of the shadow of Dalai Lama and begin to make strong policies.

Although the 14th Dalai Lama has tried to bring in some element of Western secularism to the Tibetan political process and had relinquish his political powers, it is still overwhelmingly conditioned by the indigenous dual religious and secular system of government (*chos srid gnyis Idan).* Clearly, the continuation of the religious-political axis has discouraged any alternative debate on Tibet's future; the influence of the Dalai Lama's stewardship of the Tibetan self-determination movement has reinforced a culture that stands against pluralism.

What is in dispute here is the corrosive effect of this culture upon the long-term conduct of Tibetan nationalism in diaspora and the evolution of a coherent political aspiration. The emphasis on pluralism is an attempt to analyse the efficacy of a soft and unidirectional approach, which has yielded very little in terms of concrete political results in the past 50 years. Besides, this model of institutional nationalism held together by one single leadership contains the danger of losing momentum or attain an unacceptable form in the event of the demise of the leader. Conservatives offer two reasons. First, Tibet and the Dalai Lama are one and inseparable and, therefore, any change to this institution should be gradual but not sudden and, secondly, this traditional

face of Tibetan nationalism reflects the moral force against Chinese occupation and should not be altered.

The reason why the Dalai Lama's spiritual role is ideologically predominant is that, according to the Constitution and the Charter, government should function according to the principles of dharma. As the prime representative of the Tibetan Buddhist religion, and, some would argue, of the whole Buddhist faith, the Dalai Lama's spiritual status is bound to be greater than his political role. Added to this the fact that he is without a country and his political role in the international arena diminishes still further. Indeed, it is the exile situation that presents what is perhaps the greatest challenge to Tibetan democracy: as refugees, Tibetans are ultimately subject to the laws and government of their host countries, and no amount of democratisation will change this.

For the process of democracy to succeed, the Tibetan exiles must elect a political leader. The Dalai Lama, if the institution continues to exist, could take on a purely religious role, while perhaps continuing to carry out ceremonial political acts.

The next chapter will be about the Central Tibetan Administration. It will try to analyze the effect of democratization that the Dalai Lama had initiated on the structure of CTA.

Chapter Three

Central Tibetan Administration: Democratization of Tibetan Government-in-Exile

This chapter will examine the process by which Central Tibetan Administration, the Tibetan government-in-exile, had adopted democracy and the prominent role the 14th Dalai Lama has in bringing in this change. It will also show how CTA seeks legitimacy. The exile government functioned in a variety of capacities, but Tibetan democracy is generally acknowledged to have been "more nominal than real."[1] This chapter will explore why in exile, democratization of its polity was important for Tibetans; and the emergence of new voices, which began to create civil society organizations that challenged established institutions and practices of pre-exile Tibetan society. The influence of a Tibetan civil society and the integration of elections facilitated the integration of democratic norms in the Tibetan exile community. The organizational structure of the old government and the exile government are shown to give one a comparative analysis.

This chapter will contain some of the major steps that have been taken to make the transition of Tibetan government-in-exile from a theocratic state to a democratic setup. The first major step was the establishment of popularly elected Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Secondly, the promulgation of a constitution that was later replaced by the Charter of Tibetans in Exile in 1991. Thirdly, direct election of *Kalon Tripa* since 2001.[2] And lastly, the devolution of temporal power of Dalai Lama in March 10, 2011. All these changes showed how serious the Tibetan government in exile was in trying to bring in democracy, even though the changes started from the top rather than from the people, and the problems it faced in democratizing. To have a better understanding of the Central Tibetan Administration as a government in exile, the next section will try to attempt to define government in exile from a theoretical perspective and try to place CTA within the definition.

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[1] Lobsang Sangay, "Tibet: Exiles' Journey," Journal of Democracy 14, No. 3 (July 2003):122.

[2] The *Kalon Tripa* had been popularly elected by the Tibetan in exile since 2001. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche was the first elected *Kalon Tripa*. He was elected for two terms till 2011. Since 2011, Lobsang Sangay has been the Kalon Tripa.

3.1 What is Government-in-Exile?

Shain defines government in exile as:

> ..opposition groups that struggle from outside their home territory to overthrow and replace the regime in their independent, occupied, or claimed home territory. These groups refer to themselves as governments-in-exile, national committees, provisional governments, national revolutionary councils, national liberation movements, and in other ways that reflect their claim to be the sole or at least the most viable alterrnative to the existing home regime. (Shain 1991: 2)

Shain outlined four factors that determine the nature of any exile organization: its history, its political claims, the origin of its members and the degree of national and international support. Exile organizations vary between informal and fragmented forms to highly organized non-governmental or even governmental structures. While non-governmental and less organized exile groups only represent a segment of a nation, see themselves as one alternative among others to represent the entire nation or have only a short history of existence, governmental and semi-governmental structures claim to be either the sole or at least the best alternative in terms of organizational stability and political commitment to the present political structures at home (Shain 1989: 27–8).

Among all exile organizational structures, governments-in-exile represent the most sophisticated form regarding their organizational level, origin, degree of claims and the granted outside support. Three aspects characterize the political activities of a government-in-exile. It presents itself as a lawfully elected organization that enjoys a legitimate status to rule a nation (people and territory); claims a traditional representation, an argument that emphasizes the legitimacy of its political aims; and acts as authentic spokesman of one nation and therefore for the national interest, which is mostly done with the help of a ‘charismatic’ leader in the forefront (Stephanie Roemer 2008: 37).

A government-in-exile’s claim to represent the entire nation as the legally chosen organization is important inasmuch as there is potentially more than one organizational structure, either in exile or within the home territory that claims similar power and status (Shain 1991: 5). In this context, an exile government is in a disadvantageous position as it lacks effective power over the claimed territory and people. Only through the nature of

its administrative set-up and implemented policies is it able to unify all members of the nation and foster its claimed position of power—which is in any case a difficult task. It can only be successfully handled through the promotion of unifying ideas and goals that represent the entire nation or at least make the countrymen accept certain compromises (Roemer 2008: 38).

Based on these theoretical considerations, Shain classified governments-in exile into three dynamic groups according to their background and goals:
1. There are governments-in-exile which aim to overthrow and replace the native ruling system at home. These organizations neither ask for changed borderlines nor question the existence of the state itself. They rather claim to be the legitimate representative of their nation by portraying themselves as lawfully elected bodies, as traditional or authentic groups with charismatic leaders. Examples of such exile governments are the Spanish republican government-in-exile, the Bourbons and the Romanovs, or the authentic Iranian anti-Shah campaign under an exile leadership.

2. There are governments-in-exile that focus on the creation of a new and internationally recognized state. They operate from outside their claimed territory and can be considered as 'pre-state self-determination-oriented or decolonization-orientated governments-in-exile' (Shain 1991: 3). Examples are the Angolan struggle against colonial Portugal, the anti-colonial efforts of the Algerian government-in-exile, and the struggle of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (Said 1980).

3. There are governments-in-exile that struggle for political independence to regain power over a territory that they had lost during wartime. In that category of deposed exile governments fall several European governments-in-exile caused by the Fascist's invasions in the Second World War, such as Yugoslavia, the Netherlands and Poland.

Furthermore, there are governments-in-exile that are unclassifiable because they fall into more than one category or pass through different categories during time. Examples of such multi-goal orientated governments-in-exile are the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, or the Tibetan case. They strive for the independence of their home countries (category three) and the right to self-determination (category two) (Shain 1991: 2–5).

The political success of an exile government's struggle in terms of replacing or overthrowing the present ruler in its independent, occupied or claimed home country is dependent on two crucial factors: its ability to secure loyalty within its own national community and to gain international support and recognition. Shain stated that there is a

> .,competition among contestants for power in the state [that can be described] as a struggle for loyalty and recognition, for national and international support of their claims to power' (1989: 17).

The importance of national loyalty and international support derives from the little room for political manoeuvring of a government-in-exile compared with sovereign governments. The ability for political activism is determined by the host country, which offers the people who left their homeland a base for organized political activities from abroad, by international political developments, by the present leadership at home and by the people a government-in-exile claims to represent. In this regard, exile governments operate on shaky political ground because they depend on the politics of the home and host countries and shifting allies in the global political arena (Roemer 2008: 39).

This section had explained why CTA can be called as government-in-exile from the theory that Shain had specified. The next section will deal with the approaches to the theory of democracy in exile. It will show how present theories of democracy have been inadequate to identify the unique position of Tibetan government in exile and figure out which theory comes close to categorizing the Central Tibetan Administration.

3.2 Theoretical Approaches to Democratisation in Exile

This section analyzes various theories of democracy in an attempt to classify the type of democracy the CTA follows. It will find the theories insufficient to classify the distinctive nature of Tibetan democracy. However, Weber's theory of a charismatic leader will come the closest to explaining the position of a religious head in a secular political set up of the CTA.

Democracy has a vast and varied history; one of its more unique narratives is the exiled government of Tibet currently located in Dharamsala, India. Founded by the fourteenth

Dalai Lama after his flight from Chinese-occupied Tibet in 1959, he immediately began developing an infrastructure that would form the basis of the democracy that exists today. The government in Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion was a theocracy where ultimate temporal and spiritual power rested with the Dalai Lama. Considering the original motivation behind China's "liberation" of Tibet from its feudal oppressors, it is ironic that "today, Chinese and Tibetans inside Tibet live under totalitarian Chinese rule, while Tibetans who fled into exile have developed a thriving democratic form of government."[3] The development of democracy came at a time when exiled Tibetans were struggling to make sense of the new world they had entered and their place in it.

Although Tibetans had no experience with democracy prior to 1959, it was quickly adopted by the Dalai Lama and Tibetans have slowly begun to make it their own. The last 50 years have been marked by key developments in Tibetan exile democracy that have had a profound impact on the electoral system. Upon his arrival in India, one of the Dalai Lama's first tasks was to establish a Tibetan government in exile (Central Tibetan Administration, CTA) as well as a parliament constituted in 1960.

On September 2, 1960, the Commission of Tibetan People's Deputies (CTPD)[4], took the oath of office, and has since been celebrated annually as "Democracy Day" among Tibetan exiles. The first constitutional government in the history of Tibet, albeit in exile, marked "a first concrete step toward the democratization of the Tibetan community."[5] Not long after, in 1961, the Dalai Lama took a second important democratic step by distributing a draft of a new constitution of Tibet, the final version of which he promulgated on March 10, 1963. Although technically intended to govern an independent Tibet, it nevertheless established a simple framework for the functioning of the exile government and parliament.

There is a dispute among theoretical approaches to democratisation about whether primary importance should be vested in the ruling elite or in the masses. For example,

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[3] Eva Herzer, "Testimony at the Congressional Human Rights Caucus Briefing on Tibet," 6 Dec. 2001, Washington D.C. p. 1; available at http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/tibet-an-evolving-democracy-exile, accessed 16 Feb. 2012.

[4] The legislative body was renamed to the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD) after the term of the sixth CTPD ended in 1979 and later to Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPiE) in 2006.

[5] Central Election Commission, "Election Commission" pamphlet (Dharamsala: Central Tibetan Administration: 2001).

Rustow hypothesised that democracy must be demanded by the citizens and that the democratisation process be set off by a political struggle (1970: 337–363). This does not help an analysis of the Tibetan case because the process in the Tibetan community in exile has been initiated entirely by the elite.

In contrast, Huntington suggests that a transition to democracy led by the elite is more likely to lead to a stable regime than one initiated by the masses (1984: 212). It is assumed that elite-led transition is for the benefit of the elite's own interests. This seems fairly plausible, but again it does not help an analysis of the Tibetan case. The fact is that democratisation there has been led by the Dalai Lama, yet true democracy would preclude him, an unelected leader, from office. As Huntington points out, 'in all democratic regimes the principal officers of government are chosen through competitive elections in which the bulk of the population can participate' (1991/92: 580).

In the Tibetan government in exile there have been elections for the *Kalons* (the equivalent of cabinet ministers) and *Kalon Tripa* but the Dalai Lama, remains unelected. Further, although there is universal suffrage in the exile community (1,45,150)[6], the bulk of the Tibetan population (six million inside Tibet) cannot take part. However it must be stressed that this is a government in exile, although it does purport to work for the interests of all Tibetans.

Another theoretical approach examines the reasons why regimes change. Przeworski identified four factors that might explain why authoritarian regimes democratise: the regime has realised its functional needs; it has lost its legitimacy; there have been internal conflicts; or there is pressure from foreign countries to democratise (1986: 50). None of these factors is applicable in the Tibetan case, except maybe for the final one. However, it is important to note that the process of democratisation has been initiated by the Tibetan government more in the anticipation of foreign approval than as a specific requirement of foreign governments and organisations.

[6] The Office of the Planning Commission's projected population in 2007, based on the annual percentage growth rate. Approximate world-wide distribution: India 101,242; Nepal 16,313; Bhutan 1,883; and rest of the world 25,712.

The obvious difficulty with the recognised theories of democratisation is that there is a tendency to assume the transition to democracy occurs within authoritarian regimes; which the Tibetan political system cannot be really described as one. The use of force commonly associated with authoritarian rule was not present in Tibet; on the contrary, legitimacy was accorded to the Tibetan government on the basis of Buddhist principles (Ardley, 2002: 86). The exact nature of the Tibetan state is difficult to define.

A discussion on a Tibet nation and state is interesting as it completely departs from the classic understanding of nation and state. Tibet was a theocratic state that transitioned towards democracy initiated by the Dalai Lama, who is the head of the state and rule as a divine incarnation. He revised the practice and structure of a government-in-exile which can be transplanted in a future state. Members of formerly loosely federated polities not under the consistent control of one state came together in exile under the Dalai Lama.

Therefore the most useful theoretical definition is that of legitimacy based upon charismatic authority, as proposed by Max Weber. Weber recognised that power based solely on physical force was inherently unstable, and that such regimes needed to achieve legitimate domination. One form of legitimate domination identified by Weber is charismatic authority, which is characterised by a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. (Weber 1968: 241–2)

The process of democratisation being undertaken by the Tibetan government in exile is similar to Max Weber's notion of the routinisation of charisma. Weber correctly affirmed that the institution of the Dalai Lama was an unusual case of charismatic leadership in that there was a system for choosing a charismatic successor (Weber 1947: 364). The move toward democracy by the Dalai Lama goes beyond Weber's theory, however, because the Dalai Lama is effectively seeking to remove the traditional process of selection and replace the position of Dalai Lama with an elected political leader. Rather than merely 'routinising' charismatic authority, through the introduction of bureaucratic structures, which are already present in the Tibetan polity, the Dalai Lama is actually seeking to transcend the charismatic system and replace it with a modern, democratic polity (Ardley, 2002: 85).

This is a very accurate description of the rule in Tibet of the Dalai Lamas, particularly as they were believed to be the reincarnation of Avalokiteshvara. Weber recognises that such authority is by definition innovative and unstable. Permanence and stability need to be maintained, and for these reasons charismatic forms of authority need to adapt to survive. Charisma, as Weber put it, must be 'routinised'. While in Tibet charismatic authority was in the past combined with traditional authority, in a modern context such routinisation could take the form of democratisation, which combines charisma with legal and rational domination.[7]

This section brought out the problem of fitting in theories of democracy in CTA. Only Weberian notion of the routinisation of charisma explain the prominent position of Dalai Lama in the CTA. In the next section, we will look into the process by which Central Tibetan Administration, the Tibetan government-in-exile, had adopted democracy and the prominent role the 14th Dalai Lama play in it. Unlike other democracies where democracy was achieved due to struggle and demand of the people, in CTA democracy was initiated from the top by Dalai Lama.

3.3 The Democratisation of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

This section will look into the history of how democratisation had taken place in the CTA. It will factor in various processes; of promulgating two different constitutions; experimenting with elections of the Assembly; reducing the role of the Dalai Lama over a period of time; and other changes the CTA had to go through to bring in democracy. This section will include the reasons why democratisation was important for CTA.

Government in exile can be viewed as a method of political resistance (Shain 1989, 1991; Ardley 2003; Frechette 2007). The Tibetan government in exile is the official face of the Tibetan independence movement, dedicated to both representing Tibetan exiles and presenting the Tibetan case for independence or 'genuine autonomy' from China. Although not officially recognised by any other government or international political

[7] Weber identified three ideal types of 'legitimate domination': traditional, charismatic and rational–legal. Traditional rule was legitimised by reference to custom and old rules and powers; charismatic rule by some extraordinary quality embodied by the leader; and rational–legal authority was legitimised by a legal code, a system of rules, an administrative staff, and so on.

organisation, Tibetans see their exile government, based in Dharamsala in India, as a natural continuation of the government in Lhasa. It is, however, a much modernised continuation. The Dalai Lama saw his arrival in India as an opportunity to reduce the protocol that he felt had restricted relations between the Tibetan leader and the people, and he set in motion a process of democratisation. While the old government in Tibet was made up of lay nobles who had inherited their seats, and an equal number of monastic officials, in 1960 the Dalai Lama established the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD). This legislature was to replace the dyarchy of equivalent monastic and secular offices that had existed in Tibet, as well as removing all hereditary privileges from government (Ardley. 2002: 85).

On April 29, 1959, the Dalai Lama called an emergency meeting of few senior Tibetan officials who were already in India to discuss the situation and plan for reconstruction in exile. The meeting was held in Mussorie. The meeting identified a few areas of concentration, namely: rehabilitation of refugees, education of Tibetan children, preservation of Tibetan culture and identity, gathering and disseminating information regarding Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet, pursuing the Tibetan question at the UN and promoting unity among the Tibetan refugee community (Tsewang Phuntso, 2003: 134-135).

In 1960 at Bodh Gaya, the Dalai Lama laid the foundations of democratic rule by announcing the establishment of the Central Tibetan Administration, the Government-in-Exile (Frechette 2007: 136). The CTA is the continuation of the government of independent Tibet. The government was established to meet both the immediate and long-term needs of the Tibetan people. It will be rooted in non-violence and peace, where every religion and polity would co-exist harmoniously, a system which would be endowed with the characteristics of liberal democracies yet possess the values and traits of Tibetan culture and tradition. It was here that the Dalai Lama stressed the urgency for the Tibetan Government-in-Exile to break with the past and move towards a democratic society (Tshering Tsomo, 2003: 151).

On April 29, 1960, the Dalai Lama moved to his new headquarters in Dharamshala, where he revitalised his Government-in-Exile. He transformed his administration from a traditional government based on theocratic and feudal rule to a modern democracy. The

government-in-exile was established in that regard, so that in the future when Tibet become free the whole democratic system could be transplanted there. He called a special meeting of the deputies and staff members on September 2, 1960, to formulate new rules and regulations and reallocate portfolios of the Kalon. He also established a bureau in New Delhi to serve as the Tibetan link with the Indian government and with international relief agencies that were coming to the aid of the Tibetan refugees. A similar office was set up in New York called the Office of Tibet, to raise the issue of Tibet at the UN and to disseminate information on Tibetans inside and outside Tibet. The first Tibetan settlement was set up in December 1960 at Bylakuppe in Karnataka (Phuntso, 2003: 135).

In 1961, the Dalai-Lama prepared a draft constitution for the Future Tibet, based on the principles of modern democracy. On March 10, 1963, a detailed draft constitution was promulgated. It has been planned and pursued from the start by the Dalai-Lama himself. For him the process of empowering the people to rule in their own right has become a democratic imperative that extends into the future.

The Dalai Lama is the head of the state and *Kalon Tripa* is the head of the government. The government is democratic and is popularly elected through elections held every five year. The structure of the Tibetan Government in Exile is designed along democratic principles, in an attempt to demonstrate that Tibet is a modernized society, and that the Tibetan Government in Exile could justly rule if it was restored in Tibet.

The CTA is divided into three organs- the legislature which is known as ATPD[8] (Assembly of Tibetan people's Deputies), the executive which is known as *Kashag* and the Supreme Court of Justice. The Tibetan Government in Exile includes a full cabinet with officials who focus on issues like education, public service, religion, culture, health, finances, and security. It also includes a parliament. Accordingly as enshrined in the Charter for the Tibetans in exile passed by the 11th Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies, now referred to as the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, the Executive, the

[8] The Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD) was change from the earlier name Committee of Tibetan People's Deputies (CTPD) after the term of the sixth CTPD ended in 1979 and later to Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPiE) in 2006. The ATPD and TPiE are used interchangeably according to the context of history they are placed at.

Legislature and the Judiciary-the three pillars of the democratic government of Tibetan exiles- founded on the marriage of the spiritual and political values-were instituted with the separation of equal powers among them. However, the CTA is not recognised by the Indian government or by any other governments (Boyd, 2005).

The first election to the ATPD was held in September 1960. Membership of the ATPD is based upon two criteria: the regional (Tibetan) origin of the candidate, and the religious affiliation. Accordingly, every Tibetan elects a representative from their own region or religious tradition. The reason for introducing the regional basis for election into the ATPD is explicitly linked to the Chinese occupation. The Chinese-created Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) does not include parts of the traditional Tibetan provinces of Kham and Amdo, these instead being subsumed into neighbouring Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan. The Tibetan government in exile seeks to be the representative body of all Tibetans, so the inclusion of the excluded regions is a politically symbolic gesture.

The elections to the ATPD did not become truly popular until 1975, when candidates could for the first time be chosen in primary elections (Shain 1989: 33). Even then the notion of the right to vote for one's chosen candidate remained puzzling for many Tibetans. This is one of the fundamental problems with the democratisation process in Dharamsala. The religious authority of the Dalai Lama can conflict with his position as a political leader in a supposedly democratic government. He attempted to approach this problem with the implementation of the Tibetan exile constitution in 1963.

This constitution, of which it has always been the intention that it would be implemented in an independent Tibet, contains provisions to balance the powers of the executive with a popularly elected legislature and an independent judiciary. Most controversially, for the Tibetan people at least, it contains the means whereby the Dalai Lama can be removed from office. Article 36 provided for the impeachment of the Dalai Lama by a two-thirds majority of the Assembly. The inclusion of this article was deeply unpopular with the Tibetan exiles, and resistance was such that over 150 representatives gathered to demand the deleting of the article if the constitution was to be approved (Ardley, 2002: 43). The Dalai Lama reports that:

> The thought that the Dalai Lama could be deposed flabbergasted many Tibetans. I had to explain that democracy is very much in keeping with Buddhist principles and, somewhat autocratically perhaps, insisted that the clause be left in. (Dalai Lama 1990: 186–7)

Of course, the possibility of this clause ever being used is slight. It is probable that due to the respect Tibetans have for their leader, this provision is primarily a symbol of democratic intent, and is thus extremely unlikely ever to be implemented. The final important step taken by the Tibetan government in exile has been the implementation of the Charter of Tibetans-in-exile. This is intended to be a series of guidelines for the organisation and functioning of the government, and it effectively replaced the constitution. However, there is evidence of conflict between the wishes of the Dalai Lama and those of the Tibetan people, represented as they are by the TPiE.

The Dalai Lama, during the debate on the charter, spoke strongly in favour of naming the Tibetan polity a 'secular' state. He denied that secularism meant the absence of religion but rather the word implies that the state will not discriminate among religions. The combination of spiritual and secular values could be achieved through the commitment to non-violence and peace whereas the naming of religion would narrow the scope of the charter (Edin, 1992: 31).

The ATPD decided, by a narrow margin, to exclude the word 'secular' from the charter. Instead, Article three of the charter reads as follows: 'The future Tibetan polity shall uphold the principle of non-violence and shall endeavour to be a Free Social Welfare State with its politics guided by the Dharma'. Far from containing a commitment to a secular state, this provision explicitly provides for Buddhist principles in government. Dharma refers to the process of spiritual transformation; it is the 'truth' of Buddhism. However, Tibetans have been at pains to stress that this does not mean a return to the dualistic government of 'old' Tibet; instead, true government along the principles of dharma would mean that dishonesty and self-interest have no place in the new Tibetan political process (Ardley, 2002: 44).

The legislature, constitution and charter have all been seen as major steps towards the full implementation of democratic principles in Tibetan government. Whether true democracy does exist or not in the Tibetan government in exile is of vital importance for

the independence movement. Although the Tibetan government in exile has not directly encouraged or incited political resistance in Tibet, it still plays an important role. Protest during the late 1980s has strengthened Tibetan loyalty to the Dalai Lama, and has kept the issue of Tibetan independence alive. The Dalai Lama's tireless campaigning around the world – including his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 – has meant that Tibet is not forgotten. The Chinese government persists in claiming that protest in Tibet is engineered by the so-called 'Dalai Clique' (Smith Jr, 2010: 217), and have used this to justify the various recent political campaigns such as 'Strike hard' and 'Political education' (Smith Jr, 2010: 52, 104).

Unfortunately for Beijing, however, there is no evidence to suggest that resistance inside Tibet is directly engineered by the government in exile. Indeed, given the professed wish of the Dalai Lama to negotiate with China, any attempts by his government to initiate protest in Tibet would be counterproductive. The government in exile has, however, maintained links with Tibetans inside Tibet, and material produced by the government does circulate within Tibet; material featuring the Dalai Lama is particularly in demand. The exile government also produced a Tibetan-language copy of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights for circulation inside Tibet, which is, inevitably, banned by the Chinese government.

While the government in exile did not support guerrilla activity in the 1960s and 1970s, support is given to the non-violent resistance led by monks and nuns that has occurred from the late 1980s to the present, even if it is only support in the form of dissemination of information about the situation in Tibet. The Tibetan government in exile has of course also been forced to accommodate refugees from Tibet, numbers of whom have increased following renewed unrest in the late 1980s. Marshall argues that as repression increases in Tibet itself, the presence of an exile community has enabled Tibetans to voice their resistance to China without fear of reprisals (1999: 9).

The government's major role in resisting the Chinese has been to reflect and publicise the hardships faced by Tibetans at home, and to keep up an output of regime-damaging information against Beijing, as well as representing, to the best of its limited abilities, all Tibetans' interests in the international political arena. This does not, however, extend to any formal support of the Tibetan guerrillas. While certain sections of the Tibetan people

may have shown their commitment to a violent struggle, the Dalai Lama has remained fully opposed to violence as a means to liberate Tibet from the Chinese. He believes that violence can only ever make any existing disagreement far worse, and that non-violence is the natural act of compassion (Ardley, 2002: 45).

The efforts of the Dalai Lama to democratise the Tibetan exile polity have been aimed at an international audience to emphasise the progressive nature of the contemporary polity compared both with old Tibet and modern China. At present, the Tibetan government-in-exile does not enjoy the official recognition of any other government in the world, or of the United Nations. Perhaps the Dalai Lama feels he must democratise if his government is to be taken as legitimate by the west.

To return to the Weberian analysis, the adoption of rational-legal frameworks by a regime based on charismatic authority lends that regime greater legitimacy, at least in the eyes of other rational-legal regimes. Legal domination, according to Weber, is that of the 'modern "servant of the state" and by all those bearers of power who in this respect resemble him'. Such authority is based upon legality, the 'validity of legal statute and functional "competence" based on rationally created *rules*' (Weber, 1967: 79). If the Tibetan government-in-exile can resemble a rational-legal polity, then perhaps it is hoped that the liberal democracies of the west may be more inclined to assist with the Tibetan struggle.

The process of democratisation also ensures that the Tibetan government-in-exile is seen as occupying the moral high ground in comparison with China, as well as emphasising the extent to which the Tibetan polity has changed since the Chinese occupation. The Dalai Lama's decision in 1988 to seek autonomy rather than independence was a pragmatic appeal to the international community, even though it angered many Tibetans. This could be why the Tibetan people have been reluctant to embrace democracy; they do not perceive it to be primarily for their benefit, even though the anticipated western attention is desirable. It is apparent, though, that such western attention continues to be noticeable by its absence, despite the efforts of the various Tibet support groups and of the Dalai Lama and Tibetans themselves. Indeed, with the awarding of the 2008 Olympic Games to Beijing and the entry of China into the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Tibet remains a distant concern on the international political agenda.

There are other reasons why the Dalai Lama has decided that the Tibetan exile polity must be democratic. The Dalai Lama always has intended that the democratic Tibetan government-in-exile would form the foundation of a future independent Tibetan administration (although, given his demand that Tibet should be granted autonomy within China rather than full independence, it is difficult to understand how democratic Tibet would co-exist with authoritarian China, or how a religious polity could work within an officially atheist state). At present, though, neither the Tibetan exile regime nor the Chinese state embraces a multi-party system. The process of democratisation is an important tool for Tibetans to use against the Chinese government, both to show that there is no question of them fighting for a return to the old Tibetan polity, and that any future Tibetan polity would be a democratic example for Beijing.

There are other more pressing problems for the Tibetans; foremost amongst these must be the Dalai Lama's concern for how the Tibetan community will cope in the event of his death. His move toward having an elected political leader in exile is clearly designed to address this issue in part. On March 10, 2011 he announced the devolution of his political power. This announcement has major implications for CTA in the future. It had taken more than fifty years, since 1960 when the Tibetan government in exile was first established, to see CTA heading towards a new direction where the actual practice of democracy can be realized. It will, however, first need to show to the Tibetans that they are capable of taking the responsibility of leading those in exiles and at the same time garner supports for the Tibetan movement. This would be difficult without the Dalai Lama who has the admiration and obeisance all over the world. This aspect of the CTA still need a lot more study to see how it will turn out in the future.

In this section we have seen that the process of democratisation in the Tibetan polity is linked to the Tibetan struggle for independence or autonomy. This relation is formed out of the desire to achieve legitimacy and therefore support from the west, and so as to ensure a smooth transition to effective leadership in the event of the present Dalai Lama's death. Before analysing the influence of democratisation on the structure of the Tibetan government-in-exile, it is important to have a brief idea of the government structure that existed in the old Tibet. The next section will introduce the Tibetan government as it existed in Lhasa before democratisation and before the exile.

3.4 The Tibetan Government of Old Tibet

This section will show the structure of the Tibetan government in Lhasa before exile. This is an attempt to give a general idea about structure of the government in Tibet so that comparison with the government in exile can be made. Although Tibet is generally assumed to have been an autocratic theocracy, similar perhaps to the post-revolutionary regime in Iran, in fact political control prior to the Chinese invasion in 1950 was heavily decentralised.

The Dalai Lamas, until the beginning of the twentieth century when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama attempted greater centralisation, exerted real political power only over central Tibet. Areas such as Amdo, in north-eastern Tibet, fell under the local control of monasteries or secular leaders. Even within the areas under the Dalai Lama's control, local monastic estates exercised political autonomy, although the actual control they had over their tenants was limited by Lhasa.

Religion was generally a unifying force for the Tibetans. However there was inevitably an element of rivalry between the Dalai Lama, the monk officials and the more powerful monasteries. It is for this reason that the political process in Tibet has been described as 'typified by a network of crosscutting interests and alliances' (Goldstein 1989: 36). Overriding any conflict of political interests, however, was Tibetan Buddhism, which supplied a common ideology that brought together in the same monastic groups members of different political units.

The Tibetan government consisted of two civil services, one monastic (*tse khor*) and one made up of lay nobility (*drung khor*). It was established by the Fifth Dalai Lama, who became ruler of Tibet in 1642, when the *Gelug* tradition of Tibetan Buddhism assumed political dominance over the country. The government expressed its political ideology via the term *chos srid gnyis ldan*, which loosely translates as 'religion and politics combined'. This term is crucial as it both demonstrates the commitment to a religious state made by this government, and also represents the essence of Tibetan national identity. The duality of religion and politics is also exemplified by the presence of both monks and lay people in the government. The 175 monks in the government were specially trained, and the members of the nobility, also numbering 175, held their

positions on a hereditary basis. Richardson explains these bureaucratic arrangements thus:

> The monks' activities extended into] almost every sphere of government, including that of district administration, so that there was a dualistic arrangement by which a monk was to be found in almost every government office as colleague of one or more laymen. (1962: 18)

The Dalai Lama is the spiritual and temporal head of Tibet. Beneath the Dalai Lama is a regent, after the death a Dalai Lama the role of the leader is taken by a regent. He will hold power until the new Dalai Lama come of age. The Regents were answerable to the National Assembly of Tibet, the *tsongdu.* The Regent was invariably a lama, chosen from monasteries connected with the monastic universities of Sera or Drepung, in the Lhasa Valley. Thus in a way the monasteries exerted more influence on political affairs through the Regent, who came from these big and influential monasteries. Under the Regent is the Prime Minister, *Silon.* Usually two *Silons* are chosen, one a monk and one a lay member. These reflect the dualistic nature of the government. The *Silons* are a link between the Dalai Lama and his cabinet, the *Kashag.* The *Kashag* was the highest office of the lay administration. It consisted of three lay members and one monk official. The monk was formally being treated as senior, which actually was just ceremonial. All secular business was handled by the *Kashag*, with each member (*Kalon* or *Shape)* having collective responsibility. The power of the *Kashag* was limited by its lack of authority over the monastic administration and over religious affairs. In the lay government hierarchy, the *Kashag* came above the executive department of finance.

The executive consisted of five departments: military, judiciary, foreign affairs, education and finance. All departments, with the exception only of finance, were headed by one lay and one monk official. The finance department (*tsigang)* was headed by four lay officials called *tsipons*. Apart from maintaining the finance office, the *tsipons* also acted as spokesmen for the National Assembly, as did the *yigtsang*, the monastic council. The *yigtsan* was the monastic counterpart of the kashag. They were responsible for the administration of the monasteries and for the selection and training of monastic administration. With the *tsipons*, the *yigtsan* presided over the National Assembly.

The National Assembly, *tsongdu*, was not a permanent body; it met only when required by the kashag. The basic assembly consist of *tsigang* and *yigtsan*, and it usually met to consider a proposal that was to be presented to the Dalai Lama. The full *tsongdu* consisted of *tsigang* and *yigtsan*, plus all the abbots and ex-abbots of the three monastic universities-Ganden, Sera and Drepung; all the monk and lay officials available at the particular time; representatives from important monasteries such as Reting, Tashilhunpo and Sakya; captains and lieutenants of the Tibetan army stationed in Lhasa; minor tax collectors (*tsopa)*; and about thirty clerks. The *kashag* did not actually attend the assembly, although it was convened at their behest. The The main function of the assembly was the selection of Regents, and it was also the voice of the monasteries of Sera, Ganden and Drepung, which together housed around 20,000 monks.

This section showed how the old government in Tibet was structured. It can be seen that religion was the dominant factor in the political system. This will serve as a point of reference from which CTA, the new government formed in exile, can be comparatively studied. Also it will make it much easier to observe the changes that had happened in exile, especially in relation to the process of democratization. The structure of the Central Tibetan Administration will be described in the next section.

3.5 Structure of the CTA: Tibetan Government-in-Exile

The Central Tibetan Administration functions like any other government and has its own state-like institutions. It consists of three organs of government: executive which is the Kashag, the legislature which is the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and the judiciary which is the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission. Apart from the three pillars of democracy, CTA also have three constitutional bodies: the Public Service Commission, the Election Commission and Office of the Auditor General. The CTA functions under a set of fundamental principles laid down in the constitution, the Charter of Tibetan in Exiles.

3.5.1 The Constitution: The Charter of the Tibetan-in-Exiles

The Charter of the Tibetan-in-Exiles, 1990, brought significant changes to the structure of the assembly and, importantly, to its function and relative power as to promote greater democratization. Democracy among Tibetan exiles had developed as a piecemeal historical process rather than ‘a precedent for one structural principle over another’

(Anne Frechette, 111). The charter reestablished the assembly's separate electorates to represent each of the three regional homeland constituencies- U-Tsang, Do-tod and Do-med - and each of the five religious groups- Gelug, Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu and Bon. It reserved seats for new exile-based constituencies- North America and Europe.[9] -and also reserved 3 seats for special appointment by the Dalai Lama.[10]

Apart from the achievement of resumption of election, the charter has empowered the assembly to elect the *Kashag* (Council of Ministers). The *Kashag* was earlier appointed by the Dalai Lama. The *Kashag* manage the administration of the CTA (Central Tibetan Administration). The administration is divided into nine departments- finance, security, home affairs, international relations, health, religion and culture, public service and planning. The charter also empowered the assembly to review annual budgets for the administration and pass all legislation for the exile community. The charter had revitalized the assembly and had made it more democratic.

The Charter of the Tibetans-in-Exile is the supreme law governing the functions of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). It was drafted by the Constitution Redrafting Committee, instituted by The Dalai Lama in 1990. The draft of the Charter, containing 108 Articles, was widely circulated by the Committee in early 1991 to elicit feedback and suggestions. The Committee then drafted the final Charter, which was submitted to the Eleventh Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD).

The Eleventh ATPD deliberated on the Charter and passed it unanimously on 14 July 1991. The approval of the Dalai Lama was received on 28 June 1991. The Charter enshrines the basic principles of democracy, with separation of powers among the three organs of the Government: Judiciary, Legislature and Executive. Before the Charter, the Central Tibetan Administration functioned roughly along the lines of the draft

[9] The legislature presently has forty four members. Ten members are elected each from U-Tsang, Do-tod and Do-med, the three traditional provinces of Tibet, while the five religious denominations elect two members each. Four members are elected by Tibetans in the west: two from Europe, one from North America and one from Canada.

[10] In September 2003, the Dalai Lama suggested that he no longer make direct nominations to the parliament. Subsequently the Parliament-in-Exile amended the relevant articles of the Charter, leaving it open for him to decide whether to nominate upto three eminent Tibetans to the parliament. The Dalai Lama, however, have not nominated anyone in the 14th (2006-2011) and the 15th (2011-2016) TPiE.

Democratic Constitution for Future Tibet promulgated by HH the Dalai Lama on 10th March 1963.

The salient features of the Charter incorporate non-violence, free democratic policy, respect for human rights, and the promotion of moral values while ensuring the material welfare of the Tibetan people. It also outlines the rights and responsibilities of the Tibetans in exile – including the ways to seek the resolution of the Tibet issue and how to bring happiness to the Tibetans inside Tibet. It provides for equal political rights and economic and social benefits in the exile community, including in the fields of education, culture and health.

The Charter is a comprehensive working constitution. It is modelled on similar documents in liberal democracies while being rooted in Tibetan values. The care and precision with which the rights and duties of the community-in-exile and the functions of its government are laid down constitute in the principles of a working democratic system, guaranteeing individual rights and suited to the condition of Tibet. (ATPD 1998)

The Charter lays down principles for every aspects of governance for the community-in-exile and serves as a model for free Tibet. It lays down Fundamental Principles, Rights and Duties, Directive Principles of the Tibetan Administration policy, and defines the functions of the Executive, Judiciary, Legislature, administration of Tibetan settlements, the Tibetan Election Commission, Public Service Commission and Office of the Tibetan Auditor General.

Besides laying down procedures, the Charter is unique in defining the "Nature of Tibet's Polity." The Fundamental Principles state: "The future Tibetan Polity shall uphold the principle of non-violence and shall endeavour to be a free Social welfare State with its politics guided by the Dharma." (ATPD, 1998) Dharma is clearly referred to only as an ethical code.

The Charter makes it clear that it does not promote any forms of state religion. All religious denominations are expressly assured equality before the law with the further assurance that there will be no discrimination on "grounds of birth, sex, race, religion,

language, lay or ordained, social origin, rich or poor, elected position or other status." (ATPD, 1998) A long list of other rights confirms the Charter's liberal character.

The Charter does not ignore the Tibetan homeland. The administration-in-exile is directed to "maintain a just policy for the achievement of the common goal of Tibet." (ATPD, 1998) It is also required to protect Tibetans in Tibet from hardships and danger. It is also directed to promote the well-being of the exiles in the settlements and to pay particular attention to education- already one of the major achievements of the Tibetan community.

3.5.2 Legislature: Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

The Tibetan Parliament in Exile (TPiE) is the unicameral and highest legislative organ of the Central Tibetan Administration. Established and based in Dharamsala, India. The creation of this democratically elected body has been one of the major changes that The Dalai Lama has brought about in his efforts to introduce a democratic system of administration. Today, the Parliament consists of 44 members. Ten members each from U-Tsang, Do-tod and Do-med, the three traditional provinces of Tibet, while the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the traditional Bon faith elect two members each. Four members are elected by Tibetans in the west: two from Europe, one from North America and one from Canada. The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile is headed by a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker, who are elected by the members amongst themselves. Any Tibetan who has reached the age of 25 has the right to contest elections to the Parliament.

The elections are held every five years and any Tibetan who has reached the age of 18 is entitled to vote. Sessions of the Parliament are held twice every year, with an interval of six months between the sessions. When the Parliament is not in session, there is a standing committee of eleven members: two members from each province, one member from each religious denomination. The members of the Parliament undertake periodic tours to Tibetan settlements to make an assessment of people's overall conditions. On their return, they bring to the notice of the administration about all the grievances and matters which need attention. The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile keeps in touch with people also through Local Parliaments established in 38 major Tibetan communities. The Charter provides for the establishment of a Local Parliament in a community having a population of not less than 160.

The Local Parliaments are scaled-down replicas of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. They keep an eye on the activities of their respective settlement/welfare officers. They also make laws for their respective communities according to the latter's felt-needs. The laws passed by the Local Parliament must be implemented by the respective settlement/welfare officer.

3.5.3 Executive: The Kashag

The *Kashag* (Cabinet) is the highest executive office of the Central Tibetan Administration amongst the three democratic pillars. *Kashag* runs and fulfills all its executive and administrative responsibilities. The cabinet, kashag, is the main executive body of the CTA, which highly relies on the traditional structure of the Lhasa government, indicated by its name, structure, and functioning. The kashag consists of four ministers, the kalons, who are in number and name the same as in the pre-1959 Lhasa government. At present, they are directly elected by the exile Tibetan people for a five-year term. The four ministers elect their chairman, or in Tibetan terminology, the kalon tripa, who acts in the position of a Prime Minister.

In 2004, all ministers shared their responsibilities in the seven fields of exile Tibetan politics. Seven departments are managed by the Kashag. They are Department of Religion and Culture, Department of Home, Department of Finance, Department of Education, Department of Security, Department of information and International Relations and Department of Health.

In accordance to the Charter of Tibetans, Kalon Tripa heads a maximum of seven members *Kashag*. Since 2001, Kalon Tripa is directly elected by the exile Tibetan populace. Kalon Tripa in turn nominates his other seven Kalons and seeks the approval of Tibetan Parliament in Exile. The tenure of *Kashag* is for five years. The role of the Kalon Tripa had become very important since 2011 after the Dalai Lama announced that he is stepping down as the political head of the CTA. The devolution of Dalai Lama's political power means that the Kalon Tripa is not just a head of the *Kashag* but is now the head of the government in exile.

A Secretary (Cabinet Secretary) heads the *Kashag* Secretariat. The Secretariat provides the *Kashag* with secretarial and administrative services. All decision made in the *Kashag* are channelise through *Kashag* Secretariat and are implemented by the respective departments and concerned offices. The *Kashag* Secretariat has mainly three Political, liaisoning and administrative divisions with two sub offices: Planning Commission and *Kashag* Contingency section.

3.5.4 Judiciary: The Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission

The Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission is the highest judicial organ and one of the three most important pillars of the Tibetan democratic administration in exile or the Central Tibetan Administration. It formally came into existence as per the provision of the Charter of Tibetans in Exile on 11th March 1992 (the seventh day of the first month of the Tibetan Water-Monkey year, 2119) in Gangchen Kyishong, the headquarters of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamsala in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh.

Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission is composed of the Chief Justice Commissioner and two other Justice Commissioners. They are appointed by the Tibetan Parliament in exile through election out of nominated candidates submitted by the Selection Committee, which is constituted by a Committee of Chief Justice Commissioner, Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Tibetan Parliament in exile and Kalon Tripa (Chief of the *Kashag*/Cabinet).

In the past, the Chief Justice Commissioner and two other Justice Commissioners took the oath of office from The Dalai Lama. However, since His Holiness' devolution of all his political and administrative powers on 29th May 2011, the Chief Justice Commissioner is to take the oath of office from the out-going Chief Justice Commissioner or the officiating Chief Justice Commissioner. The two other Justice Commissioners are required to take the oath of office from the Chief Justice Commissioner.

3.5.5 The Election Commission

The Election Commission is the apex body with a permanent office headed by the Chief Election Commissioner-CEC along with regular staff members. Whenever there is a

vacancy for CEC, the Supreme Justice Commissioner, the Speaker & the deputy Speaker of TPiE and the Kalon Tripa will set up a committee to finalize a name list of candidates. In the list number of candidates should not be less than the double of a CEC to be appointed. The Committee submits the list to the Parliament and appointment of the CEC is done by the Parliament through voting. The candidate who secures maximum number of votes becomes the CEC.

If the appointment of CEC is required when the Parliament is not in session, the Standing Committee of the Parliament conducts the election process through voting and the candidate will have to secure two third of votes in favour, from the total strength of the Standing Committee to get CEC elected. Whenever Tibetans go to polls to elect Tibetan MPs and the Kalon Tripa, two Additional Election Commissioners are required and the Parliament appoints the two in the same way as the CEC. The Charter for Tibetans in Exile, makes it clear that the term of the two Additional Election Commissioners is from the "official announcement of the date for commencement of the Tibetan General Election to the declaration of the final results of the Election."

The Election Commission is empowered to adjudicate any electoral disputes among its Regional Election Offices or direct appeals to the EC to settle disputes. During the General Election, the EC can if necessary, ask the *Kashag* to cancel transfer of any Regional Election Officers-REOs or a staff at the Office of EC and can also take disciplinary actions against any REO or a staff for non-fulfillment of any electoral duties assigned to the concerned.

3.5.6 Public Service Commission

The Dalai Lama's vision to democratize the Tibetan society yielded its fruit in exile when he set up the Tibetan Government in Exile on 29 April 1959 and the first democratically elected Tibetan People's Deputies as they were known at that time, took their oath on 2nd September 1960 Till 1972 the recruitment & appointment of Tibetan civil service staff were done by the Home & Security Department in the name of Service Management Office. Democratization and expansion of the Central Tibetan Administration-CTA, went on unabatedly & a separate office then Department of Personnel, was set up under the supervision of *Kashag*, the Executive Organ of CTA. Thus recruitment & appointment of CTA staff was done by the Department of Personnel.

With further democratization & expansion of CTA, Tibetan Parliament in Exile –TPiE became more effective as a Legislative Organ of the CTA. The Parliament passed a number of laws and the Charter for Tibetans in Exile, approved by The Dalai Lama on 28 June 1991 is the most important legal document. CTA functions as per provisions in the Charter which enumerates the three pillars of democracy (legislature, executive and judiciary) and three autonomous bodies of which, Public Service Commission – PSC is one of them.

3.5.7 Office of the Auditor General

The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) of Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) was established in 1962 and functioned as executive body headed by a Secretary under the *Kashag*(Cabinet), the Executive Head. In 1991, as per the Charter of the Tibetans in exile, this office was commissioned as autonomous body, accountable directly to The Dalai Lama. According to the Charter and the Regulation of the Office of the Auditor General, the OAG has the power and responsibility to audit the accounts of all the CTA Departments and its subsidiaries, autonomous institutions that are fully or partly funded by CTA and self funded autonomous institutions like co-operative societies, trading concerns, educational institutions, public health centre and hospitals and so forth that comes under the purview of CTA.

Since Office of the Auditor General is the Supreme Audit Institution of CTA, its scope of audit is not restricted to financial audit only. It also has the power to conduct value for money audit, systems audit, management audit etc., as and when deemed necessary. So far, due to short of manpower and lack of specialization in other fields of audit, we have been concentrating on financial and regulatory audit. The Office of the Auditor General is headed by an Auditor General, who is directly appointed by the Dalai Lama, till his devolution of power recently. Next Auditor General will be appointed by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile as per the 2011 amended Charter. The Auditor General holds the office for a term of ten years or until he/she attains the age of 65, whichever is earlier.

3.6 Challenges to the Process of Democratization

An initial examination of the theories of democratisation in the previous section, suggests that the Tibetan case is unique and that the theories are of little help in grasping the complexities involved. It is difficult for the Tibetans themselves; it is also difficult from a theoretical perspective. It is hard to see how the theoretical approaches to democratisation are helpful, for these must come to term with several special factors: the nature of the Tibetan state apparatus; the lack of political parties and an opposition in Tibetan exile politics; the attitudes of the Tibetan people; and the position of the unelected Dalai Lama within a democratic system.

The role of the monastic establishment in the fall of the Tibetan government has been agreed upon by many (Golstein 1992; Ardley 2002; French 2003; Smith 2010). The major monasteries in Tibet were opposed to the political and military modernisation which would inevitably have undermined their powerful positions. The Dalai Lama acknowledged in his 10 March Statement in 1982 that the dominant role of the monasteries in pre-1959 Tibet was a relic, and spoke of the need for change:

> Tibetans will have to keep pace with the progressive changes that are occurring in the twentieth-century world and move towards democratic revolution. The old social system will never be resurrected. The teachings of the Buddha . . . are beneficial to society since they are based on sound reason and actual experience. These we must preserve and promote. However, the livelihood of lamas and monks and the administration of the monastic establishment must of necessity change with the changing times. (Dalai Lama 1986: 63)

In accordance with such views, when the exile government was established it was decided that rather than having a hand-picked dualistic government of influential monks and aristocrats, there should be an elected legislative body (Ardley, 2002: 84). This, the Commission of Tibetan Peoples' Deputies (CTPD), was established in September 1960, and at present has forty-four elected members[11]. A Constitution and Charter of Tibetans in exile were also introduced. It was hoped by the Dalai Lama that these measures would go some way towards changing Tibetan society for the better.

[11] The CTPD was renamed in 1979 to Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD) and later as Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPiE) in 2006. Ten members each are elected from the regions of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo; two from each of the five religious denominations of Kagyu, Gelug, Nyingma, Sakya and Bon; two from Europe and two from North America.

The main problem with the TPiE is that its powers are limited, particularly as it has no powers to overrule the Dalai Lama. Edin points to the fact that a delegation of Tibetan officials visited Tibet in 1980 without informing the TPiE, or involving them in the decision. This, she argues, is evidence of the lack of stature of the Assembly (1992: 32). A far more powerful body than the ATPD is the *Kashag*, or Cabinet. The ministers (*kalon*) of this body are elected by the ATPD, and a 70 per cent majority is required for election. However, if this majority is not reached the Dalai Lama has the power to appoint ministers directly.

According to Article 20 of the Charter, the *Kashag* is responsible for 'exercising executive powers of the Tibetan administration subordinate to the Dalai Lama'. Each minister heads one or two departments of the Tibetan government including the departments of finance, culture and religion, home affairs and education. These departments are responsible for the daily administration of Tibetan affairs in exile. The *Kashag* is ultimately accountable to the Dalai Lama, rather than to the ATPD, although in legal matters it is accountable to the ATPD.

Herein lies a principal difficulty: the Dalai Lama is not elected, so accountability to him is not, in general terms, analogous with accountability to the Tibetan people. However, it is said that the majority of Tibetans believe that the total faith they have in the Dalai Lama as a religious figure means he can be relied upon to make political decisions in their best interests.[12]

It is the position of the Dalai Lama as an unelected religious and political leader that makes the Western concept of democracy so difficult to apply in the Tibetan case. His status complicates the relationship between the Tibetan executive and the legislature, and his position is not addressed by the Constitution and the Charter. He is traditionally installed rather than being an elected political leader. He acts theoretically as the head of the CTA which is not questioned by the executive or legislature.

[12] Edin 1992: 47. According to Edin, given all Tibetans have faith in the Dalai Lama, this is in itself democratic, for he truly represents the people.

Dalai Lama is expected by the exile Tibetans to decide in the name of all Tibetans and to take responsibility for the entire nation. Even though he had frequently stated his position in a future Tibet would be exclusively a religious one, but the actual practice leave much to be desired (Roemer, 2008:163). The constitution proposed for a free Tibet resembles a parliamentary democracy, yet nothing precludes the status of the Dalai Lama as spiritual head of state which is ideologically supra-ordinate to any temporal power (Klieger, 1992: 82).

The other major impediment is the lack of opposition within the Tibetan polity. There are at present no political parties in the government in exile, although within the wider Tibetan exile community, parties and political groups are beginning to emerge.[13] The only political party that presently exists in the Tibetan exile community is the National Democratic Party of Tibet (NDPT), but there is no provision for parties to play a role in the exile administration. Indeed, one of the powers of the ATPD is 'to play the role of opposition parties', which is interpreted as 'maintaining effective control of the government' (TPPRC 1999: 34). As it cannot formally contest elections as a party - there being no multi-party system in the exile polity - it instead supports individual candidates.

TYC is often seen as the de facto opposition in the Tibetan because it is the largest organization of Tibetan exiles which stands for pro-independence. It was formed in 1970 by four energetic young Tibetans: Tenzin Geyche Tethong, Lodi Gyari, Tenzing Tethong and Sonam Topgey. The main goal of the TYC was to fight for complete independence of Tibet. Even though that goal is counter to the middle way approach of the Dalai Lama, they work under the leadership of the Dalai Lama for the common good of the government and people of Tibet.

Although a diversity of views is a necessary aspect of democracy, the political opposition represented by the TYC and the NDPT is perceived as undesirable because it would bring disunity. Disunity, it is argued, would damage the Tibetan cause; as the

[13] An important NGO is the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC). This organisation is often seen as being the *de facto* opposition in the Tibetan polity, mainly because they are radical and disagree with the Dalai Lama's policy of total non-violence. A fledgling political party, the National Democratic Party of Tibet, emerged from the Tibetan Youth Congress in 1994. Its aim is to 'safeguard and strengthen the democratic process inaugurated by the Dalai Lama', and it is unequivocally committed to Tibetan independence (home page of the National Democratic Party of Tibet : http://www.ndp4tibet.org/).

preface of the Charter makes clear that Tibetans' primary objective should be the 'achievement of Tibet's common goal [and the strengthening of] the solidarity of Tibetans'.[14] Although this common goal is not stated, it is implied that this is a future free Tibet.

The next challenge for Tibetan parliamentary democracy is the need to strengthen democratic responsibility among the general Tibetan population. The lack of political awareness and voters' apathy are critical for the successful functioning of a democracy. Although the Tibetan government along with several non-governmental organizations initiated political education, there is still a need for more political will, action and responsibility among the Tibetan people (Norbu, 2003: 401).

However, all direction towards the goal of free Tibet has been centred on the Dalai Lama. He made an announcement in 1988 in Strasboug that Tibetans had abandoned the goal of independence in favour of genuine autonomy, yet there was no process prior to this announcement to ascertain whether this was actually the wish of the people. There was a referendum planned in 1997, which would have chosen the future strategy for the Tibetans to take, but this did not take place. A great deal of controversy surrounded this referendum, mainly because some Tibetans feared that once a strategy had been selected by the people, there would have been little opportunity for change if the strategy proved unsuccessful.

Further, many believed that Tibetans in exile did not have the right to make a decision that would have had an enormous impact on the six million Tibetans inside Tibet. It was also suggested that the referendum was eventually cancelled because the Tibetan government feared the result would not be their preferred outcome (Ardley, 2002: 87). If this is the case, the implications for the process of democratisation are damaging.

It would appear that, overall, Tibetan democracy is still very much in its infancy and that the measures implemented so far have had only limited success. However, the process must be put into a wider perspective: it is only a little over fifty years since the Dalai

[14] The Charter of the Tibetans in Exile is the supreme law governing the functioning of the CTA. It was drafted by the Constitution Redrafting Committee set up by the Dalai Lama in 1990.

Lama and his people left Tibet, and so to make any transition in that time from what resembled a medieval ecclesiastical kingdom into a modern democracy would be impressive. The fact that the Tibetan people have shown any inclination at all to disagree with the Dalai Lama, even when it has been in his interests, is progress – if not in the direction of Western democracy, then at least toward an environment in which debate and freedom of speech are commonplace.

In this chapter we have establish that the Tibetans experiment with democracy is different from the normal theories of democracy. While many democracies are established with some struggle from the demand of the people, Tibetan's case is unique where democracy had been endowed on them by the top by Dalai Lama. However the experiment with democracy is not without criticism and challenges. The main problem is that the legislature (TPiE) has limited powers. Even the cabinet (*Kashag*), which is much more of a higher body than the TPiE is subordinate to the Dalai Lama. The *Kashag* is elected by the TPiE but is ultimately accountable to the Dalai Lama rather than the legislature. It is the position of the Dalai Lama as an unelected religious and political leader who makes the concept of democracy so difficult to apply in the Tibetan case. As the figurehead of Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama's spiritual status is bound to be greater than his political role. Added to this fact is that he is without a country.

In a surprise development in March 2011, the Dalai Lama had step down from the political leadership and is now just a spiritual leader. His decision of relinquishing political authority to the Kalon Tripa is a clear indication of the eagerness to build up the Tibetan community on the principles of democracy. This paved the way for the election of the XVth Assembly in March 2011 and along with it the 3rd Kalon Tripa. This event marked the emergence of a new Tibetan leadership comprising of third generation of the community in exile mostly born outside Tibet.

Summary and Conclusion

Due to the nature of their displacement, it became important for the Tibetans to assert their identity. The culture and tradition in Tibet were systematically being destroyed by the Chinese government. Buddhism helped in shaping a distinct identity of the Tibetans. Tibetan can be associated with certain symbols like praying wheels, prayer flags, picture of Dalai Lama, etc. which are all symbols created in exile. Now these symbols have become ingrained into Tibetan society as symbols of common identity. They also serve nationalistic symbols of a Tibetan nation in exile.

There is a close link between Tibetan nationalism and religion, so most Tibetan national symbols are related to Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan national symbols appear in every Tibetan settlement in the form of colourful prayer flags, pictures of the Dalai Lama, prayer wheels, monasteries and altars. The religious practice is still an essential part of every exile Tibetan's
life. There are numerous traditional religious rituals that are officially celebrated and are part of an annual celebration calendar, like monastic cham dances, which dramatize transition, Tibetan New Year celebrations (losar) or the monlam chenmo, the great prayer where religious power takes over from the secular.

All these exile Tibetan national ceremonies are created to support the close link between Tibetan secular affairs and religious symbolism, but also to evoke unifying feelings among all Tibetans. Interesting is the mix of secular and religious ceremonies. Numerous exile Tibetans do participate in the events. Tibetan nationalism has been enforced by the CTA through the introduction of the central Tibetan Lhasa dialect as the national language, the promotion of ethnic endogamy and high birth rates, the discouraging of assimilation with the host population and the taking of new citizenship. Tibetan Buddhist-based nationalism is also employed by the CTA to motivate the Tibetan Diaspora abroad, in particular to take an active part in the exile Tibetan struggle.

To recreate and maintain a distinct Tibetan culture and religion, the CTA has been initiating and expanding a wide organizational network between exile Tibetans, Tibetans in the PRC and Tibetan and non-Tibetan members of the international. In this regard,

Tibetan Buddhist nationalism represents an important source for the CTA to cultivate national and international support. First, the CTA emphasizes in its political course Tibetan nationalistic ideas to reach all Tibetan people independently from their place of living to motivate them to participate in the exile struggle. National symbols and a ceremonial calendar create a wide basis for loyalty to the CTA. Through the effective usage of such national symbolism, the CTA supports the development of a collective identity and the construction of a national consciousness, which fosters the CTA's political position within the Tibetan community. The CTA encounters difficulties among the young generation of exile Tibetans who are born in exile and whose knowledge about, and personal experiences with, the homeland are limited. Second, the CTA has successfully promoted Tibetan Buddhist nationalism in the international sphere through the creation of an image of Tibet that is mainly based on Western perceptions.

The success of the Dalai Lama in heading a Tibetan government-in-exile based in India is fascinating. Its main purpose is to work for the reestablishment of Tibetan sovereignty through democratic procedures. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan diaspora have nurtured an alternative democratic polity in India, and provided a beam of light and hope for the six million Tibetans remaining in the Chinese-dominated Tibet. They have not abandoned their faith or their loyalty to the Dalai Lama, who has come to personify more than ever the Tibetan religio-political order and national identity.

The process of democratisation must also be contextualised by relating it to the nature of the Tibetan state, and in particular the position of the Dalai Lama. While from a Western perspective the Dalai Lama as an unelected monk holds little political legitimacy and certainly has no clear position in a democratic framework, this is not the case for Tibetans. It is surprising, then, that the process of democracy, initiated as it was by the Dalai Lama, should have been met with such little enthusiasm by the Tibetan people. Perhaps the process will gain in popularity with time. At present it is apparent that it is the Dalai Lama's role as ultimate spiritual authority that is holding back the political process of democratisation. The assumption that he occupies the correct moral ground from a spiritual perspective means that any challenge to his political authority may be interpreted as anti-religious.

Loyal opposition and diversity of views are of course a vital part of a modern democracy. While the Dalai Lama recognises this fact, it would appear that the majority of Tibetans in exile do not think it desirable. The nature of the Tibetan independence movement means that commitment is required from the exile Tibetans and so there might be some valid reasons in limiting the opportunities for dissent. But it also means that the apparent long term nature of the struggle would require a better acceptance of dissent and a greater movement towards democracy. Despite such problems, however, the Tibetan government in exile in democratic terms is a vast improvement on the traditional theocratic pre-1959 government. The political role of the monastic establishment has been diminished and the fledgling democracy functions moderately well.

It is the exile situation that poses a big challenge for the Tibetan democracy. Given the position of the Dalai Lama and the limitation of the exile context, it can be said that Tibetan exile society has not yet become fully democratic. As refugees the Tibetans are subject to the laws and government of the host countries and even the democratization of their own exile government cannot help change this dilemma. The other challenge on the path to Tibetan democracy is the lack of opposition within the exile Tibetan polity. National Democratic Party of Tibet is the only political party but there is no provision for the role of political parties in the parliament and hence they cannot participate in any elections. The TPiE acts as an opposition to itself.

There are two complex issues related to post-Dalai 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). 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. The Chinese leadership has proclaimed that the Fifteenth

Dalai Lama will be born in the PRC and will be chosen through traditional methods. 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 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. It will make the task for India 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.

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?)

However, with some credit to the Tibetans, their society is changing in such a way as to promote democratization. Organizations such as Tibetan Youth Congress and Tibetan Women's Association and other nongovernmental organizations have provided formal opportunities for popular participation. Since the said organizations remains outside the ambit of the administration, the dominant change is expected to come from the activities of the civil society. In a surprise development in March 2011, the Dalai Lama had step down from the political leadership and is now just a spiritual leader. His decision of relinquishing political authority is a clear indication of the eagerness to build up the Tibetan community on the principles of democracy. This paved the way for the election of the XVth Assembly in March 2011 and along with it the 3rd Kalon Tripa. This event marked the emergence of a new Tibetan leadership comprising of third generation of the community in exile mostly born outside Tibet.

It had taken more than fifty years, since 1960 when the Tibetan government in exile was first established, to see CTA heading towards a new direction where the actual practice of democracy can be realized. It will, however, first need to show to the Tibetans that they are capable of taking the responsibility of leading those in exiles and at the same time garner supports for the Tibetan movement. This would be difficult without the support and guidance of the Dalai Lama who has the admiration and obeisance all over the world. The problem is that the CTA has been used to being overshadowed by the Dalai Lama. It needs to be seen if the new *Kalon Tripa* Lobsang Sangay can take the mettle to carry forward this change in democracy and how he would seek to legitimise the government to the world now that Dalai Lama has relinquished his power. This aspect of the CTA still need a lot more study to see how it will turn out in the future.

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