

ISSUES OF SOVEREIGNTY, ETHNICITY  
AND NATIONALITY IN THE PEOPLE'S  
REPUBLIC OF CHINA: THE CASE OF TIBET

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, “ISSUES OF SOVEREIGNTY, ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY IN THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: THE CASE OF TIBET” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is my own work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.

**Tshering Chonzom Bhutia**

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

**(Dr. H.S. Prabhakar)**  
Chairperson

**(Dr. Madhu Bhalla)**  
Supervisor

*To my sister Sangay*

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation generates, accumulates and transfers knowledge and know-how on aspects of the interrelationship between the concepts of sovereignty, ethnicity and nationality. Specifically, the attempt is to examine the concepts of sovereignty, ethnicity and nationality and their epistemological connotations, in the context of the People's Republic of China. Accordingly, it assesses the dynamics of the interrelationship between these concepts in relation to the question of Tibet.

The dissertation postulates that the acceptance of sovereign norms, related to territorial integrity by the modern Chinese nation-state from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, recast issues of nationality and ethnicity with implications for sub-national and minority politics. Pre-modern China assumed control of territories in its periphery through a very loose notion of sovereignty and within the framework of a traditional tribute system. As a result, its sovereign claims were never challenged by demands for "self determination". In modern China, on the contrary, state sovereignty and construction of Chinese national identity by the ruling political elite gave rise to assertion of ethnic and sub-national identities. State sovereignty problematized sub-national and ethnic issues, as in the case of Xinjiang and Tibet.

### **1. The Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation thematically discusses the various issues regarding sovereignty, ethnicity and nationality in the Peoples Republic of China and pertaining to the case of Tibet in particular. This work is, therefore, concerned with international relations and geopolitical changes accompanying modernity that confronted China in the mid 19th century when it came into open conflict with colonial Britain.

One of the distinguishing features of this research is its interdisciplinary, comparative and pluralistic approach to the analysis of global and local issues. Given this orientation, much of the research is provided in a multi-disciplinary setting: as

problems are typically multifaceted, their analysis and solutions require inputs from a broad array of disciplines and perspectives, thereby enhancing the analytical capacities of the research. Moreover, the research advocates comparative analysis of societal problems, highlighting similarities and commonalities, as well as geographically, culturally, historically determined differences, and borrows from secondary sources. By way of a process of criticality, this dissertation understands the issues of sovereignty, ethnicity and nationality within the wider contexts of the process of modernization. It strives to provide application-based research to heighten awareness that any historically or culturally specific context, be it spatially defined or within a network, requires insight into geographically and historically determined differences.

The research provides an opportunity to compare conceptual approaches, on one hand, and their practice, on the other. It was also understood that a research endowed in theoretical and methodological capacities is better equipped to conduct policy analysis, and that applied theories are situated within a deeper understanding of their methodological and theoretical settings.

The research provides an introduction to key substantial problems, concepts, theories and strategies in the reflection on, and the practice of sovereignty. It analyses the problems and implications inherent in the application of sovereignty in societies where it had not originated in the modern context. The research broadly presents a theoretical and critical overview of the major issues, debates, strategic interventions and theories involved.

The issues and the analytical responses to them will be treated in a historical perspective with due attention to socio-economic, political and cultural dimensions. The treatment is both general and specific. Within the larger processes of sovereignty, modernity is seen as assuming a paradoxical position, where, though modernity provides the ground for the concept of sovereignty to breed, it at the same time curtails its functions by concurrently giving birth to concepts like “nations” and “nationalism”,



which are also of modern origin.<sup>1</sup> The research is theoretically organized around contrasting general paradigms of divinity, realism, neo-liberalism, modernism, democracy, individualism, and nationalism.

The objectives of the research included clear formulation of the problem, choosing an adequate method to research the problem; applying that method adequately, identifying theoretical perspectives relevant to the research, drawing a clearly stated conclusion and supporting the conclusion with a systematically written report containing a logical argument based on theoretical evidence.

Though the design of this dissertation is academic, the implications are by nature political. This is because the mandate surrounding sovereignty involves the most precious element on earth, and that, of course involves power, who wields it, how to share it, and in which ways the State may better balance it.

## **2. Sovereignty**

There exists a gamut of literature on the origin, history and nature of the concept of sovereignty from the period of the Roman Empire through the developments in Europe from the 13-16<sup>th</sup> centuries and to the modern era. Clearly, sovereignty owes its origins to various factors. The most pervasive of them all is the notion that society was in a state of disorder and thus required somebody who could command the power and authority to maintain peace and stability. The disorder was attributed to the nature of man who was conscious of “dignity and honour”, and thus, “competitive”<sup>2</sup> and envious. The concept received patronage from man’s propensity to command and wield power. Since, “emergence of the state reflects not the desire of a society for its kind of rule but an urge in men to possess its kind of power”.<sup>3</sup> The realist paradigm absorbs both the understandings on the concept of sovereignty relating to disorder and power. In the modern era of international relations, proponents of the realist paradigm believe that the world is in a constant state of anarchy. Thus actors, in the form of

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<sup>1</sup> Proponents of the ‘nation’ as modern are, Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner. Anthony D Smith, who concurs with them, he differs in his opinion that nations have an ethnic core.

<sup>2</sup> Hobbes was the proponent of such a view.

<sup>3</sup> F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 10.

states, enter into alliances to maintain the *status quo* and balance power in order to avoid war.

The concept, however, did not fully develop until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Jean Bodin was perhaps the first to use the term sovereignty as *sovereinte*. The concept has, since then evolved gradually. Before the modern era, sovereignty was linked first to the Roman church and later to the sovereign monarch or ruler, who was supposedly endowed with the divine authority to rule. Simultaneously, attempts at questioning or opposing the monarch's divine authority gave rise to a community's claim to sovereignty.

In the modern era in Europe, as a result of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which brought an end to the Thirty Years War, the ground was laid for the establishment of the modern states system. Vincent P Pecora's anthology on "nations and identities", as well as the appendages, sovereignty and state, views the origin of these terms from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and Hobbes, till date.

The modern concept of sovereignty has been embodied in the nation-state and is oriented towards the collective rather than the individual Pope or the monarch. The state derived its, legitimacy hence, from the collective rather than individual or a divine power. It had both international recognition, as well as a well-defined territory. Domestically and within the confines of its boundaries, the state could legitimately exercise sovereignty over a given population and resources. In its modern form, sovereignty has a core meaning – *supreme authority within a territory*.<sup>4</sup> The term "sovereignty" in the modern context, "assumes the existence of an independent territorial state with linear boundaries, legal equality with other states, freedom and autonomy of action externally to pursue its own interest to the best of its abilities and a population under the legitimate authority of a government that admits to no moral superior but subscribes to international law".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dan Philpott, "Sovereignty", <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sovereignty/>

<sup>5</sup> Surjit Mansingh and C V Ranganathan, "Approaches to State Sovereignty", in Alka Acharya and GP Deshpande, ed. *50 Years of India China – Crossing a Bridge of Dreams* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2001), p. 446.

Machiavelli conceived of sovereignty as being absolute and morally unaccountable. Such a notion of sovereignty, however, impinged on popular, private and individual sovereignty. In a monarchical state, the notion of individualism was linked to the notion of civil rights, and in the modern nation-state it has been linked to human rights and national self determination. The principle of the self determination of peoples, in fact, evolved under late nineteenth century nationalism in Europe. It was brought into universal prominence by US President Woodrow Wilson in his sixteen points agenda for post-First World War I settlement, along with the League of Nations. Modern China's dislike for any such principle is revealed in Mao Zedong's words. He understood the League of Nations mandate as one by which a "league of robbers" and "various imperialisms are dismembering China".<sup>6</sup>

Sovereignty in its modern form was imported by newly independent entities in Asia and Africa as a result of their encounter with colonialism. When the colonial powers gave up their territorial possessions, they bequeathed to post-colonial independent entities a very European conception of the nation-state. The People's Republic of China too in 1949 adopted a European form of nation-state that saw sovereignty as the ultimate concern of the state. Territorial borders were to be administered by the state which was seen as the ultimate manifestation and representation of sovereignty, quite contrary to pre modern societies, where the modern concept of sovereignty as embodied in the state was missing. Therefore, sovereignty, "except by importation from Europe ... has not figured at all in the history of non-European societies".<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the assertion that the notion of sovereignty as developed in China in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is of Western origin is not to be seen as an attempt at making a case for the "western impact-Chinese response approach", nor should it be viewed as an attempt to question the innovativeness and richness of the Asian politico-historical system. Rather than viewing this development from the Western-centric approach which has a "built-in tendency to link whatever change was discerned in nineteenth-

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 452.

<sup>7</sup> F.H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 21.

century China to the impact of the West”,<sup>8</sup> the “world system” theorists argue for a “transcivilisational pattern of relationships”,<sup>9</sup> since “the ‘West’ does not exist, except by reference to the ‘inscrutable’ ‘East’.”<sup>10</sup> This helps us to avoid the pitfalls of “Eurocentrism and other centrisms which prevent seeing or even asking how all ‘parts’ relate to the world (system) whole.”<sup>11</sup> The China-centric approach is equally untenable for it is unable to do justice to issues that concern China’s minority policy. It falls short of dealing with issues that “focus on the behaviour and thinking (including the self-perception) of non-Han ethnic groups within the Chinese realm” or tend not to raise “questions about the boundaries of Chinese history and, indeed in some instances the very meaning of the word China”.<sup>12</sup> Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K Gills, for one, argue for a “wider world-historic humanocentric alternative to Eurocentricism”<sup>13</sup> and propagate a “world system” constituted by “civilisations”, the interactions between which they label as a “transcivilisational pattern of relationships”. Within such a pattern, “some dimensions of human affairs transcended civilisational boundaries in ancient as well as modern times” resulting in contacts that led to “one or both parties to alter their behaviour by modifying old practices in the light of new information”.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, we can view the contact between the Western colonialists and China, as characterized by reciprocity, with both sides interacting with each other and indulging in mutual give and take, in the field of commerce as well as ideas and institutions. Immanuel Hsu has noted that “the interplay of foreign and domestic elements gave rise to revolutionary changes in the Chinese political system”<sup>15</sup> as a result of the “advent of the age of discovery” beginning with the arrival of the Portuguese and

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<sup>8</sup> Paul A Cohen, *China Unbound-Evolving Perspectives on the Chinese Past* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K Gills, ed. *The World System – Five Hundred Years of Five Thousand* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. x.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>12</sup> Paul A Cohen. *China Unbound-Evolving Perspectives on the Chinese Past* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K Gills, ed. *The World System – Five Hundred Years of Five Thousand* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>15</sup> Immanuel C Y Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1990, p. 4

Spanish explorers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, thus, placing China's 19<sup>th</sup> century experience within the framework of the word system as it evolved in the modern age. In the pre modern age however, the Chinese developed a definite concept of sovereignty to suit the particular history and contemporary needs of the state.

In this regard, Christopher Clapham and George Sorensen<sup>16</sup> give an insightful understanding of how the concept of sovereignty influenced post-colonial independent states, taking the case of Africa. In general, Clapham views the concept of sovereignty with skepticism since it is vulnerable to manipulation in the hands of the third world elite who use the power of "unfettered control" that sovereignty bestows on them to gain control of the resources and the domestic population. However, where Clapham argues that sovereignty has reached its end, Sorensen argues that it continues to exist in significant ways.

In this dissertation, I have tried to argue that though the concept of sovereignty as wielded by a supreme state was adopted by newly independent entities in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, it's understanding and utilitarian purpose was discerned previously. For instance, though China adopted a modern concept of sovereign state only in 1949, its ideas germinated under Republican China in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century itself. Within it, importation and application of such a concept by new states like China had their own limitations owing to the limitations of the concept itself. For newly independent entities, the adoption of a form of nation-state already practiced by the United States, France, the United Kingdom, etc, was also driven by the compulsion to be accepted and recognized by the major powers in the international system. Thus, the purposes that sovereignty sought to serve attracted these actors to it.

Sovereignty serves various purposes: Externally, it allows for recognition of independent statehood which confers on the state membership to enjoy the privileges of the international system. This depends on recognition by the major powers within the international system. Domestically, it confers upon "the rulers of the state" the

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<sup>16</sup> Christopher Clapham, "Sovereignty and the Third World State" and George Sorensen, "Sovereignty: Change and Continuity in a Fundamental Institution," in Robert Jackson, ed., *Sovereignty at the Millennium* (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1999).

power to administer and control its territorial borders and the resources within it, which in turn denies external actors any “right to interfere”. Therefore, sovereignty is equal to territorial integrity, providing the state “international backing for the entrenchment of state control over the rest of the domestic population.”<sup>17</sup>

### 3. Limitations of sovereignty

Under the conditions that it developed, sovereignty had certain notions attached to it – the primary being the notion of power. The desire to harness power on footing equal to the major states, as well as command power in the domestic arena over its resources and population, had repercussions on the practice of sovereignty. “Third World governing elites in their own mission, reinforced ... by statist ideologies ... (carried out) ambitious programmes for nation building and economic transformation”<sup>18</sup> which resulted in domestic alienation. Problems arose because sovereignty serves the purpose of conferring “power on some people and removes it from others”<sup>19</sup>. In reference to my hypothesis, sovereignty and the application of territoriality by modern states prolematised the national identity of the forming state. Because sovereignty requires that a state have defined boundaries, unlike in the pre modern era where conquests and expansion deemed boundaries as fluid and undefined, when the new states went on to demarcate and define boundaries, they cut across ethnic groups, nations, pre-nation people, and in the case of China, the “barbarian” people. This resulted in a contest over the sovereignty of the demarcating state by those people who had, by then, developed feelings of nationalism. For J S Mill, “the boundaries of governments should coincide with those of nationalities”, to generate “fellow feeling”<sup>20</sup> between the various nationalities and to thwart internal challenges to state sovereignty. Simultaneously, the emergence of a discourse based on binary terms – minority/majority in the new Chinese state recast barbarian opposition to Chinese indirect rule in the form of sub-national oppositions.

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<sup>17</sup> Christopher Clapham, “Sovereignty and the Third World State,” in Robert Jackson, ed., *Sovereignty at the Millennium* (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1999), p. 107.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), pp. 142-143.

Thus, sovereignty faced numerous challenges in its modern form. Clapham, in fact, clearly says that “use of sovereignty as an ideology for maintaining state power was...fragile...and indeed carried within (it) the seeds of (its) own destruction.”<sup>21</sup> Exclusive rights to sovereignty have been challenged by the good governance agenda, and notably the campaign for human rights. Existence of nations within the nation-state has deligitimised the state’s claim to absolute sovereignty. Samuel S. Kim and Lowell Dittmer<sup>22</sup> say that a “nation” has often been subordinated, manipulated and exploited by the modern nation-state. Gandhi rejects state as “inhuman” as it lacks the *atman* to understand citizen grievances. Lynn White and Li Cheng point out some of the crises that a modern state faces on coming to power. They are “identity, legitimacy, penetration, participation, integration and distribution”.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4. Case of China

At the outset, this dissertation makes a conceptual clarification, that to argue that the modern concept of sovereignty is of Western origin, it is not to say that the concept of sovereignty did not exist in pre modern China at all. Rather, the perception of sovereignty in the Empire-state of pre-modern China and the Chinese nation-state differed. In the former period, the understanding was primarily based on the Confucian worldview, i.e., the Emperor of China wielded divine power and authority over everything under heaven (in that sense, the Emperor was the sovereign ruler).

The core of Confucian philosophy believed that the Emperor, *tianzi*, was the Son of Heaven, *tian*, and he ruled “all under heaven”, *tianxia*. Extending this insight to the modern period, the pre-modern discernment of sovereignty did not require international recognition and the Emperor was ascribed sovereign status over all that existed under heaven. This notion of sovereignty, however, had conceptual, theoretical

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<sup>21</sup> Christopher Clapham, “Sovereignty and the Third World State,” in Jackson, Robert. ed. *Sovereignty at the Millennium* (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1999), p. 107

<sup>22</sup> Samuel S. Kim and Lowell Dittmer, “Wither China’s Quest for National identity”, in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China’s Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993).

<sup>23</sup> Lynn White and Li Cheng, “China Coast identities: Regional, National and Global” in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China’s Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 158.

and political limitations especially in the context of the modern opinion on the concept of sovereignty. It was a result of such a residue that pre-modern China functioned for centuries as an Empire with fluid boundaries and frontiers. But such a resultant residue did not percolate the Chinese understanding for long. Anything not falling under the purview of the Confucian worldview was considered an exception. The people who inhabited the peripheral regions of China (and those who did not adhere to Confucianism) were considered “inferior” and when known as “barbarians”. The understanding of the exceptions was just not limited to the people in the peripheral regions being “inferior” and known as “barbarians” but was extended on ecological lines too. This implied that while the Han Chinese practiced intensive agriculture, the “barbarians” were mostly nomads. Owen Lattimore’s study of the Chinese inner Asian frontier<sup>24</sup> notes that “between the Pacific Ocean and the Pamirs, and from the Pamirs curving southward into the bleak highlands that divide China from India, lie the lands of Manchuria, Mongolia, Chinese Turkistan and Tibet”, which Lattimore says are the Inner Asian barrier lands, “which limit the geography and history of China.”<sup>25</sup> He regards the advent of modernity in China as “the suppression of the old historical modes by new forces” whereby “the regions and subregions of China and the major and minor zones of its frontier territories are being more sharply defined and differentiated.”<sup>26</sup>

The principle poles of the debate illustrate a range of views on why China established itself as a modern state, debunking its own traditional and cultural notions of sovereignty. One perspective centers around the fundamental pre-condition of definite boundaries and territorial formations as being necessary for the existence and functioning of the modern state. China’s fascination with state sovereignty was a result of more than a century of developments. The advent of the colonialists to China brought it face to face with the reality that its Emperor after all did not “rule all under heaven”. The scars of the Opium Wars, and the fact of being governed by a Manchu Emperor, led the Republican Nationalists to embrace the idea of sovereign control of

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<sup>24</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.



territories. This process was consolidated in 1949 when the Communist Party of China, formed in 1921, took over the reigns of modern China. The demands for territorial integration and consolidation, which had evolved during the Republican period, were more or less a social reality for the Communists and considering the internal situation and the international atmosphere, it was imperative for them to undertake steps for the effective transition from pre-modern to modern sovereign nation-state.

China's fascination with sovereignty, and the adoption of a system of governance that facilitated this concept was also a response to what it saw as a "hostile international environment". World War II had just ended and America and the Soviet Union had emerged as the dominant powers in the world. China itself had undergone a violent civil war against the nationalist Guomindang forces which was backed by a foreign power, the United States. The world was divided along ideological lines whereby America sought to contain China driven by General MacArthur's strategy and the "Domino effect theory". Given US support to the Guomindang forces, China opposed what it called "domestic forces colluding with forces of imperialism". This was one pretext by which China consolidated the territories in its periphery for strategic and security reasons. Therefore, the foremost and immediate need for it was to consolidate its territorial possessions internally and defend against external threats effectively – territorial integration *per se* required the redefinition of the centuries old fluid boundaries and had implications for the "barbarians" inhabiting those territories.

Though the logic and the rationality of the Peoples' Republic of China were strategic with nationalistic overtones, it was necessary to stitch a tapestry which resiliently incorporated the building of national identity and was sculpted around the idea of one-nation, one-people. The integrity of the process of transition, therefore, could not negate China's internal situation, strategic concerns, the accompanying socio-cultural, political and economic circumstances and the changing geo-political architecture. While Chinese pre-modern conception of sovereignty could not remain a mute spectator and an anachronism to the modern western discourse on sovereignty, it at the

same time was faced with modern dilemmas of having to confront issues of nationality and ethnicity within its borders.

The resultant effect of emphasis on sovereign territorial control over all of the present People's Republic of China brought it in direct conflict with the territories on its periphery that claimed their own sovereignty. China faced all the problems that a modern state faces. Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim's book relating to China's national identity<sup>27</sup> covers a vast literature on the debate on the subject and also questions the homogeneity of Han identity. Kim's formulation that a modern nation-state faces various crises like that of "identity, legitimacy, penetration, participation, integration and distribution" is very useful and helps me in approaching my study of the problems faced by the People's Republic of China on its formation in 1949 in a given framework. The fact that China, instead of addressing these challenges followed a policy of nation building and construction of a national identity based on majority/minority discourse led to hostility between nationalities.

Dawa Norbu, Huang I-shu and O.N. Mehrotra<sup>28</sup> look at the various issues concerning minorities in China, how they were identified based on Stalin's criterion of nations and how the policy of assimilation towards the minorities led to the rise of (ethnic) nationalism. All three provide useful information on the Communist Party's policies and also the momentum of future policies and responses by the minorities. Where Norbu gives a more detached assessment, Mehrotra sees ethnic nationalism as persisting and "self determination" as being "today's solution" but "a cause for tomorrow's bloodier conflict".<sup>29</sup>

The PRC followed the Marxist approach to the "national question" to counter internal challenges to its sovereignty from the minorities. Chang Chi-i's book on the "national

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<sup>27</sup> Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> Dawa Norbu, "China's Policy Towards its Minority Nationalities in the Nineties", *China Report*, 27:3, 1991; Huang I-shu, "National Minorities of China", *China Report* 32:1, 1996; and O N Mehrotra, "China and Ethnic Nationalism", *Strategic Analysis*, September, 1996.

<sup>29</sup> O.N. Mehrotra, "China and Ethnic Nationalism", *Strategic Analysis*, September 1996, p. 928.

question” in China,<sup>30</sup> with introductory texts by George Moseley who translated the book, provides us in rare detail the PRC’s policies that were formulated in order to address the “national question” in China. “Nationalities work” was the application of the “ideological weapon” of the theory of “national question” in order to win over the masses and the “patriotic” leaders of the national minorities. Chang, who was then a member of the Communist Party of China as well as an official who went into the hinterland to carry out the task of classifying the minorities, provides an insiders account of the national question in China. Mosley’s introduction provides insights into the inadequacy of the Marxist approach to dealing with the nationality question. According to him, both in “Soviet Russia and China, the national question has been used to promote the revolutionary goals interpreted by Great Russians and Han Chinese respectively”.<sup>31</sup> The policies of the PRC towards the “national question” have taken different shapes throughout time, yet one thing is consistent, the “advanced” Han as the vanguard leads the underdeveloped minorities towards socialist revolution and economic prosperity.

The Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, 1949 stated: “Acts involving discrimination, oppression and splitting of the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited. China was well aware of the internal challenges to its sovereignty in 1949”.

**The various responses of the newly formed PRC can be broadly categorized as:**

1. “Liberation” of the peripheral areas that it saw as victims of “imperialism” as well as counter revolutionaries colluding with imperialists, which thus needed to be unified with the motherland.
2. Recognition of national minorities that consisted not of “Five Peoples” but of several peoples, divided arbitrarily along the lines of the Soviet model. In 1953, 38 minorities were recognized; 16 in 1965 and the last one in 1979. Thus, construction of national identity along the lines of 55 minorities and one Han majority. The “advanced” Han remains at the inner

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<sup>30</sup> Chang Chi-i, George Moseley, trans., *The Party and the National Question in China* (London: MIT Press, 1966).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

core which is the vanguard to lead the underdeveloped minorities towards socialist revolution and economic prosperity.

3. Assimilation and autonomy: Since ethnic minority groups were “expected to shed the bulk of their cultural traditions to become much like the majority,”<sup>32</sup> in the PRC, the policy of assimilation sought to transform non-Han minorities into Han ways and, thus, into becoming Chinese and identifying with the Chinese state. Regional Autonomy as a law was passed only in 1984, although autonomy, in principle was a part of all Chinese constitutions since 1949.
4. Creating a legal basis for minority policy: Various legislations passed on national minorities reflect how the concern for sovereignty affected the People’s Republic of China’s minority policy after 1949. The constitution of 1954 states that “the national autonomous areas are inalienable parts of the People’s Republic of China”. The China Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), under the State Council, has initiated a “nationality Studies Project” in order to examine security implications of China’s minority problems.<sup>33</sup> China, in 1999 brought out a White paper on “National Minorities Policy and its Practice in China” which says, “In China, regional autonomy for ethnic minorities is a basic policy adopted by the Chinese government in line with the actual conditions of China, and also an important part of the political system of China.”

## 5. Contesting Sovereignty – Ethnicity and Nationality issues in the PRC

The aspiration and the obsession of the ruling elite of modern China to impose state-sovereignty over territories in its periphery provided the incentive to the national and ethnic consciousness of the erstwhile barbarians.

Intrinsic to the modern conception of state sovereignty is the notion of national identity. It was necessary for the PRC to have centered systems of governance and organized territorial regimes with sovereign authority, and particular, coercive and discursive techniques for disciplining space, populations and individuals. On confronting modernity head on and the various ideologies that accompanied it, it was pertinent for the PRC to clearly define conflicts, definite interests and obvious alliances. Responding rationally to the reality around it, the PRC embraced a political

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<sup>32</sup> Nimmi Hutnik, *Ethnic Minority Identity: A Social Psychological Perspective*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 154.

<sup>33</sup> As a footnote (5) in Dru C. Gladney, “China’s National Insecurity: Old Challenges at the Dawn of the New Millennium”, 2000

realism that foreshadowed its earlier beliefs. The framing of the objective reality, political interests, normative laws and representation of the subjects in the international system required the modern-state to command allegiance from the population within its boundaries. For the people to identify themselves with the state, which further transcended itself into the idea that the state must, necessarily, have a national identity.

China, in the last century, twice attempted to construct a national identity owing to external and internal imperatives. The first attempt was under Sun Yat-sen in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and second under Maoist China. The effect was a heightened sense of ethnic and sub-national consciousness under the PRC. Non-identification with the national identity of the central state which took on assimilationist tendencies; coupled with imposition of reforms for a socialist revolution in places that were not ready for them led to antagonistic relations between Han majority and minority Tibetans, for example.

Though territorial integration is the very foundation of sovereignty, the territorial formations of the PRC were more or less based on the sense of an imagined political community. In this sense they were completely opposed to the centuries old fluid boundaries, negating the issues of ethno-nationality and diversity and imposing territorial and continuous jurisdictional governmentality over people who were spatially, culturally and ethnically different.

With the PRC multiplying operational spaces, dividing ties of belongingness and mixing zones of rules, a host of issues came to the fore in relation to state-sovereignty impinging on the issues of ethnicity and nationality. In underlining the various concepts of ethnicity and nationalism, such as primordial, ascriptive, modern and instrumental, Anthony D. Smith affirms that “state making requires, among many other things, a secure base in an ethnic core from which elites can be drawn.” When such is not the case there is an emergence of nationalism that is based on ethnic ties, which he calls “ethnic nationalism”. His piece reinforces my argument about how ethnic and national ties interact in conjunction against unsatisfactory state policies.

The modern Chinese State's active construction of its national identity was in a state of infancy and ambiguity and, thus, sensitized group consciousness within its boundaries and led to fractured spaces and populations.

In order to make sovereignty the cornerstone of the Chinese system of governance, to legitimately represent the Chinese people in the international system and to conform to a number of values based on reason, the Chinese, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, put forward two-notions of the Chinese people. One, by Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek believed that there were "Five Peoples" inhabiting China – the Han, the Man, the Meng, the Zang and the Hui. The issue of diversity was addressed by them on the basis of "religious and geographical environment" and not on the contention of "differences in race or blood". According to this view all the Chinese people belonged to the "yellow race". The other notion was forwarded after the formation of the PRC in 1949. It recognized fifty-six groups, with one, Han, as majority and fifty-five "national minorities".

The Tibetans (or the erstwhile barbarians, inhabitants of China's Inner Asian frontier), who comprised Sun's "Five Peoples" now became one of the fifty-five "national minorities" in the PRC. The underpinnings of Tibetan nationalism, which had been little developed under Manchu indirect rule, were now roused by China's redefinition of its territories and by its attempt to transform its previous "suzerainty" into direct sovereignty. The Tibetans, paradoxically, pronounced their own right to sovereign statehood in 1913 and thereby challenged Chinese claim to, national sovereignty.

Extensive historians of Tibet have debated the issue at length. For example, Melvyn C Goldstein's<sup>34</sup> focus on the history of Tibet from the period of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama until the formal signing of the 17 point agreement of 1951, when he analyses developments in Lhasa amidst the domestic religious, institutional, political intrigues alongside the political turmoil of uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding Tibet's political status *vis a vis* China, concludes with that of Sir Charles Bell,<sup>35</sup> a British official in colonial India,

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<sup>34</sup> Melvyn C Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of a Lamaist State*, (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1993).

<sup>35</sup> Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet – Past and Present* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1924).

that “national sentiment in Tibet, so long in abeyance, is now a growing force.” Whereas, Goldstein sees Tibet as modern in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century itself, for Dawa Norbu<sup>36</sup> Tibet became modern only in 1950 on its encounter with Chinese nationalism. The various agreements into which Tibet entered into in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century under the auspices of Britain, for eg. the Simla Agreement of 1914, were signed by a Tibet that had no understanding of modernity. That is why modern lexicons of sovereignty/suzerainty did not make much sense to pre modern Tibet. Likewise, British use of such terms to define Sino-Tibetan relationship couched in modern lexicon, made the Chinese conscious of the modern concept of territorial sovereignty and thus ground was laid for the delineation of century old undefined boundaries and reformulation of indirect Manchu-Tibetan relationship.

Likewise, Warren W Smith, Jr’s book on the history and politics of Sino-Tibet relations<sup>37</sup> tracks the simultaneous progression of Chinese and Tibetan history and thus locates the interrelationship between the two. For him, like Norbu, Tibet’s encounter with Chinese sovereignty gives rise to the Tibetan sense of nationalism. His work is noteworthy for viewing the whole subject from the prism of the idea of a “nation” and the PRC’s nationality policy. Tsering Shakya’s work<sup>38</sup> on Tibet’s modern history from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also analyses the developments in Tibet under the PRC as a minority region, especially the detailed analysis of developments after the “liberation of Tibet”, viewed in the context of domestic as well as external developments. Of valuable insight is the section on Panchen Rinpoche controversy which is paid due attention as it is an important benchmark of post 1959 anti-China sentiment from within Tibet.

Thus, acceptance of sovereign norms by the modern Chinese state led to the construction of policies like “liberation”. Tibet was the first to be “liberated”. In 1951, Tibet and China signed an agreement on “peaceful liberation of Tibet” or the “Seventeen Points Agreement”, according to which Tibet would be granted

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<sup>36</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996).

<sup>38</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000).

autonomous status. Though the Tibetan government of Lhasa, in the post-liberation phase of Tibet co-existed and was accommodative of the PRC, the conduct of reforms in areas east of the Tibetan plateau, which incidentally did not fall within the purview of the 1951 Agreement, were hot-beds for anti-China sentiments. The Tibetans took to the imposed notion of Chinese sovereignty as being alien and divisible. Slowly, the anti-Chinese sentiments spilled over to the central Tibetan plateau, wherein the Khampa fighters had relocated after facing hostilities from the Chinese forces in the eastern plateau. The situation was further compounded by the consistent nation building policies of the PRC. The issue of Tibet was internationalized with the escape of and the Tibetan spiritual and temporal leader, accompanied with many followers to India and the establishment of a government-in-exile in 1959. China's sovereign claims are now being contested by the proponents of the principles of national self determination and human rights; it is indeed ironical that both concepts have their origin in the modern era.

It is evident in the case of Tibet that modern aspirations for self determination and human rights are suppressed and dispensed with, to form and sustain the modern state. It is this aspect of a paradox of modernity that will also be explored in this dissertation. It is my understanding that the consequences of the application of a modern conception of sovereignty to modern China can be relegated to the paradox that modernity accrues for it.

Therefore, the perception of sovereignty in pre-modern and modern China was not only diagrammatically opposite but, simultaneously, different. In the modern period, the mandate of authority and power were decentralized to the collective (read the Communist Party of China) and the epochal decisions were made by the Party (which again represented the collective). Hence, an approach to an understanding of the issues pertaining to sovereignty, ethnicity and nationality has to methodologically align itself with history. It is only then that we can build a coherent and cohesive argument on the conceptions of sovereignty that clearly show how the conception of sovereignty differed in the pre-modern and the modern periods and how the misconceptions on the same can unravel themselves.



In approaching this dissertation, the various sources that I have referred are helpful in charting the course of the research. At the same time, certain shortcomings in them assist me in deciding what has been lacking on research on the subject under review and hence, allow me to attempt to fill some of the gaps. For example, on the concept of “sovereignty” F H Hinsley deals with sovereignty in a historical context and though comprehensive, does not relate these to the modern issues of nationality and ethnicity. Likewise, Vincent Pecora, analyzing the same sources as Hinsley, at least from the period of Hobbes, looks at the subject of nation and nation-states but nowhere is there an attempt to make a connection with sovereignty as a concept, except for a chapter by Joseph Maistre. The shortcomings are a way is useful as they leave the issue open for analysis. On the issue of emulation, though Christopher Clapham provides an interesting account of the “third world” adoption of the European sovereignty regime, the study focuses majorly on Africa. Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S Kim, who look at China and its national identity, are helpful in providing a succinct picture of problems faced by a modern state, but the work is mostly confined to diversity in terms of coastal regional identities like that of Sichuanese, Shanghainese, Cantonese, etc., and do not explore the dimensions of ethnicity and the nationality question in China. George Moseley’s book covers the shortcoming by giving a detailed analysis of the “national question” in China, but stops short at analyzing the Marxist Leninist definition of the national question and does not go beyond explaining the shortcomings of the approach or suggesting alternative paradigms. Another interesting article by O N Mehrotra sees ethnic nationalism as persisting and ‘self determination’ as being “today’s solution” but “a cause for tomorrow’s bloodier conflict”. He basically sees it as a vicious circle which is never ending. Though there might be some basis for it, I believe that such a preconception is responsible for perpetuating hostility between communities and groups. On approaching the history of Tibet, various books proved helpful and complemented each other’s shortcomings. For instance, Goldstein’s book covers only the part till 1951, from where Tsering Shakya takes the discussion. Tsering Shakya is also supplemented by Dawa Norbu. And above all, Smith’s comprehensive and analytical study covers the history as well as contemporary periods. Except for Goldstein, all of them have attempted to hark on the

nationality issue in China, but do not delve into its interaction with the concept of sovereignty.

Apart from this, literature emanating from China on its idea of Tibet finds voice in Wei Jing and Wang Furen and Suo Wenqing.<sup>39</sup> Both are attempts to prove claims to Tibet as having been a part of China ever since the marriage of King Srong *btsan* Sgampo to Chinese Princess Wencheng. It is useful in providing the Chinese side of the argument. The shortcoming is that, owing to lack of empirical proof coupled with historical rereading, their books suffer from lack of credibility and are to be read with a sense of vigilance.

Adherence to norms of sovereignty, and the subsequent construction of Chinese national identity by the ruling political elite in the modern Chinese nation-state from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have recast issues of national and ethnic identity. The Tibetans, who had otherwise acquiesced to the center's command after 1949, began to reassert their identity as state sovereignty impinged on the nature of policies formulated and implemented towards minority Tibetan nationality.

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<sup>39</sup> Wei Jing, *100 Questions About Tibet*, (Beijing, China: Beijing Review Press, 1989) and Wang Furen and Suo Wenqing, *Highlights of Tibetan History*, (Beijing: New World Press, 1984).

## CHAPTER II

### SOVEREIGNTY – CONCEPT, PROBLEMS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 1. Introduction

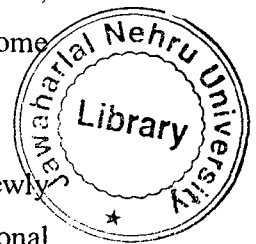
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Sovereignty is a concept which “did not really develop until the Middle Ages.”<sup>1</sup> In the pre-modern era, the concept of sovereignty was linked to the sovereign monarch or the ruler, who was supposedly endowed with the divine authority to rule. The linkage between the king’s authority as derived from divine law continued to guide man’s understanding of sovereignty even in the European world after the disintegration of the Roman Empire in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. However, sovereignty as a conceptual term came to be used only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Even then, territory was not central to the conception of the state in both earlier periods. In the seventeenth century, as a result of a prolonged war in Europe – the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) – power shifted to the monarchy which split the Holy Roman Empire into many distinct political entities. Thus, ground was laid for the eventual establishment of a states system in Europe. From the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sovereignty, “applied to international situation, became the central principle in the external policy and the international conduct of all leading states in the European system.”<sup>2</sup> However, the Asian and African world continued to be guided by a non-territorial notion of rule. Moreover, colonial subjugation meant that they submitted to either the British Crown or some similar foreign entity that was not territorially bound to the non-western state.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the colonial rulers departed after the end of World War II, newly independent entities who were driven by a realist understanding of the international environment adopted the European concept of sovereignty. This enabled them to function in the already established international states system as equal actors. Moreover, by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Congress of Vienna (1814-15), had stipulated that even the “newly recognised states beyond Europe and the United

<sup>1</sup> Forest L Griebes, *Conflict and Order: An Introduction to International Relations* (USA: University of Montana, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 204.



States of America – Japan – should be bound by the whole existing body of international law.”<sup>3</sup> Hence, while the idea of the “nation-state...spread from Europe to the rest of the planet,”<sup>4</sup> the emulation of the European states system had its limitations. First of all, in the words of Montesquieu (1689-1755), “positive legislation needed to be in harmony with customary institutions” and there were problems when “elements from one nation (were) imported haphazardly into another.”<sup>5</sup> Writing from the experience of the Italian city-states, Nicolo Machiavelli held that maintenance of an institution required great “skill”. If the political institution, the state, was consolidated as a result of “conquests,”<sup>6</sup> it was possible that it would have different cultural groups within its boundaries making a cohesive political entity impossible. In the modern age, conquests have euphemistically taken the form of delimitation of boundaries which also have similar consequences. Such a phenomenon was characteristic of the post-colonial states, which sought to define borders. The immediacy of the demarcation of borders ignored the consequences arising out of the concurrent redefinition of people’s membership to the state. Problems arose when the modern aspirations for “self determination” of people and groups who did not necessarily identify with the demarcating state were suppressed and dispensed with, as a consequence of forming and sustaining the modern state.

The notion of sovereign rights, earlier challenged by the “community” and later by the “people”, has been challenged in the modern state by sub-national minorities, with indications for the limits on how much sovereignty a state may exercise. Likewise, the very concept of the sovereignty of the state has come under strain and is evident in the various arguments by scholars who oppose the idea of a state. Mahatma Gandhi rejected the contemporary notion of the state on the basis that it was “inhuman” and for one, lacked *atman* to comprehend citizen’s differences over the functions of the state.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 208.

<sup>4</sup> Stein Tonnesson and Hans Antlov, “Asia in Theories of Nationalism and National Identity” in John Hutchison and Anthony D Smith, ed., *Nationalism: Critical Concepts in Political Science - Vol III*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 845.

<sup>5</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Hinsley says that “consolidation, if not the origin of the state has often been assisted by conquest.”

In this chapter, I shall examine the historical evolution of the concept of sovereignty and make an attempt to understand the dynamic of hows, in the modern era, it takes on the form of a problem as far as impinging upon issues of nationality and ethnicity within the nation-state are concerned.

## 2. Origins of Sovereignty and the State

The origin of the concept of sovereignty is closely linked to the history of the origin of state, and intrinsically linked with the concept of sovereignty is the perception that the society/world environment is in disorder/anarchy. Hence, the basic function of sovereignty was to enforce/preserve order. The concept of sovereignty in its modern form as an answer to political anarchy, culminated in the institution of the state. However, it was long before its final development in its contemporary form occurred.

In ancient Rome, the idea of sovereignty originated as a result of the conception of the world as being in “disorder”. Thus, the Emperor managed to govern the people as a sovereign ruler whose authority was derived from natural law which, however, also assumed a despotic character. As a result, sovereignty inhered in the sovereign ruler, the Emperor, rather than in the will of the people.

In Europe, by the end of the thirteenth century, assisted by revival of interest in Roman classical law and Aristotle’s notion of politics, the idea of “public law of the state distinct from both divine and private law”<sup>7</sup> was consolidated. Previously, public law had been confused with private rights, and the right of the community or the people conflicted with those of the emerging state (all part of the positive law). Thus, by the end of the thirteenth century, it was recognised “in separate communities of Europe” that divine or natural law was different from positive law. Public law was associated with the authority of the state (*status regis*) and held that the “government’s power, being indispensable for the common weal or the state of the realm (*status regni*) was superior, at least in emergencies, to human positive law or private right”<sup>8</sup>. Aristotle had conceived of the state (the city-state) as a gradual development from the

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<sup>7</sup> F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 70.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

family group. For him, man is by nature political and, thus, capable of establishing a civil society. His idea of the body politic was based on positive law which was supreme and “taught men to regard the body politic, Aristotle’s *polis*, as a purely human association ... attaining its own ends by its own means”<sup>9</sup> and not from any divine or natural law.

However, the spread of the classical ideas did not figure as a consistent and effective body of thought until the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the use of the term sovereignty only came on the heels of the changes that transformed Europe: “improvement in communications and organisation, of an accompanying consolidation of the forms, institutions and habits of political association and of government.”<sup>10</sup>

Jean Bodin is considered to be the first person to state the theory of sovereignty in his *Six livres de la republique* of 1576 which was first translated into English only in 1606. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, the notions of sovereignty underwent a transformation as a result of “social disorder and political need”<sup>11</sup> in Europe. The period witnessed a new form of rebellion against the state. The disorder flowed out of resistance to the authority of the monarch and concurrent assertion of one’s rights by political and religious communities who were mired in internal struggle against each other. Whereas, the supporters of the royal French Crown argued for the sovereignty of the Crown based on Roman law and Divine Right. Bodin attempted to establish the case that “only the acceptance that some authority wielded central and unlimited power within the political society could bring chaos to an end”.<sup>12</sup> On this, Bodin’s view was similar to that of Machiavelli. He, however, opposed the sovereign’s exercise of “absolute sovereignty” because he disliked the consequence of it – tyranny. For Bodin sovereignty or *soverainte* was to flow out of moral order as it was derived from God/divine authority. Therefore, he argued that monarchical sovereignty should be above the positive law. At the same time, he viewed the body politic as being composed of both the ruler and the ruled. Not only that, Bodin went

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 72

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 73.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 126.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 121.

further to enunciate “forms of government” as he believed that it was “good governance” that would check the negative fallout from the monarch’s right to sovereign power. Nonetheless, ultimately, monarchical sovereignty was not answerable to anybody but God.

Another proponent of divine law was Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821). For him, too, sovereignty flowed “through a moral order established by absolute, patriarchal authority”.<sup>13</sup> He believed that laws and government assumed importance as human beings started forming associations, in the form of a family. Therefore, when families joined, there arose the need for a sovereign who made *people* out of the association of families by giving them laws. Thus sovereignty provided cohesion and political unity by acting as the “common center” for people to aggregate around. Maistre was guided by moral, religious and patriotic principles which were derived from notion of divine authority. Like Bodin, he argued that belief in a divine authority would bestow moral authority the sovereign and, thus, maintain harmony in the society.

On the other hand, in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Althusius, drawing from Bodin’s language of monarchical sovereignty, “first applied to popular rights the concept of sovereignty”.<sup>14</sup> His argument was based on the “contract” that the ruler had entered into with the People and, thus, “the indestructibility of the underling contract” by the ruler and thereby the subjection of the monarch to positive law. Bodin’s “Divine Right of Kings”, on the one hand, and the source of authority, whether God, People, or the papal community, “distorted the sovereignty thesis”.<sup>15</sup> Amidst the confusion, Suaraz forwarded a theory of “limited or partial sovereignty”,<sup>16</sup> whereby the people could reserve some of their rights at the time of transferring some power to the Ruler.

As opposed to the conception of man as being political and sovereignty as being divine, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) in the *Leviathan*, achieved “the first clear

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<sup>13</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 107.

<sup>14</sup> F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 132-133.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 135.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 135-136.

formulation of the concept of sovereignty in the history of English political thought”,<sup>17</sup> and thus, approached the issue from a rational premise rather than theological assumptions. He put forward the idea of the world as comprising of actors who were in constant fear of one another in an international system which was in a constant state of anarchy. The fear is generated by man’s sense of competition for “honour and dignity” which gives rise to “envy and hatred and finally, war”. To avoid the war of all against all in a state of nature, actors entered into a “contract with each other to submit to a sovereign authority...for protection of themselves and their property.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, government derived legitimacy from “a mutual relation of Protection and Allegiance”, and not on “any *a priori* views about the source of authority.”<sup>19</sup> For him, government was accountable to the people, a relationship somewhat similar to what Althusius and Suaraz had propagated, although they were certain about the fact that it would be the monarch in whom the people would vest their power to rule them through contract. Likewise, Hobbes differs in the sense that, the People are not all powerful as they have chosen to transfer their sovereignty to the State/government, which is of their own creation. Thus he, on the one hand, managed to “destroy the personality of the people” (by absorbing the body politic of the people into the will of the Ruler<sup>20</sup>) and on the other, substituted “for the Prince (monarch) the abstract notion of the State”.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the state, in all its forms, as envisioned by Hobbes, absorbed all public right and did away with any contract theory or any dichotomy between ruler and popular sovereignty. Even F H Hinsley concludes that, with the modern development of the concept of sovereignty, “the rights of the ruler no less than those of the community, succumbed to the doctrine of the sovereignty of the state itself”.<sup>22</sup>

Contrarily, John Locke (1632-1704) argued that the body politic derived its authority through a social contract with the people. The contract was based on Hobbes’ mutual “Protection and Allegiance” principle, but for Locke “the personal rights and the

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 141.

<sup>18</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 44.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 141.

<sup>20</sup> F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 143.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 142.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 126.



property of individuals were prior to all social and political organisation.”<sup>23</sup> The body/government would consist of a legislature and the executive would function within the laws laid down by the legislature both of which would be sustained on the consent of the people, or the “will of the majority.”<sup>24</sup> Quite differently, Rousseau forwards a theory of popular sovereignty attached to which is the precondition of harmony rather than disorder. For him, (1712-78) “true popular sovereignty could be achieved only in “simple states” where there was no conflict of interests or political intrigue”.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, his argument implies that in chaotic societies, true popular sovereignty cannot exist and submission to the state is inevitable. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, such a doctrine of absolute sovereignty of the state had already been established in Britain in its “Crown-in-Parliament” government. Europe, during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century witnessed an increasing conflict between popular rights on the one hand and consolidation of monarchical power on the other, for instance, during the American and French Revolutions of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

At the same time, the establishment of a territorial states system, which replaced the imperial form of rule, did not happen overnight. The “delay” as Hinsley calls it, was a result of the non-conception “of the world they (the Europeans) inhabited as being a world composed of separate political communities”.<sup>26</sup> The Europeans had conceived sovereignty as being wielded by a supreme authority within the community. The presence of a community beyond theirs had been difficult for them to imagine. Though the Romans as well as its Byzantine successor had not applied a concept of “internal sovereignty”, it did conceive of a “non-territorial” form of imperial sovereignty, which was later absorbed in the concept of “Christendom”<sup>27</sup> within the separate political societies of Europe which lasted till about the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequently, the Thirty Years War that had ended in the 1648 Treaties of Westphalia “concluded a series of struggles for national sovereignty that effectively destroyed the

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 149.

<sup>24</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 50.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 73.

<sup>26</sup> F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 158-159.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 160.

continental hegemony of Roman Catholicism, the Pope, and the Holy Roman Empire”.<sup>28</sup> The Peace of Westphalia gradually led to the establishment of the states system in Europe.

However, it was not until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that this problem was completely solved, though the process began three centuries ago with Bodin’s use of the term *sovereinte* to define the authority of the divine king. The Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) became the first modern international political settlement which was founded on the modern system of international law. Its purpose was to redraw the continent’s political map after the defeat of Napoleonic France and it determined the frontiers of nearly every state in Europe. Thus, defined by precise borders, it was easier to link control over territories to the idea of sovereign rights. In a medieval state, “overlapping frontiers”<sup>29</sup> made it impossible to define sovereignty in territorial terms. “Raymond Aron described at length the primacy of a nation-state’s political integrity and independence, its inviolable territoriality and sovereign impermeability.”<sup>30</sup>

### 3. Sovereignty and Territoriality

The terms “sovereignty” and “territorial integrity” are generally used together in the foreign policy pronouncements of various countries, reflecting the high degree of attachment to the notion of sovereignty as territorial by newly formed states. The four basic elements of statehood are population, defined territory, organized government, and sovereignty. Territoriality, the most important representation of political authority defines membership of the population that resides within its borders. Such territorial correspondence of boundaries with that of a government’s authority did not exist during the medieval period; it is a phenomenon that arose with a modern understanding of the concept of sovereignty. Otherwise, “it was unusual for the administrative power of the state apparatus to coincide with defined territorial

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<sup>28</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> John Macmillan and Andrew Linklater ed., *Boundaries in Question – New Directions in International Relations* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1995), p. 27

<sup>30</sup> Cited in Albert L Weeks, “Do Civilizations Hold”, in *The Clash of Civilizations Debate*, (New York: *Foreign Affairs*, 1996), p. 54.

boundaries”.<sup>31</sup> Sovereignty thus clearly demarcates frontiers and distinguishes between what falls within one’s authority – internally and externally. Therefore, the modern state creates for itself its sphere of influence by defining and demarcating its territorial borders within which it exercises sovereignty; the violation of which is not to be tolerated.

On general terms, a state has the prerogative within its territory to formulate and regulate laws and policies it deems fit. The state also reserves the prerogative to exploit resources within the territory that it claims as being under its sovereign control. A state has laws, taxes, officials, currencies, postal services, police and (usually) armies. They wage war, negotiate treaties, put people in prison and regulate life in thousands of ways. Sovereignty bestows upon the modern state complete control over its “domestic population”, irrespective of whether they associate themselves with the state or not. The territorial state thus has its limitations owing to the fact that now sovereign states are required to delimit their jurisdictions in an international system and carve their own spheres of influence. Such a modern understanding of the territorial state raises new questions. How are boundaries delimited? Who has the authority/sovereignty to delimit territories? What would be the criteria for delimitation of boundaries?

In this context, John Stuart Mill’s (1806-73) thesis is refreshing, and a point of departure in approaching the notion and concept of sovereignty. For Mill, “government must suit the historically evolved aptitudes of the people”; “the boundaries of governments should coincide with those of nationalities.”<sup>32</sup> Here, perhaps for the first time, we have sovereignty debated not in terms of the rights of the “people”, but from the perspective of “nations” – a deconstruction of “people”.

Adherence to a modern conception of sovereign statehood that often demarcates its borders along “arbitrary lines” and across undefined territories raises questions about

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<sup>31</sup> Cited in John Macmillan and Andrew Linklater ed., *Boundaries in Question – New Directions in International Relations* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1995), p. 27.

<sup>32</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 142-143.

the legitimacy of the state. Legitimacy is questioned when the lines cut through territories of ethnic groups and nations while demarcating boundaries. When boundaries of governments do not coincide with those of nationalities, it gives rise to ethnic and sub-national consciousness among groups who consequently challenge the territorial viability and sovereignty of the state.

#### **4. Limitations of territoriality**

At the very least, the idea of statehood “presupposes that human beings can be organized into territorially based hierarchies which they can be compelled or induced to accept, and that the economic resources will be forthcoming to maintain the rather expensive institutions which statehood entails”.<sup>33</sup> However, two serious problems emerge out of the notion of territorial sovereignty. One is when states that have entrenched their control over a particular territory are not accountable for their behaviour towards the people that reside within its borders. More so, when the people are not of a homogenous character but belong to differing ethnic and national groups. Thus, when Mill says that “the boundaries of governments should coincide with those of nationalities”, he is basically reiterating the point that “fellow feeling”<sup>34</sup> generation between the various groups is an important criteria for state formation in order to thwart internal challenges to state sovereignty.

Simultaneously, the growing trend towards globalisation as well as political fragmentation have rendered the modern state vulnerable to outside interference, gnawing at the very sovereignty that the state tries to uphold. The imperatives of globalisation have had a destabilizing effect upon modern states. It is important for the state to extract allegiance from its citizens not only so that it can harness its support to remain in power but also “in order to be successful in the new global marketplace ....

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<sup>33</sup> Christopher Clapham, “Sovereignty and the Third World State”, in Robert. Jackson, ed., *Sovereignty at the Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p. 108.

<sup>34</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), pp. 142-143

If the citizens do not identify with the state, its authority may erode, and territories with little effective authority cannot attract investments and generate growth”.<sup>35</sup>

There is also a growing trend at questioning the viability of the “territorial state” as forces of globalization transform the world into a global village at an unprecedented pace. Therefore, lack of identification with the state by certain groups within the state exacerbates the debate on whether territorial boundaries are tenable. John Macmillan and Andrew Linklater, challenge the tenability of boundaries and argue that the “significance of conventional boundaries has been eroded by globalisation and the burgeoning sub-national revolt.”<sup>36</sup> An early proponent of the disappearance of the territorial state, John H Herz noted that “territoriality was bound to vanish, chiefly under the impact of developments in the means of destruction which render defense nugatory by making even the most powerful “permeable”.”<sup>37</sup> In his book titled *International Politics in the Atomic Age (1959)*, “Professor Herz had forecast that modern technology would lead to the demise of the nation-state as the international actor”.<sup>38</sup> However, writing in 1969, a decade after he had proclaimed the decline of the state, Herz reconsiders his thesis on the basis that, “as the rush into “independent” statehood shows, being a sovereign nation seems to be the chief international status symbol as well as to furnish the actual entrance ticket into world society”.<sup>39</sup> Professor Herz’s reconsideration is a result of the developments that took place in the 1960’s when various states in Africa attained independence. Where during the Cold War era, sovereignty served as an “instrument of state consolidation for Third World states”,<sup>40</sup> in the post-Cold War era, that very sovereignty has come to haunt and impinge on national state sovereignty, as a result of the rising demand for statehood and secession by sub-national groups within the already established territorial state.

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<sup>35</sup> Stein Tonnesson and Hans Antlov, “Asia in Theories of Nationalism and National Identity” in John Hutchison and Anthony D Smith, ed., *Nationalism: Critical Concepts in Political Science - Vol III*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 845.

<sup>36</sup> John Macmillan and Andrew Linklater ed., *Boundaries in Question – New Directions in International Relations* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1995), p.3.

<sup>37</sup> John H Herz, “The Territorial State Revisited: reflections on the Future of the Nation-State”, in James N Roseneau, ed., *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory* (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 77.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 76.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Jackson, ed., *Sovereignty at the Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p. 104.

At the same time, we must recognise that the demands for self determination, autonomy or secession, etc, are not an exclusive post-Cold War phenomenon. The longing for a territorial homeland or statehood to define and represent one's identity is not a desire exclusive to the "majority" group either. And again, it is not only identity which motivates groups towards demanding or asserting one's distinctiveness, though it is a primary reason. Therefore, we can see a drive towards yearning for "territorial sovereign self-representation" in almost all the actors: those that already wield sovereignty and those who oppose that sovereignty. "The territorial nature of man is genetic and ineradicable,"<sup>41</sup> hence, "though the territorial state as a physical shell has been shattered by the force of modern nuclear physics, nothing has thus far shattered the loyalty of the people to their nation; and so long as this is true, the motives, conduct, policy and pattern of international relations will continue to be a function of the behaviour of sovereign states."<sup>42</sup>

While "Marxists and proponents of global universalism," argue that the state is bound to disappear,<sup>43</sup> adherents of the Realist paradigm in international relations view the state as an essential and a primary actor in regulating an anarchic international environment. The Marxist views the state as an instrument for exercise of "domination" of one class over the other. "It is born as an instrument in the hands of the possessing class for the purpose of maintaining the domination of this class over society, and it will disappear along with this class domination."<sup>44</sup> Whereas, in the Marxist understanding, the state is destined to disappear one day, Hinsley regards state sovereignty as essential for maintaining "social order"<sup>45</sup> within a given territory.

The foremost proponents of the Realist paradigm are classical theorists, Thomas Hobbes and Nicolo Machiavelli. Hans J Morgenthau, George Kenan, and Henry

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<sup>41</sup> John H Herz, "The Territorial State Revisited: reflections on the Future of the Nation-State", in James N Roseneau, ed., *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory* (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 86.

<sup>42</sup> Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 1953.

<sup>43</sup> John H Herz, "The Territorial State Revisited: reflections on the Future of the Nation-State", in James N Roseneau, ed., *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory* (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 77.

<sup>44</sup> Ernest Mandel, "Marxist Theory of the State", <http://www.geocities.com/mnsocialist/mandel-state.html>.

<sup>45</sup> F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 5.

Kissinger are more recent expounders of the realist school. They believe that the implications of security and power factors guide the imperatives of the chaotic international states system. For Morgenthau, politics cannot be understood in terms of moral or religious terms but instead have to be based on rational thinking. National interest of the state is of supreme concern for the realists and is defined in terms of power and the way it is balanced.

### 5. Sovereignty and Power

Hinsley's argument that sovereignty is basically a manifestation of the desire of men to wield absolute political authority through a political institution is a comment on the nature of man and his obsession with power. Since "a state functions as a "means of organising political power" in maintaining "social order within a territorial framework"<sup>46</sup> the "emergence of the state reflects not the desire of a society for its kind of rule but an urge in men to possess its kind of power".<sup>47</sup> Sovereignty is a byproduct of man's quest for power; such an understanding, extended, any political institution (eg. the state) that makes claims to sovereignty is motivated by a desire to exercise power. Though Hobbes does not mention 'power', he talks about the nature of man as being inherently envious and craving for honour and dignity. We can translate his idea of honour and dignity as one, with the acquisition of which man intends to exercise power, and likewise, wage war. Thus, in order to avert war, in the Hobbesian sense, the visualization of a state is necessary so that it can regulate power and, thus, thwart/avert the consequences of man's obsession with power.

For Morgenthau, "political power is a psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised. It gives the former control over certain actions of the latter through the influence which the former exerts over the latter's mind."<sup>48</sup> At the same time, state "power can (also) be used to allocate resources and values; it may be sought not only for psychological reasons but also for fulfilling

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> Prakash Chander and Prem Arora, *International Relations*, (Delhi: Cosmos Bookhive, 1993), p. 12.

material wants and needs,”<sup>49</sup> domestically as well as externally. Externally, it allows for recognition of independent statehood which confers it membership to enjoy the privileges of the international system. Sovereignty bestows on the newly formed state a degree of legitimacy that allows it to function as an independent entity in the economic, political, social or cultural sphere, equally with other states like itself. Internally, it confers upon “the rulers of the state” the power to administer and control its territorial borders and the resources within it, which in turn denies external actors any “right to interfere”. “Post independence Third World sovereign regimes served the dual function of protecting the territoriality of the state itself, and of providing international backing for the entrenchment of state control over the domestic population.”<sup>50</sup> In fact, as Christopher Clapham notes, the key claim to sovereignty by Third World states is to “unfettered control over their internal affairs, and notably over their own domestic populations”.<sup>51</sup>

This paper is basically concerned with issues pertaining to “internal sovereignty”<sup>52</sup> rather than external sovereignty, though reference and comparison will be made to the latter when necessary. At the same time, it is my contention that a precise demarcation of these two types of sovereignty is superficial because they often overlap and reinforce one another, or react to each other. Internal sovereignty of a state renders the state as the supreme authority in setting the terms and conditions for the conduct of its domestic populations as members of the sovereign state as well as in the international sphere.

The use of sovereignty as an ideology for maintaining state power is, however, inherently fragile, since it rests on a combination of domestic and external circumstances which cannot be expected to continue indefinitely, and which indeed

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<sup>49</sup> Michael Ng-Quinn, “National Identity in Premodern China: Formation and Role Enactment”, in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 36.

<sup>50</sup> Christopher Clapham, “Sovereignty and the Third World State”, in Robert. Jackson, ed., *Sovereignty at the Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p. 107.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103.

<sup>52</sup> Geoffrey L. Goodwin, “The Erosion of External Sovereignty”, in Ghita Ionescu, *Between Sovereignty and Integration* (New York: John Wiley and Sons), p. 100.



carry within them the seeds of their own destruction.<sup>53</sup> In the modern context, territoriality and the command of power and authority within that territory is the ultimate concern of the state making the concept vulnerable to challenge given the resurgence of conflict between state and nations. Since, as Hinsley clearly points out, the state is an “outcome” of the “quest of some cultural group for domination over others”<sup>54</sup> it is very likely that there will be opposition to such domination by groups who are conscious of their identity, such as ethnic and sub-national groups. As discussed earlier, the haphazard immediacy with which territorial delineation has occurred in newly independent post-colonial states impinged on issues of ethnicity and nationality in various nation-states. Identification of groups along minority/majority lines have also added to minority exclusivity and thus enhanced in-group cohesiveness of various minority populations. Since the modern conception of sovereignty is associated with the notion of democracy where rulers or leaders of states are democratically/popularly elected, usually, the community or ethnic group which constituted the “majority” of the population, entrenched itself in positions of “power” in the government administration. As hold over political “power” is a very important component in the exercise of sovereignty, the minority nationalities usually are deprived of it. Lack of decision-making power to determine one’s economic, social, religious, political policies lead to minority alienation and likewise, majority chauvinism.

Clearly, sovereignty which confers problematic notions of territoriality, power and authority, complicates the issue of national identity of the state as well as sub-nations within the state.

## **6. Sovereignty, Ethnicity and Nationality**

Though the conception of monarchical power as derived from natural or divine law had become redundant, Hobbes’ notion of the abstract state had its own shortcomings as the tentacles of Machiavellian absolutism was far from loosening its command over

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<sup>53</sup> Christopher Clapham, “Sovereignty and the Third World State”, in Robert. Jackson, ed., *Sovereignty at the Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p. 107.

<sup>54</sup> F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 13.

the body politic. His abstract state is criticized as being the old rule in a new form – “a kind of exclusive jurisdiction that goes back to the rule of kings”.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the debate between sovereignty of the “People” and that of the state had resulted in the gradual emergence of state as the absolute wielder of sovereignty to conduct and regulate a disordered society, and later an anarchical international environment. Absolute sovereignty, territoriality and quest for political power of the state dispensed with the rights of the People and subsequently impinged on ethnic and national consciousness of sub-nations within the state. A state views the “people” within its boundaries in terms of its “citizen” which is a universalizing concept. However, with the rise of nationalism in the modern era, the state could no longer assume to treat its people as a homogenous entity.

With the end of World War I, formulation of the principle of “national self determination” of the people in US President Woodrow Wilson’s 14 points for the League of Nations, sovereignty of the modern state came to be challenged. For Lenin, “true communism supported the principle of self determination ‘in so far as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the (imperial) oppressor’.”<sup>56</sup> The disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia into distinctive political entities based on ethnic affiliations has threatened state sovereignty as they dread the recurrence of the same. Modern China’s discomfort of any such principle is revealed in Mao Zedong’s words. For him, the League of Nations was a “league of robbers by which the various imperialisms are dismembering China”.<sup>57</sup> The trend of globalisation and modernization has likewise contributed to the rise of group consciousness along ethnic, national and civilisational lines. Max Weber defines nation as “a community based on sentiments of solidarity”.<sup>58</sup> John Stuart Mill defines nation as “a portion of mankind...united among themselves by common sympathies...which make them

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<sup>55</sup> James A. Paul, “Nations and States”, July, 1996, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/nations/natstats.htm>.

<sup>56</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 220.

<sup>57</sup> Surjit Mansingh and C V Ranganathan, “Approaches to State Sovereignty”, in Alka Acharya and GP Deshpande, ed. *50 Years of India China – Crossing a Bridge of Dreams* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2001), p. 452.

<sup>58</sup> Maria Hsia Chang, *Return of the Dragon: China's Wounded Nationalism* (United States of America: Westview Press, 2001), p. 15.

cooperate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government...".<sup>59</sup> Samuel S Kim defines nation as a socio-psychological concept referring to a self-conscious and self-differentiating community of people bound by common history and solidarity. Modernist theorists<sup>60</sup> of the rise of "nations" believe that modernization in the form of industrialization, media/education, have contributed to the growth of nations, or as Benedict Anderson calls it, "imagined communities". On the other hand, Anderson sees the nation as imagined and "limited because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations".<sup>61</sup>

The lack of proper differentiation between a state and the nation has led to treatment of both as the same. From this have arisen various issues linked to ethnic and sub-national identities that contest the sovereignty of the modern nation-state. Most states that came about as a result of the disintegration of colonial empires lacked the core criterion to qualify as modern nation-states, "within their boundaries were enclosed not one, but more than one nation. As Kim says, a nation has often been subordinated, manipulated and exploited by the modern nation-state where "governing elites ... levy taxes and armies and they have substantial reasons to promote popular identification with groups they can control as local identity is a resource which inspires group action".<sup>62</sup> The modern nation-state, as is implied by the term itself, lays claim to the idea that it (the state) is a nation. Hegel (1770-1831), who attempted to eliminate the differences between the state and the community to provide a "united view of reality,"<sup>63</sup> believed that in the evolution of politics, the nation is ultimately predestined to get absorbed in the state whereas, Marx contended that in the course of political evolution, the state would ultimately disappear. For Marx, the state was a special organ that appeared at a certain moment in the historical evolution of mankind and

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p.15.

<sup>60</sup> The prominent modernists are Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson.

<sup>61</sup> Benedict Anderson, "The Nation as Imagined Community", 1983.  
<http://www.nationalismproject.org/what/anderson.htm>.

<sup>62</sup> Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993).

<sup>63</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 128.

that is condemned to disappear in the course of this same evolution. It was born from the division of society into classes and will disappear at the same time that this division disappears. However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century there has been a growth of new states as a result of end of colonialism. The territorial form of the state, which germinated in the Peace of Westphalia and culminated in the Congress of Vienna has endured to such an extent that even within the new multinational states, contestations to state sovereignty by nations have persisted.

The existence of different groups – ethnic and nations, which might also qualify as minorities – within the state often feel intimidated, as has been evident in the cases of many newly formed nation-states, where secessionist, separatist, revolutionary and insurgent movements have sprung up one after another. Not only that, the emergence of nationalism and demand for self determination, secession, autonomy, etc., by ethnic and sub-national groups have levied heavy constraints on the right of the state to its sovereignty. Anthony D. Smith's argument that "would be nations that lack a dominant ethnic base often have great problems in forging national consciousness and cohesion",<sup>64</sup> would point to the analysis that modern nation-states that "lack a dominant ethnic base" are in danger of disintegration.

Because, the "consolidation, if not the origin of the state has often been assisted by conquest",<sup>65</sup> to hold culturally different groups together in a single political society, "there is need for the differently based and differently organised authority of the state".<sup>66</sup> It is the politics of language that some of them were identified as ethnic groups and some as nations or sub-nations. Nationality and ethnicity can both be viewed as a mode of identification in the stages of development of a group. Ethnies are "named units of population with common ancestry myths and historical memories, elements of shared culture, some link with the historic territory and some measure of

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<sup>64</sup> Anthony D. Smith, "Culture, community and territory: the politics of ethnicity and nationalism", *International Affairs* 72, 3 (1996), p. 447.

<sup>65</sup> F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 12-13.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

solidarity, at least among their elites.”<sup>67</sup> A nation, by contrast, is a “named human population which shares myths and memories, a mass public culture, a designated homeland, economic unity and equal rights and duties for all members.”<sup>68</sup> Smith provides “two routes” by which an ethnic progresses into nation. One from above – incorporation of the population by agents of the state, and one from below – the formation of a new state by an ethnic through separation or unification. We can conclude that ethnicity exists as the preceding identification. Smith, like the modernists, agrees that nations occur in the modern era, however, for him nations have an ethnic core. Ethnicity per se is not much of a problem as far as impinging on state sovereignty is concerned. The prevalence of ethnic clashes or ethnic-cleansing tendencies is not a result or source of desire for sovereignty. However, when ethnic affiliations have tended to take political tones; and tended to be conscious of their political identity that they have tended to impinge on state sovereignty. It is at this stage that ethnic groups have developed into nations even before fulfilling Smith’s precondition of the “two routes”.

Existence of different political groups within a nation-state impinged upon the state’s legitimacy, as nation-state and at the same time led the ruling political elite to pursue agendas of assimilation, nation building and construction of national identity of the state. Such a response again was reinforced by the modern conception of sovereignty of the nation-state that derecognized diversities. Especially the newly established Communist states, inspired by the thoughts of Marx, viewed “cultural and national differences as temporary stopping-points on the way to being citizens of the world” and “have thus been more indifferent or hostile to the claims of minority cultures”.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Stein Tonnesson and Hans Antlov, “Asia in Theories of Nationalism and National Identity” in John Hutchison and Anthony D Smith, ed., *Nationalism: Critical Concepts in Political Science - Vol III*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p.851.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Will Kymlicka, ed., *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 5.

## 7. Sovereignty and National Identity

At its formation, the modern nation-state is usually faced with a variety of crises linked to identity (national), legitimacy, penetration (into various minority regions), participation (from various groups within the territorial state), integration (of various groups that feel alienated and discriminated against) and distribution (and allocation of economic resources that are not able to reach wider segment and groups of the society). Nation building is an all encompassing exercise for a newly formed state. Often, the group of rulers who wielded the power and authority bestowed by sovereignty upon them, followed discriminatory policies or embarked upon projects of “nation-building” which boomeranged. Formation of a national identity also becomes the most urgent task of nation building in terms of non-economic attention. Like individuals have their identities, a nation is conceived as having a collective identity of the individual identities. According to Katherine Verdery, national identity exists at two levels: “the individual’s sense of self as national, and the identity of the collective whole in relation to others of like kind”.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, national identity serves the purpose of reiterating in-group cohesiveness of the nation and uniqueness of the identity of “a people and specially a policy making elite, (who) perceive the essence of their nation in relation to others”<sup>71</sup>. Implicit in the above prognosis is the assumption that the national identity under scrutiny involves the identity of one nation consisting of individuals. However, it does not provide for national identities of states that incorporate more than one nation within them. When absorption of individual identity into a nation is problematic, we can envision the problems in the Hegelian absorption of nations into the national identity of one state.

The process of national identity construction of a new state involves, at inception, the exercise of sovereign control over specific territories and establishment of its relationship with the citizenry in terms of what the state is, and what it does. Its

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<sup>70</sup> Katherine Verdery, “Whither ‘nation’ and ‘Nationalism’?” in Gopal Balakrishnan. ed. *Mapping the Nation* (London & New York: Verso, 1996), p. 229.

<sup>71</sup> Robert A. Scalapino, “China’s Multiple Identities in East Asia: China as a Regional Force”, in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China’s Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 215.

function is “to sustain the state by unifying the population, at least psychologically.” Externally, a state reinforces “national distinctiveness, which justifies the perpetuation of the state”.<sup>72</sup> Reiteration of national distinctiveness of the state in comparison to other states is to generate the solidarity and unity of the people within the state. At the same time, it is directed at the international audience that might be seeking to jeopardize its unity or even at the global market for investments by projecting a stable stock market.

As national identity is the concordant relationship between nation and state that obtains when a mass of people identify with what the state is and does, problems arise when ethnic groups and nations stop or do not identify with the national identity of the state and instead proclaim their own national identities. Adoption and application of the concept of sovereign statehood and territorial integrity has prolematised the national identity of the forming state. Because sovereignty requires that a state have defined boundaries, unlike in the premodern era where conquests and expansion deemed boundaries as fluid and undefined, and demarcation and definition of boundaries by new states cut across ethnic groups, nations, pre-nation people, resulting in a contest over sovereignty in the demarcating state by those people who had by then developed feelings of nationalism.

The ruling elite also used “nationalism” to extract loyalty from its citizens. Nationalism is a very good tool to instill in people a sense of national identity, “national consciousnesses of belonging to a nation, be it through discourse of racial belonging, primordial ties, collective fate, or civilisational theory. We could deduce from here that just as a group of people can be molded to think and ‘imagine’ in a particular way to rebel against or contest the sovereignty of a nation-state, likewise, a group can be manipulated and tended to think in terms of affiliating with the modern state by its ruling elite. Ethnic groups that succumb to such manipulations could do so on the premise that they receive reasonable benefits – socio-economic – from such an

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<sup>72</sup> Michael Ng-Quinn, “National Identity in Premodern China: Formation and Role Enactment”, in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 32.

affiliation. At the same time economic incentives have their limitations when issues of identity are at stake. Usually, the case has been that construction of national identities in a multinational state has limited possibility of eliciting identification from different groups to the state.

Sovereignty has thus come to be challenged by ethnic and national groups from within which might also have transnational linkages. And, “as long as people feel pulled between two worlds and without roots in any society, they cannot have the firm sense of identity necessary for building a stable, modern nation-state”.<sup>73</sup> Likewise, “relation between nation and state has indeed become both ambiguous and interdependent, as the state has indeed become the sovereign center of self conscious collective action in the formation and presentation of national identity.”<sup>74</sup>

## 8. Conclusion

The era of sovereignty as a universal organising principle for the management of the global system has ended,<sup>75</sup> the trend indicates the future of the territorial and sovereign nation-state. Harold Laski contended in *The Grammar of Politics* (1941), “it would be of lasting benefit to political science if the whole concept of sovereignty were surrendered”.<sup>76</sup> The desire for the demise of the concept of sovereignty is a result of its limitations as a universal principle in bringing about societal harmony. With the rise of nationalism, the urge for supreme authority and power within a territory has led to the rise in conflicts/disorder/anarchy – for the avoidance of which the concept of sovereignty and its agent, the states system had come into being. Various issues that have undermined state sovereignty are: “domestic alienation”,<sup>77</sup> “alliance between

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<sup>73</sup> Cited in Lynn White and Li Cheng, “China Coast identities: Regional, National and Global” in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 158.

<sup>74</sup> Samuel S. Kim and Lowell Dittmer, “Wither China's Quest for National identity”, in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China's Quest for National Identity*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 245.

<sup>75</sup> Christopher Clapham, “Sovereignty and the Third World State”, in Robert. Jackson, ed., *Sovereignty at the Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p. 115.

<sup>76</sup> F H Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 216.

<sup>77</sup> Christopher Clapham, “Sovereignty and the Third World State”, in Robert. Jackson, ed., *Sovereignty at the Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p. 109



organisations of every kind”, and “assault on legitimacy of sovereignty”,<sup>78</sup> “the good governance agenda and notably the campaign for human rights”,<sup>79</sup> “right of intervention...in the name of humanitarianism”, “changing status of insurgencies”, “rival claim of juridical statehood”<sup>80</sup> and finally ethnic and sub-national identities that felt increasingly threatened by the modern concept of state sovereignty.

Second, the placing of public positive law above private human law gives rise to tendencies of absolute sovereignty in the ruler and thus tyranny. Bodin’s dilemma that the belief in a divine moral accountability to God will ameliorate such a shortcoming is not convincing, as “good governance” has not been dependent on the people being governed but on the sovereign itself. In a modern state, good governance might be checked and balanced by people’s right to vote etc, but the fact that government means rule by majority, leaves out the minorities. And because the very origin of sovereignty is a desire of men to wield power, when the majorities command it, the minorities are discriminated against. In modern parlance, it creates a binary relationship whereby the tag of being a minority and unlike the majority, harnesses majority chauvinism and the resultant policy of assimilation destroys the minority culturally, psychologically and economically.

Moreover, sovereignty originated in the context of empires, monarchy, divinity, and community affiliation. The rise of nations has completely altered and cast the challenges to sovereignty in a new light. Modern day proclivity to view sovereign subjects within a universal cosmos – citizens – underplays the role of nations.

At the same time, we are urgently faced with the question as to what would replace the nation-state system, if at all its demise is inevitable. Would it be replaced by a multinational world government, or an association of corporate businesses, or a grouping of NGOs, or simply anarchy and chaos? A more appropriate question to ask, however, would be: in the first place what role would the present opponents of the sovereignty regime assume in the event of the disintegration of the state system?

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p. 110

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, p. 111

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, p. 112

Ironically, these forces that oppose the sovereignty of established nation-states seem to be demanding or asserting their own claim for sovereign statehood. In such a scenario, the demise of the territorial state seems only to be wishful thinking.

John Macmillan and Andrew Linklater very succinctly capture the essence of the future of the nation-state, which they say will be dependent “heavily on the outcome of the interplay between forces of globalisation and fragmentation”.<sup>81</sup> Likewise, they assert that, the boundaries should be understood as temporary and provisional supports rather than “present and invariable structures.”<sup>82</sup> Is such an understanding possible at all? Andrew and Linklater’s argument is based on the assumption that the actors defending, as well as demanding sovereignty, over a given territory are rational actors not affected by desire for power or urge for identity. Machiavelli was correct to recognise that institutions are by nature fragile and, thus, “their maintenance required great skill”. And rightly, it is on “skill” that the issues of sovereignty, ethnicity and nationality are now dependent; on how the various actors conduct themselves; the state through good governance and nationalities through coexistence.

There seem to be two arguments on which rests the possible future of the nation-state system – the cause and the potential solution. The first argument has to do with the post-colonial independent entities that adopted the European concept of sovereign statehood. Though Macmillan and Linklater hold that the newly independent entities “emulate(d) the West by establishing their own sovereign boundaries”, not for any other reason but to “free themselves from the Western empires” and “to protect their economic and political interests”,<sup>83</sup> it must be pointed out that there are limitations to how much can be emulated. Rousseau (as well as Montesquieu) have argued that “all forms of government do not suit all countries”<sup>84</sup> or climates. If we were to view the states system from below, “in terms of its component units, the “states” draws upon our image of the Western nation-states” and “it is when we start applying it to the non-

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<sup>81</sup> John Macmillan and Andrew Linklater ed., *Boundaries in Question – New Directions in International Relations* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1995), p. 4.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>84</sup> Vincent P Pecora, ed., *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings* (Massachusetts, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), pp. 73-73

western world, and especially to the new states of Asia and Africa, that we run into difficulties.”<sup>85</sup> According to Herz, “in many new states that emerged from decolonisation, absence of minimally strong feelings of identity and solidity still prevents their being considered as fully legitimate”.<sup>86</sup> He further adds, “in many new countries legitimacy is in doubt not only because of the problematic nature of the unit but also because of the nature of the regime, which may be oppressive (military control as the only way to keep the unit together) and/or unrepresentative (in the sense of rule by one among several ethnic groups).<sup>87</sup>

Nonetheless, given the analysis of sovereignty in relation to various variables like power, territoriality, ethnicity, nationality and national identity, we have noticed that the “territorial instinct” of men is still dominant, as is evident in men’s desire for owning property. If ethnic and national groups challenge and contest state sovereignty, it is with the motive to establish their own sovereignty. Therefore, it would be helpful and more practical to delve into the second proposition. The second argument deems that “the functions which sovereignty has served for the Third World governing elites can be achieved only when these are able to avert economic catastrophe and maintain an appropriate level of effective control over their domestic territories.”<sup>88</sup> The issue is again about “skill”. Apart from maintaining economic harmony and control of territories, which is a very Marxist and functional perception of placating dissent, potential solution can be found in trying to make amends for the consequences that have accrued as a result of emulation of the European concept in the Asian case. The nature of consequences as discussed above is largely a result of policies of “autocracy”, “misgovernment”, “statist ideologies”, “ambitious programmes for “nation-building” and economic transformation”.<sup>89</sup> Established states that are now on the defensive need to understand the dynamic of ethnic and national identities and

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<sup>85</sup> John H Herz, “The Territorial State Revisited: reflections on the Future of the Nation-State”, in James N Roseneau, ed., *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory* (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 91.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p. 83.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, p. 84.

<sup>88</sup> Christopher Clapham, “Sovereignty and the Third World State”, in Robert. Jackson, ed., *Sovereignty at the Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p. 114.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, p. 108

devise ways in which diversity is recognised. Throughout the world, majorities and minorities clash over such issues as language rights, federalism, religious freedom, education curriculum, land claims, immigration and naturalization policy, even national symbols such as the choice of national anthem or public holidays.<sup>90</sup> Ethnic groups and nations that exist in the nation-state as minorities need to be able to feel a sense of belonging to and be able to identify with the state in order for the state to command its loyalty. Otherwise, “as long as people feel pulled between two worlds and without roots in any society, they cannot have the firm sense of identity necessary for building a stable, modern nation-state”.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Will Kymlicka, ed., *The Rights of Minority Cultures*. (New York: Oxford University Press), 1995, p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Cited in Lynn White and Li Cheng, “China Coast identities: Regional, National and Global” in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China’s Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 158.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **CHINESE DISCOURSE ON SOVEREIGNTY, ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY ISSUES**

#### **1. Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with the concept of sovereignty in the context of its relationship and interaction with the notions of state, power, territoriality and national identity and the various residual problems emanating from it. We learnt in the preceding chapter that the modern conception of the state as a supreme wielder of power and authority in the domestic, as well as, the international system was of western origin and thus alien to countries in the Asian sub-continent. Sovereignty and its modern connotations of territoriality have been applied in modern China with various ramifications for its ability to forge national solidity and consciousness.

This chapter will discuss the understanding of, adaptation to and application of the pre modern and modern conception of sovereignty in the People's Republic of China and the implications, thereof, on nationality and ethnicity issues. While the periodisation of Chinese history into the pre modern and modern remains problematic, as a heuristic device it enables us to separate the strands of the discourse on sovereignty.

#### **2. Sovereignty, Modernity and China**

The advent of sovereignty, along-side the arrival of modernity in China, gave an impetus to demands for national and ethnic identities in China. Issues of nationality and ethnicity do not figure in pre-modern China owing to the absence of a modern conception of sovereignty in China during that period.

The concept of sovereignty differs epistemologically in pre-modern and modern China. In the pre-modern era, the concept of sovereignty was linked to the sovereign monarch or the Son of Heaven who was, supposedly, endowed with divine authority to rule all under heaven. In the modern era, it was vested in the nation-state as envisaged

by the European-Western worldview, implying that the end of dynastic rule in China in 1911 marked the beginning of China's move towards modernity. The modern conception of sovereignty was associated with the notion of democracy. With the formation of modern nation-states, rulers or leaders of states began to be democratically/popularly elected, ushering an era of "majority" rule. As a consequence, the community or ethnic group which constituted the "majority" of the population, entrenched itself in positions of "power" as it managed to secure the requisite mandate. Appropriation of political "power" is a very important component in the exercise of sovereignty. In the case of China, though elections did not take place on the basis of "universal adult franchise", people occupying positions of power belonged to the majority Han nationality. The absence of popular franchise has not precluded the effect of exercise of sovereign power by the majority on national and ethnic minorities' consciousness. Thus, the "sub-nations" which are classified as "minorities", have lacked the "power" and authority to air their grievances in modern nation-state in general because they lack the power of representation. The inability of states to discern such grievances has created fissures, which have ultimately been manifested in the contestation of national sovereignty by sub-national forces.

The Chinese state has tried to unite its various "peoples" with an extensive network of transportation and communications networks, recently infrastructure building and the controlled infusion of capitalistic investment and market manipulation. National identity has been actively reconstructed and endowed with indigenous meanings that are specific to China. "A discourse of patrilineal descent has emerged as a very powerful and cohesive form of national identity in China which has been capable of transcending the extreme diversity of religious practices, family structures, spoken languages and regional cultures of population groups that all define themselves as "Chinese".<sup>1</sup> In contemporary times the Chinese "national identity" has been stitched to suit the tapestry of ideology and principles of the governments at the centre – by the Nationalist Guomindang under Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek; Mao Zedong during the Yanan years and Deng Xiaoping there. Since "Han identity" has been an "invented

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Dikotter, "Culture, Race and Nation: Formation of National Identity in Twentieth Century China", *Journal of International Affairs*, <http://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/china.html>.

nationality”,<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Spence’s view that China has never in that sense, “even at the end of the twentieth century...been convincingly one of them (i.e. modern)” deems consideration.

We can thus, call this phenomenon a “paradox of modernity”, because, modernity<sup>3</sup> allows a state to demarcate territorial boundaries. However, the process gives rise to the formation of states that have more than one nation within its boundaries. And usually, the process involves the use of coercion to extract compliance from other nations, in order that the state can be established and opposition to state formation quelled. Therefore, wherein modernity challenged imperial, colonial and feudal modes of government, it simultaneously, in the name of defending an invented territorial and national sovereignty, reinforced and regressed into the very thing that was being opposed – the denial of the right to self determination – in the form of clubbing together of various nations inside the nation-state. This was not a problem as long as the sub-nations did not aspire for sovereignty or self-rule. When they did, right to freedom, the ultimate measure of modernity challenged the claim to being modern.

The meaning of sovereignty is, however, complicated in the case of China by the fact that sovereignty has had different meanings in pre modern and modern China. Given this background, in this chapter, I intend to explore the dynamics of the concept of sovereignty as understood by China in the various stages of its historical evolution and the various attitudes that accrue out of that understanding; the responses shaped by those attitudes and the implications of the same.

### **3. The Pre Modern Chinese State**

Pre modern China saw itself as being surrounded on all sides by the so-called “barbarians” who inhabited its frontier region. James A Millward chooses to consider

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<sup>2</sup> Dru C. Gladney, “China’s National Insecurity: Old Challenges at the Dawn of the New Millennium”, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> A wide variety of terms are used to describe the society, social life, driving force, symptomatic mentality, or some other defining aspects of modernity. They include: Bureaucracy...Rationalization, Secularization, Alienation...Decontextualization... Homogenization, Unification...Democratization, Centralization, Hierarchical organization...Totalitarian, and so on. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernity#Modern\\_as\\_Post-Medieval#Modern\\_as\\_Post-Medieval](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernity#Modern_as_Post-Medieval#Modern_as_Post-Medieval).

a frontier as a “process”, an ever shifting notion, the territory of and allegiance to which is not fixed. He says, “a frontier is a region where recent military conquest and consolidation, new migration, cross cultural contact, agricultural reclamation and urban growth occurred.”<sup>4</sup> In the Chinese context, this area, i.e. the Chinese frontier is also known as the “Inner-Asian region”. Lattimore explains that “the lands of Manchuria, Mongolia, Chinese Turkistan and Tibet...are the Inner Asian barrier lands, which limit the geography and history of China on one side as the sea limits them on the other.”<sup>5</sup> According to Millward, “most historians of China automatically equate the concept of frontier with the Chinese Inner-Asian frontier – the Great Wall line”,<sup>6</sup> which during certain periods “abruptly set off...linear demarcation” of the “landward edge of China”.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the argument that the demarcation between the Chinese empire and the barbarian lands rested on demographic differences, the residence of barbarians who did not fit into the Confucian cosmology, Owen Lattimore and Warren W Smith also view the demarcation as based on differentiation between the nomadic barbarians of the steppe and the agrarian economy of China. Based on such economic consideration, according to Lattimore, it was logical to exclude the nomadic population as “it was best to administer as “Chinese” only territory in which it was possible to promote the increasingly intensive agriculture on which the new standard of empire was based.”<sup>8</sup> For him, the Great Wall “only approximates to an absolute frontier...(as) the product of social emphasis continuously applied along a line of cleavage between environments...(whereby) different forms of society, as they mature, function and develop within their environments and attempt to control them.”<sup>9</sup> He adds that “many

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<sup>4</sup> James A Millward, “New Perspectives on the Qing Frontier”, in Gail Hershatter, Emily Honig, Jonathan N Lipman, and Randall Stross, ed. *Remapping China: Fissures in Historical Terrain* (California: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> James A Millward, “New Perspectives on the Qing Frontier”, in Gail Hershatter, Emily Honig, Jonathan N Lipman, and Randall Stross, ed. *Remapping China: Fissures in Historical Terrain* (California: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 115.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3

<sup>8</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 462.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25



other differences – including race, nationality, language, religion, and form of political organisation – can be referred to the Great Wall line of cleavage.”<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, Smith<sup>11</sup> makes a differentiation between Tibetan and Chinese geographical ecology, thus making a case for the uniqueness of Tibet as distinct from China. He notes that “Tibet as a culture and a nation is ...distinguished from surrounding areas by the high altitude of the plateau”<sup>12</sup> whereas “the Chinese cultural area is defined by climate and hydrology, by the area in which intensive, irrigated agriculture is possible.”<sup>13</sup> At the same time, Lattimore postulates that “in recurrent periods, however, the inland border of China has not been a sharp edge, defined by the Great Wall, but a series of frontier zones, varying in depth from north to south (and in Tibet from east to West) and stretching away indefinitely into the plains and mountains and forests of Siberia, the vague depths of Central Asia, and the wastes of Tibet.”<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the erstwhile “Inner Asian barrier lands”, limiting China’s “geography and history”, later, lost their “sharp edge” and developed into a “series of frontier zones”.

In a pathbreaking study of the Great Wall Arthur Waldron cites Frederick Wakeman as one of the many scholars who view the Wall more as embodying Chinese attitudes toward the outside world: “...more than a defense line. To the Chinese, it marked the border between civilization and the barbarian hordes of Huns, Turks, Khitan, Ju-chen, and Mongols that successively threatened native dynasties. To the nomads it was a barrier that challenged and beckoned...”<sup>15</sup> For Waldron, however the traditional notion of the Wall as separating the supposedly incompatible agrarian society of China from the nomadic world of the steppe or the interpretation of the Wall as marking the defense boundary of China is discomfiting and begs enquiry. For him it is important to ask the question about “why did some dynasties build walls while others did not.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), pp. xix-xxvii.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix

<sup>14</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China – From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Most part of the Great Wall was built during the Ming period (1369-1644 AD), the last Chinese-ruled dynasty. Probably it could be a result of the threat from the Mongols with whom the Ming fought many wars over decades that ultimately, indirectly, brought about its downfall. In the thirteenth century, the Mongols became the first alien people to conquer all of China. The Mongols, though not as culturally developed as the Chinese, left some impression on the Chinese civilization, while on the other hand, intensifying Chinese perceptions of threat from the north. The other dynasties that contributed to building of the northern fortifications of the Wall were Chin (221-207 BC when the first unified Chinese state came into existence<sup>17</sup>), the Han (202 BC-220 AD), the Northern Chi (550-74 AD), and the Sui (589-618 AD).

Waldron believes that rather than viewing the Wall as “a given” or “an aspect of Chinese culture”, wall-building must be viewed as “a policy about which people disagreed”; whereas, “some Chinese wanted exclusion and at various times advocated wall building to accomplish it”, there were others who “argued for trade and diplomacy, or in effect for peaceful co-existence with the nomads.”<sup>18</sup> Beyond this Waldron does not to contest Lattimore and Smith argue, nor does he contest the traditional notion of the Wall as marking the defense boundary north of China. Instead, Waldron ends the book with an ambiguous note: “The great Wall, useless militarily even when it was first built, seems guaranteed to keep its position as a multivalent symbol of Chineseness, and to mirror for the rest of us our fantasies about that society”<sup>19</sup> and a speculation that “China’s northern frontier has always been a question and indeed it remains so today”.<sup>20</sup> This ambiguity could be allayed to some extent by the following observations on pre-modern China’s worldview.

The Chinese have defined the world in their own way. Pre modern China conceived itself as being at the “center of the universe” – as is evident in the phrase “the Chinese Emperor is bestowed with the “mandate of heaven” and rules all under heaven” or *tanxia*. Wherever the Emperor ruled was the Empire and whosoever acknowledged his

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<sup>17</sup> Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China – From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 226.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

ultimate authority was considered to be a part of the Empire as well as part of the world. As a result, “sovereignty”, as a concern of the state did not figure in imperial China’s control over territory, as the Emperor believed that he ruled all under heaven. Such a traditional understanding of what constitutes China is also reflected in the Chinese name for the country - *Zhongguo*, literally, Middle Kingdom or Central Nation. As a result, everything under heaven was considered as constituting China and therefore, a fixed notion of what constitutes Chinese territory was never defined, reflecting the uncertainty marking the purpose of the Great Wall. In this context, the notions of territory and ethnicity were not considered while defining the Empire. The unity of the Chinese civilization and the integrity of the Chinese culture were given priority. The people who did not fall within the purview of Confucian cosmology were considered inferior by Chinese standards and were thus typified as the “barbarians” rather than as “minorities” or “minority nationalities”. Therefore, China’s belief in Confucian civilization as the universally applicable principal for governing the world played a major role in shaping its understanding of the people and the territory on its periphery/frontier.

This philosophy or worldview, in turn, outlined the framework of relational conduct with the region. China managed its relationship with the barbarians in its periphery/frontier (the terms are often used interchangeably) through a very loose notion of sovereignty/suzerainty<sup>21</sup>, within the framework of a traditional tribute system. Prasenjit Duara holds that “until the late 19th century, the tribute system is the model of relationships between different state formations in the region of the empire that we call China and immediately around it ... was in some ways the political order; it was in some ways an effort also to regulate trade flows”.<sup>22</sup> The European conception of exchanges between sovereign states was alien to the Chinese system of tributary relations. Rather, there was a lot of ambiguity perpetuated by either parties that

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<sup>21</sup> ‘Suzerainty’ is a term used by the British colonialists to define China’s relation with territories, that the latter claimed belonged to it, which however faced contestation. Britain envisaged ‘suzerainty’ as something that lay in between absolute sovereignty and total lack of control – indirect rule or autonomous relationship. In its agreement with Russia in 1907, Britain for the first time, termed Sino Tibetan relations as both the signatories recognize “suzerain rights of China in Thibet.”

<sup>22</sup> [http://cio.ceu.hu/extreading/CIO/Duara\\_on\\_Tribute\\_System.html](http://cio.ceu.hu/extreading/CIO/Duara_on_Tribute_System.html)

entered into tributary relations, for the furtherance of respective interests<sup>23</sup> and such a relationship served them well. Lattimore cites the example of the evolution of trade relations between “the oases and the Chinese overlords”. He sees this relationship as a result of a Chinese policy to “encourage(d) (the oases) to look toward Chinese overlords instead of toward steppe overlords”.<sup>24</sup> Maintenance of such an imperial policy was expensive because since it was “not practical to simply subjugate the oases and extract wealth from them”, and it became necessary that trade be carried out. Since transportation costs cost the Chinese rulers dear,<sup>25</sup> such trade was “carried out largely by ‘embassies,’ which brought ‘tribute’ to the Chinese court and carried back ‘gifts’ from the imperial court to its ‘loyal subjects’.”<sup>26</sup>

The “Middle Kingdom complex” is “summed up in the “Wall” and the “Tribute System”, a pattern of ritual relations in which nomadic states and even such foreign countries as Korea and Vietnam accepted a sort of Chinese suzerainty”.<sup>27</sup> Waldron sees the “tribute system” as a result of centuries of Chinese of “web of economic, political, and cultural connections” which had “knitted much of Inner Asia to the northern part of China proper”<sup>28</sup>. The process reached its climax during the period of the Yuan, “when Mongol power in Inner Asia had stimulated a tremendous upsurge in commerce and travel”.<sup>29</sup> During the period of the Ming, China attempted to “organize its economic relationship with the steppe according to the Chinese conception of the ‘tribute’” which called for the establishment of a frontier that would “cut right through the network of economic connections and interdependencies that had linked north China to the nomadic world for hundred of years”.<sup>30</sup> The Chinese conceived of “tribute” as “a structure of fictive kinship through which non-Chinese rulers accepted

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<sup>23</sup> For instance, one would be subservient to the other so that it would receive some material privileges. On the other hand, the other might look up to the other for spiritual guidance or patronage as in the case of Tibet and Mongol Yuan dynasty. Paradoxically, both might also deny one’s subservience to the other by reiterating self-importance and necessity of such a relationship, by projecting a picture of generosity.

<sup>24</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 174.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175

<sup>27</sup> Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China – From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

a position of ritual subordination to the Chinese Emperor.”<sup>31</sup> Apart from the imperatives for trade, there is another view that sees the tribute relations as incorporating political undertones. Dawa Norbu cites Mark Mancall, who opines that the tribute system is “roughly equivalent to modern diplomatic recognition in the West, where political entities that have no international diplomatic status are not considered to exist legally.”<sup>32</sup> Norbu draws similarity between the United Nations system of rendering diplomatic representation and recognition to “lesser powers” and the “Sino-centric international system in which lesser powers were given diplomatic recognition and representation to act in the said international system.”<sup>33</sup> Thus he says that “a tributary relationship was not only symbolic but was characterized by ceremonialism rather than political domination.”

The China-centered or “Sino-centric” world-view continued to guide the Chinese understanding of the world even till the nineteenth century when China seriously confronted the West for the first time. The implications of it were damaging on the traditional Chinese worldview and the sovereign authority of the Son of Heaven. The encounter with the West that took the form of an open conflict culminating in the Opium Wars. Such an encounter had a major impact on pre modern Chinese conception of sovereignty. Imminent territorial dismemberment and anti-foreign sentiment coupled with access to western ideas sowed the seed for the awakening of a modern Chinese state.

#### **4. Towards a Modern State**

For John Fitzgerald, “Sun’s Nationalist Revolution marked the awakening of modern China.”<sup>34</sup> Fitzgerald adds: In speaking of the national awakening, Sun celebrated the liberation of the individual and the national people from the absolutism of the imperial state, and at the same time reclaimed the awakening for the modern state.<sup>35</sup> While it is

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), pp. 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (California: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8.

true that Sun's role in the making of a modern Chinese state is significant, it was only with the formation of the PRC in 1949 that the territorial state of China was consolidated. However, such a process had begun way back in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century with China's heightened awareness of anti-foreign sentiment.

Modern China's awakening in a way was marked by an acute recognition of the presence of the "other"—the foreigners. On the one hand, there were the Japanese and on the other, the Europeans. China took it for granted that Sino-European relationship would be conducted according to the tributary system that had evolved over the centuries between the Emperor and representatives of the inferior states on China's borders, as well as between the Emperor and some earlier European visitors. However, the defeat faced by China at the hands of the British during the Opium Wars in the mid-nineteenth century greatly vindicated the Chinese understanding of itself as being at the centre of the universe. Where, earlier, the rulers of China viewed themselves as ruling all under heaven, the confrontation with the West in the mid-nineteenth century, and the subsequent defeat and "unequal treaties" that it was made to sign brought home the realization that, it was after all, not invincible. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, China had also failed to respond to Japan's challenge in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). Military humiliation at the hands of the superior Western weaponry and technology led China to reassess its position. China's military defeats, not only forced people to open their eyes to the Western world - which manifested incidentally quite a different tradition - but also prompted them to seek new inspirations within their own civilization.<sup>36</sup> As a result, by 1911, the two millennia old dynastic system of Imperial government was brought down. Awareness of the humiliation that China had to undergo under the colonialists during the Qing dynasty made the nationalists extremely wary of the former on the one hand, and the latter, on the other.

Modern China awoke to the reality and importance of sovereignty as a result of a declining Empire. The sovereign right of the Manchu Emperor faced challenge in

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<sup>36</sup> Edward Wang, "Modernity inside Tradition: The Transformation of Historical Consciousness in Modern China", [http://www.indiana.edu/~easc/resources/working\\_paper/noframe\\_10c\\_mod.htm](http://www.indiana.edu/~easc/resources/working_paper/noframe_10c_mod.htm)

three fronts: economy, military and defense and foreign affairs. In the first, China had to acquiesce to British incursion into its sovereign right to levy custom duties within its territories and was forced to provide privileges like that of extra-territorial privileges to British citizens in China. In the second field, imperial power faced challenge from domestic as well as external forces, especially during the Taiping Rebellion. Finally, Manchu-Qing control over its Foreign Affairs was constricted as a result of the “Open Door Policy” that was imposed on China by the colonial powers.

The Treaty of Nanjing (1842), signed after the Opium Wars was the first of a series of agreements (also called the “unequal treaties”) with the Western trading nations Under the Treaty of Nanjing, China ceded the island of Hong Kong to the British and granted British nationals extraterritoriality (exemption from Chinese laws); and paid a large indemnity to Britain. It set the scope and character of an unequal relationship, giving rise to a Chinese consciousness of having to face (a century of) “national humiliation.” The treaty was followed by other incursions, wars, and treaties that granted new concessions and added new privileges for the foreigners. The humiliation of defeat and, thereafter, the state of semi-colonialism under which China was placed after the Opium wars, paved the way for the rise of Chinese consciousness that realized the need for a counter-balance to the colonial powers as well as the declining capability of the Manchu-Qing dynasty. The history of the Chinese revolution began in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century with the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1865) that saw the drawing of inspiration from modern Western intellectual sources. “Imperialism not only undermined the old Confucian order but- thus making a revolution possible and indeed necessary- it provided, as a by product, new ideas and ideologies which turned the modern Chinese revolutionary process against the traditions and institutions of the Chinese past”.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the last Chinese dynasty’s ability to govern its Empire was curtailed by its increasing subservience to colonial rulers as a result of the abovementioned challenges, coupled with the handiwork of inefficient and corrupt court-officials. Some of the factors that lead to the fall of the Qing, are various various uprisings, like the Boxer Uprising which on June 1900 besieged the foreign concessions in Beijing

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<sup>37</sup> Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China: A History of the People's Republic* (London: The Free Press, Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1977), p. 3-4

and Tianjin, an action that provoked an allied relief expedition by the offended nations who occupied north China and under the Protocol of 1901 made the Qing court consent to the execution of ten high officials and the punishment of hundreds of others, expansion of the Legation Quarter, payment of war reparations, stationing of foreign troops in China, and razing of some Chinese fortifications, which was a complete assault on the Qing dynasty's administrative and foreign affairs capacities.

Finally, the republican revolution broke out on October 10, 1911 among discontented modernized army units whose anti-Qing plot had been uncovered. On January 1, 1912, Sun was inaugurated in Nanjing as the provisional president of the new Chinese republic. But power in Beijing already had passed to the commander-in-chief of the imperial army, Yuan Shikai, the strongest regional military leader at the time. However, once Yuan Shi Kai assumed power, there emerged a tendency to again recede into another monarchical form of rule. During his rule, to achieve international recognition, Yuan Shikai had to agree to autonomy for Outer Mongolia and Xizang. China was still to be suzerain, but it would have to allow Russia a free hand in Outer Mongolia and Britain continuance of its influence in Xizang (Tibet).

#### *4. 1. Discourse on Race in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China*

At the beginning of the twentieth century, when the Nationalists managed to topple the Qing dynasty, Sun Yat-en realized that there was no sense of a "national identity" in China. Sun's political philosophy was conceptualized in 1897, first enunciated in Tokyo in 1905, and modified through the early 1920s. It centered on the Three Principles of the People (or *san min zhuyi*): "nationalism, democracy, and people's livelihood." The principle of nationalism called for overthrowing the Manchus and ending foreign hegemony over China. The second principle, democracy, was used to describe Sun's goal of a popularly elected republican form of government as opposed to imperial rule. The realization of the need for democracy implied that Sun intended to establish a modern Chinese sovereign nation-state, which, however was hampered by Yuan Shikai's political intrigues and machinations. People's livelihood, often



referred to as socialism, was aimed at helping the common people through regulation of the ownership of the means of production and land.

The idea of national identity was intrinsic to the formation of the new sovereign nation-state that Sun desired. More so, because national identity is the concordant relationship between nations and states that obtains when a mass of people identify with what the state is and does. Therefore, it was important to extract allegiance from the people who were not Han, in order that they would unite in overthrowing foreign rule in China.

Chinese leaders, therefore, indulged in the active construction of a Chinese national identity. Sun Yat-sen, outlined an understanding of China as based on race rather than on civilization. Immanuel Hsu adds, “the forcible injection of alien elements into Chinese life – the Westerners from without and the Manchus from within – generated a strong sense of nationalistic-racial consciousness, which was to influence deeply the future course of Chinese history.”<sup>38</sup> He said, “The greatest force is common blood; The Chinese belong to the yellow race because they come from the blood stock of the yellow race; The blood of ancestors is transmitted by heredity down through the race, making blood kinship a powerful force”. This was the first time in Chinese history that the discourse on “race” was highlighted in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chiang Kai-shek wrote: “Our various clans actually belong to the same nation, as well as to the same racial stock. Therefore, there is an inner factor closely linking the historical destiny of common existence and common sorrow and joy of the whole Chinese nation. That there are five people designated in China is not due to differences in race or blood, but to religion and geographical environment.”

This concept of the “Chinese people”, included four major non-Chinese races (the barbarians) – the Man (Manchus), the Meng (Mongolians), the Hui (ethnic groups of Islamic faith in northwestern China), and the Zang (Tibetans), and were believed to have been assimilated into the culture of the “superior Han race”, which, is however, more of a propagated myth, than a reality. Therefore, while references did exist in

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<sup>38</sup> Immanuel C Y Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 4.

traditional China to the descendants of the various Han dynasties (206BC-AD220), the representation of the “Han”, as an ethnically integrated majority is a modern phenomenon intrinsically linked to the rise of nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century.

A significant manifestation of rise of “nationalism” and anti-foreign movement in China after the Boxer and the Republican revolution is the May Fourth Movement of 1919.

*The May Fourth Movement of 1919:* After Yuan Shikai’s death, shifting alliances of regional warlords fought for control of the Beijing government. The nation also was threatened from without by the Japanese. When World War I broke out in 1914, Japan fought on the Allied side and seized German holdings in Shandong Province- the “Holy land” of China, where Confucius and Mencius were born, taught, and died- which has an important economic and strategic position.<sup>39</sup> In 1915 the Japanese set before the warlord government in Beijing the so called Twenty One Demands, which would have made China a Japanese protectorate. The Beijing government rejected some of these demands but yielded to the Japanese insistence on keeping the Shandong territory already in its possession. Beijing also recognized Tokyo’s authority over southern Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia. The Chinese consoled themselves with the hope that the Great powers would redress this wrong in an equitable settlement at the end of the war.<sup>40</sup> However, in 1917, in secret communiqués, Britain, France, and Italy assented to “support Japan’s claims in regard to the disposal of Germany’s rights in Shandong”.<sup>41</sup>

In 1917 China declared war on Germany in the hope of recovering its lost province, then under Japanese control. But in 1918 the Beijing government signed a secret deal with Japan accepting the latter’s claim to Shandong. When the Paris peace conference of 1919 confirmed the Japanese claim to Shandong and Beijing’s sellout became public, internal reaction was shattering. On May 4, 1919, there were massive student

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<sup>39</sup> Chow Tse Tung, *May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 84.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 86.

demonstrations against the Beijing government and Japan. The appeal of novelty and modernism to the youth which had strengthened by the hopelessness of the old Confucian order of China had served as a contribution to Chinese youth's political and social activism and consciousness.

The May Fourth Movement served as an intellectual revolution in China. The New Culture Movement, which started in the early republican period, helped many Chinese intellectuals to work towards the future. It was a movement that aimed to introduce to China western concepts such as democracy, equality and liberty. In the following decades, the anti-foreign movement continued to work toward abolishing all the unfair treaties. Some intellectuals were interested in western learning to help resist foreign imperialism; some others who were bitterly disappointed by the Paris peace settlement began to turn to Marxist theory as the alternative to solve China's problems. It was during this time that Communism was studied seriously by some Chinese intellectuals such as Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao. Western Socialism, proved very popular and finally led to formation of the Chinese Communist Party as a strong contender in the power struggle against the Guomindang in the backdrop of the failure of the Republican government in 1921.

#### ***4.2. The Chinese Communist Party and Nationality policies***

The Chinese Communist Party formally came into existence in July 1921 with about fifty seven members led by Chen Duxiu and Li Dachao. They adopted standard Marxist Leninist aims assisted by a representative from the newly formed Moscow based Third International Comintern. The first half of the Chinese Communist movement (1921-1935) is characterized by the Chinese Communist Party's struggle for power. This period witnessed the failure of the bourgeois democratic revolution and the failure of the urban working class to bring about a socialist reordering of society with a disastrous attempt in (1925-1927) which almost decimated the Chinese Communist Party.

Thus, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat were both removed from the revolutionary scene after 1927, when the revolution moved from the cities to the countryside. Mao's

immense faith in the revolutionary potential of the peasants negated the orthodox Marxist-Leninist dogmas on the revolutionary limitations of peasants. The Chinese Communist strategy began a new phase in October of 1927 which was now based on agrarian revolution. The field of action was the Chingkanshan mountains, a remote mountain region and old bandit hideout bordering on the border provinces of Hunan and Kiangsi, which was based on guerilla warfare from 1928 to 1931.

Owing to military predominance in southern Kiangsi, in 1931, the Chinese Soviet Republic was established with Mao Zedong as its President and Juichin, as the capital<sup>42</sup> but it was to survive only three years. Such a short life of the Kiangsi Soviet was due to the internal factionalism among the Comintern backed Communists and the Maoists for control of the party and the Red Army, and due to onslaught by the Guomindang armies in 1934. On the periphery of Nationalist power, during the Jiangsi Soviet in 1931,<sup>43</sup> Mao refuted Sun's "Five People's Principle". This could have been a result of the Communists' unwillingness to recognize what had been recognized by its rival government; that essentially, China was composed of "several important peoples".<sup>44</sup> It could also be a result of the various assaults that China encountered regarding its territories. In 1913, Yuan Shikai had, himself, agree to autonomy for Outer Mongolia and Xizang, in order to achieve international recognition of his rule. On the other hand, Tibet had declared independence after the fall of the Qing Empire. China was also forced to allow Russia a free hand in Outer Mongolia and Britain's continuance of its influence in Tibet (Xizang). China was also threatened by Japan who fought on the Allied side during World War I in 1914 and seized German holdings in Shandong Province. Simultaneously, Tibet was entering into an Agreement with British India in Shimla regarding its territorial division and political status. Therefore, prior to taking a hardline position on the "minorities" in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is useful to take a look at the evolution of the CCP's policy towards the "unification of its motherland".

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<sup>42</sup> Lucian Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution 1915-1949* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1971), p. 65.

<sup>43</sup> View Appendix – VII.

<sup>44</sup> George Moseley, ed. *The Party and the National Question in China* (London: MIT Press, 1966), p. 9.

*Among the objects listed in the Manifesto of the Second National Congress of the CCP (July 1922), the following articles pertain to the national minorities:*<sup>45</sup>

Article 2. The removal of oppression by international imperialism and the complete independence of the Chinese nation.

Article 3. The unification of China proper (including Manchuria) into a genuine democratic republic.

Article 4. The achievement of a genuine republic by the liberation of Mongolia, Tibet, and Xingjiang.

Article 5. The establishment of a Chinese federated republic by the unification of China proper.

Note the reference to China as a “nation” – an important mark of Chinese movement towards modernity. One year after the formation of the Communist Party, territory assumes an important aspect of becoming a nation. Use of a modern lexicon to define itself, signifies China’s understanding of a modern concept of sovereignty whereby “unification of China proper” was important in removing “international imperialism”. The CCP’s strategy during this time is the same as that of the Guomindang, to unite as many people as possible to fight foreigners. This document also reveals the party’s policy towards its frontier region that was to be liberated, which is a Marxist lexicon, to form a “genuine republic”. The party’s dislike of the existing republic under the Guomindang is evident. It was the first time, and the last too, that the idea of federation was used. Norbu makes an observation that though this idea of “federated state” might have been influenced by the Soviet model, it was surprising that the idea of “self determination” was not mentioned. It was surprising because it was a time when Stalin and Lenin were vociferously calling for self determination for the “oppressed nations”.

Though the political resolution of the Sixth Congress held in Moscow from July to September 1928 called for a unified China and at the same time recognized the principle of self determination as one of the “major slogans” of the Chinese revolution.

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<sup>45</sup> Cited in Dawa Norbu, “China’s Policy Towards its Minority Nationalities in the Nineties”, *China Report*, 27:3 (1991), pp. 219-220.

In the “*Resolution of the First All-China Congress of Soviets on the Question of National Minorities in China*”, adopted by the Congress at Juichin, Kiangsi, November 1931, the CCP discussed the “national question” straight away, thus reflecting the urgency of the issue. The document states that the minorities could choose to secede, join the Chinese Soviet Republic, or form an “autonomous region” within the Chinese Republic. “Autonomy” is the policy of resolving the “national question” and a part of the “nationalities work” in the PRC. The Jiangsi Soviet was dominated by “returned students and the influence of the Comintern was also strong “as seen in the Section 5 (e) which states “the Provisional Soviet Government is hereby instructed to immediately establish the closest political, economic, and cultural ties with the Soviet Union”. This might probably have been the reason for the recognition of “self determination” for the minorities in 1931. Norbu observes that, once free from Soviet influence, and the “returned students”, the CCP declined to follow the Soviet example. The Jiangsi Soviet survived only for another three years and such a short life could have been the result of internal factionalism among the Comintern backed Communists and the Maoists for control of the Party and the Red Army. Therefore, though the CCP agreed to “self determination” for the “minority nationalities”, the idea was abandoned soon after.

The document also calls upon all to oppose “Sun Yat-sen’s so called Nationalism” as oppression had continued even after Guomindang’s formation of Republic. It reflects the CCP’S defensive attitude against its rival. In an attempt to gain minority favour, the Communists even called the “talk of equality” and “Five nation Republic” of Guomindang, a deception. The Jiangsi Soviet collapsed in 1935 when the Long March began. Significantly, during the Long March Communist cadres and frontier armies came in contact with the peoples on the frontiers for the first time. The CCP realized that it would require their support in fighting the KMT forces, Japan and the “ruling classes of the minorities themselves”.<sup>46</sup> The document calls upon them to unite with the Chinese workers and peasants in a joint struggle against their common exploiters, persecutors, and oppressors - imperialists, Chinese militarists, landlords, bourgeois

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<sup>46</sup> George Moseley, ed. *The Party and the National Question in China* (London: MIT Press, 1966), p. 166.

and the ruling classes of the minorities themselves. It most unequivocally states that, “it is the purpose of the Chinese Soviet Republic to create a single system for them (“the toiling masses of all nationalities”), without national barriers and to uproot all national enmity and national prejudices”.<sup>47</sup>

In January 1934, in the face of Kuomintang (hereafter KMT) onslaught and Japanese aggression, Mao in his Presidential Report to the Second National Congress held at Juichin, declared “The point of departure for the Soviet national policy is the capture of all the oppressed minorities around the Soviets as a means to increase the strength of the revolution against imperialism and KMT”,<sup>48</sup> and emphasized “national regional autonomy” rather than “self determination”. The use of minorities for the struggle against the enemies as a necessary tactic is revealed in the words, the answer was “not independence from Han China but liberation from oppression”,<sup>49</sup> and “imperialism”. It was precisely this policy that was carried forward during the formation of the PRC in 1949. In the August 1935 “Decisions of the Central Committee on the linking up of the First and Fourth Front Armies” pointed out that “bringing of the national minorities under the leadership of the Chinese Communist party and the actual Chinese people’s revolutionary government ‘will be of decisive significance on the road ahead to the victory of the people’s revolution’.”<sup>50</sup>

#### ***4.3. The PRC and the various issues***

The formation of the PRC was proclaimed by Chairman Mao Zedong from the Gateway of Heavenly Peace in Tiananmen Square, on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1949. It was a moment of triumph for the CCP as well as the People’s Liberation Army (hereafter PLA). Though Mao, during the years of the Long March, avowed the importance of the people inhabiting the territory in China’s periphery in order to fight the KMT and the imperialist Japanese forces, with the formation of the PRC their significance was

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Cited in Dawa Norbu, “China’s Policy Towards its Minority Nationalities in the Nineties”, *China Report*, 27:3 (1991), p. 222.

<sup>49</sup> Dawa Norbu, “China’s Policy Towards its Minority Nationalities in the Nineties”, *China Report*, 27:3 (1991), p. 223.

<sup>50</sup> George Moseley, ed. *The Party and the National Question in China* (London: MIT Press, 1966), p. 49.

reduced as the Party had consolidated its position. His focus was now on the socialist construction of the PRC. Parallel with the concept of “united front”, the PRC retained the notion of “Han majority” as is seen in the use of the term “greater nationalism and chauvinism”. However strategic and security continued to dominate the PRC’s policies after 1949. This time, the Party no longer needed to appease the “minorities” to enlist their support. Rather, from a position of power, the newly formed state adopted a very European conception of the nation-state system that saw the exercise of “sovereignty” as the central concern of the state and thus the peripheral region had to undergo “liberation” as they were viewed as still being under threat of “imperialism”. On liberation, they were granted a rather fictive version of autonomy and not self determination.

The PRC adopted “The Common Program”, which proclaimed the “People’s Democratic Dictatorship” as a result of having put an end “to the era of the rule of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism”. The Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference avowed the membership of “the Communist Party of China, of all democratic parties and groups and people’s organizations, of all regions, of the PLA, of all national minorities, overseas Chinese and other patriotic democratic elements” as the “organizational form of the people’s democratic united front”.<sup>51</sup> The national identity at the formation of the Republic is that of “united front” of “all national minorities, overseas Chinese and other patriotic democratic elements”. The constant reiteration of its sovereign rights and the persistent invocation of the phrase “united front” indicated the awareness within the central government of the presence of internal challenges to state sovereignty.

Constitutive outsiders played an essential role in the formation of national identity in twentieth century China. Constant threat of national extinction at the hands of evil-minded outsiders bolstered national union. Sun Yat-sen’s enemies were the Manchus, Japanese and Imperialists. Likewise, the PRC’s fascination with sovereignty, and the adoption of a system of governance that facilitated this concept, was a response to

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<sup>51</sup> “The Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference” Adopted by the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People’s PCC on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1949, Peking, pp. 1-2.



what it saw as a “hostile international environment”. The People’s Republic’s enemies were the Guomintang “counter-revolutionaries” and the “imperialist underdogs”. The World War II had just ended with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in its neighbourhood. America and the Soviet Union had emerged as dominant powers in the world. China itself had undergone a violent civil war against the nationalist Guomintang forces which was backed by a foreign power, the United States of America. On the other hand, the Korean peninsula, on its northeastern border was emerging as a potential hotspot of conflict. The world was divided along ideological lines whereby America sought to contain China driven by General MacArthur’s strategy and the “Domino effect theory”. Given US support to the Guomintang forces, China opposed what it called “domestic forces colluding with forces of imperialism”. This was one pretext by which China consolidated the territories in its periphery.

To counter internal challenges to its sovereignty from the minorities, the PRC followed the Marxist approach to “national question”. The PRC, according to its White Paper of 1999 was a “united multiethnic state founded jointly by the people of all its ethnic groups”. The 1990 Census lists 91.96 percent of the population as belonging to the Han ethnic group and 8.04 percent belonging to minority ethnic groups of a total population of more than 1.2 billion. The policies of the PRC towards the “national question” have taken different shapes throughout time, yet one thing is consistent- the “advanced” Han remains at the inner core which is the vanguard to lead the underdeveloped minorities towards socialist revolution and economic prosperity.

“Nationalities work” was the application of the “ideological weapon” of the theory of “national question” in order to win over the masses and the “patriotic” leaders of the national minorities. This was carried out by the Chinese Communist Party cadres once the minority areas were under military control of the army. Ironically, during the Jiangsi Soviet it was the “ruling classes” who were to be opposed by the minorities and the latter was even promised self determination. Whereas, on coming to power, the CCP practiced a different policy whereby it enlisted the support of the ruling class in minority region to control the common people. Such a policy reveals the use of tactic by the Communist Party in application of the Marxist principle to China. While,

during the Jiangsi Soviet, under the influence of Comintern and Soviet returned cadres, there was a stricter adherence to Marxist principles, once in power, the CCP formulated policies to suit its needs.

The “National Question” is a term emerging out of the Marxist-Leninist theory on national question, which defines a methodology for dealing with specific questions concerning the status of communities called nations or nationalities; therefore, only Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries are confronted with the “national question”. “Nations” are artificial units, which came into being with the rise of capitalism, and which are destined to disappear when capitalism is replaced with Communism. According to the Marxist-Leninist approach, the division in society is not along either ethnic or national lines, but along class lines. The State Statistical Bureau (SSB) was set up in late 1952 based on modern statistical system of Soviet model. In 1953, 38 minorities were recognized; 16 in 1965 and the last one in 1979. Therefore, in China, when 55 minority nationalities and one Han majority was recognized, the “advanced” Han was to remain at the “inner core” as the vanguard to lead the underdeveloped minorities towards socialist revolution and economic prosperity.

Lenin’s and Stalin’s work on the “national question” provided the Chinese Communists a tool in approaching the national question in China. At the same time the Marxist approach towards the problem of nationality is limited in its facility because division between groups was seen as accruing out of economic disparity. More so, such divisions only exist in a capitalistic society where there is economic disparity between the “haves” and “have-nots”. Social divisions (hierarchy, resource allocation, and inferiorisation)<sup>52</sup> are accrued not to nations or ethnicities but to the classes. Therefore a policy was devised, whereby, the CCP sought to vindicate any demands for national self determination. And at the same time, the CCP retained the use of the term nation to describe its minorities, which was later abandoned as minority nationalism endangered state sovereignty.

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<sup>52</sup> Floya Anthias, “Rethinking Social Divisions: Some Notes Towards a Theoretical Framework”, *The Sociological Review*, 1998.

Various official documents reiterate the importance of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The extent of China's belief in "sovereignty" as a tool for conduct of its foreign relations is reflected in one of its foremost foreign policy pronouncements. The Panchsheel Agreement (1954)<sup>53</sup> or the Five Principles of mutual respect for sovereignty, and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence in developing diplomatic relations and economic and cultural exchanges with other countries. Though the Panchsheel Agreement was a document for guiding foreign relations, it also reflected China's domestic concerns when it laid emphasis on the "non-interference in each other's internal affairs" or on "mutual respect for sovereignty, and territorial integrity".

All the constitutions of the PRC and some of the corresponding White Papers, too, state the point in very clear terms. The White Paper on Taiwan, for example very explicitly states modern China's opinion of the concept of sovereignty – "Firstly, state sovereignty is inseparable. The territory is the space in which a state exercises its sovereignty. In the territory of a country there can only be a central government exercising sovereignty on behalf of the state."<sup>54</sup>

*Constitution of the People's Republic of China, 1954*<sup>55</sup>

The Constitution of 1954 came about in a period when China had fared well internationally in the Korean War. In the domestic front, the land reforms had been completed and there were neither KMT forces nor imperialists to tackle. The most important development was that China and India signed the "Panchsheel Agreement" whereby, India recognized Tibet as a part of the People's Republic of China. China was amidst a revolution that was in "transition to socialism" while the "class struggle" was still on. Article 3 of Chapter 1, "General Principles," of the Constitution read:

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<sup>53</sup> View Appendix – IX.

<sup>54</sup> White Paper – The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/twwt/White%20Papers/t36705.htm>.

<sup>55</sup> "Agreement between The Government of The Republic of India and The Government of The People's Republic of China on Trade and Inter-Course Between Tibet Region of China and India", 1954.

The People's Republic of China is unified, multinational state.

All nationalities are equal. Discrimination against, or oppression of, any nationality and acts that undermine the unity of the nationalities are prohibited.

All the nationalities have freedom to use and foster the growth of their spoken and written languages and to reserve or reform their own customs or ways.

Regional autonomy applies in areas entirely or largely inhabited by national minorities. National autonomous areas are inalienable parts of the People's Republic.

The constitution of 1954 calls China a "unified, multinational state" and that the areas are "inalienable parts of the People's Republic of China". This is one phrase that it always insists that India use in the case of Tibet. Christopher P Atwood says "perhaps the most common and authoritative formulation on the nationality question found in present-day China is that "Our (our) country is a unified, multinational (multi-national) country."<sup>56</sup> However, he points out that "the demographic, economic, political, and cultural domination of the Han nationality in the Chinese state and its policies amounts to a virtual monopoly" which in essence undermines the very idea of a "multi-national state". The words used to identify minority policy in the 1954 constitution reflect China's increasing interest in safeguarding its "territorial sovereignty".

*"On the Ten Major Relationships", April 25, 1956, and "Correct Handling of the Contradictions among the People" (1957) by Mao Zedong*

Mao, too, has dwelt on the issue of national question in China. Earlier in 1934, Mao in his Presidential Report to the Second National Congress had suggested that the real answer to the national problem would be liberation from oppression rather than separation from China and thus had approved of a policy of "regional autonomy" rather than "self determination". In 1956, Mao spoke of "The Relationship between the Han Nationality and the minority Nationalities" in his *Ten Major Relationships* speech. He acknowledged the minorities inhabiting vast territory and says that local

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<sup>56</sup> Christopher P. Atwood, "National Questions and National Answers in the Chinese Revolution; Or, How Do You Say Minzu in Mongolian?", [http://www.indiana.edu/~easc/resources/working\\_paper/noframe\\_5b.htm#N\\_1\\_#N\\_1\\_](http://www.indiana.edu/~easc/resources/working_paper/noframe_5b.htm#N_1_#N_1_)

nationalism as well as Han chauvinism must be opposed. Basically Mao seems to acknowledge the rich resources of the minority lands and says that the “human” resources there are equally important in order that the materials there “can be exploited and utilized”.<sup>57</sup>

Mao in his *Contradictions* speech talks about “The Question of the Minority Nationalities”. Mao included the nationalities question under the category of non-antagonistic contradictions. He takes a gradualist approach towards the question and says that “democratic reforms have not been carried out in Tibet because conditions are not ripe”. He adds that, Han chauvinism and local nationality chauvinism are to be overcome as they are harmful for the “unity of the people”.

The minorities, who had voiced their grievances towards Han presence in their areas during the “let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred thoughts contend” campaign (1956), were put down in the rectification and anti – rightist campaigns (1957). However which “concentrated in correcting tendencies towards local nationalism”.<sup>58</sup> Soon after, in summer of 1957, a new policy line was set up by a nationalities work conference held at the coastal city of Tsingtao<sup>59</sup> laid down in a report by Chou Enlai “singled out local nationalism as the principal obstacle rather than Han chauvinism in the implementation of the CCP’s nationalities policy of socialist reforms” which was being opposed by the minorities.

Soon after, the Great Leap Forward (GLF) is unleashed in 1958, and the gradualist policy of the initial years is broken. Dreyer remarks that “If Great Leap was a failure in Han China it was a fiasco in the minority areas”. “Major rebellions occurred in Sinkiang in 1958 and in Qinghai and Tibet in 1959”,<sup>60</sup> which were put down quickly enough. And immediately, democratic reforms were carried out and a Preparatory Committee was established with the aim of making Tibet (U-Tsang region) an

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p. 296.

<sup>58</sup> June Teufel Dreyer, “China’s Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution”, *China Quarterly*, 235 July-Sept p. 98.

<sup>59</sup> George Moseley, ed. *The Party and the National Question in China* (London: MIT Press, 1966), p. 23.

<sup>60</sup> June Teufel Dreyer, “China’s Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution”, *China Quarterly*, 235 July-Sept p. 100.

autonomous region of the PRC, which was formed in 1965. In 1959, Mintsu tuan chieh (Nationalities Unity or Solidarity) superseded the earlier publication (Nationalities Research) by Nationalities Institute which had “a greater number of pages and a much reduced content value”.<sup>61</sup> Dreyer points out that there was “curtailment of news on minority areas” which he says was less successful than the policy of gradualism. If the GLF was a failure, the Cultural Revolution aggravated the failure of the GLF.

One important development in the international scene is the Sino-Indian war in 1962 on the question of border. Concurrently, China’s relation with the Soviet Union was straining with China’s worldview opposing not only US imperialism but also Soviet hegemonism.

The Constitution of the Party in 1969 (9<sup>th</sup> Party Congress came about in a great moment of flux - inner Party struggle, Rise of Deng Xiaoping and the purge of the Gang of Four - in rebuilding the Party. It says that the party must lead “the hundreds of millions of the people of all nationalities of our country in carrying on the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment.” Besides that nothing else is mentioned on nationalities in the 9<sup>th</sup> party Congress. The Party Constitution of 1973 too does not say much about the nationalities. The country was busy with the overthrow of Lin Biao and the ensuing factionalism between the Leftists (Jiang Ching) and Chou Enlai-Deng factions. With the Deng forces dominating from late 1974 to late 1975, the Constitution of China came about in the beginning of 1975. We assume that the Constitution will bear influences from the moderate faction.

*Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, January 17, 1975, adopted by the Fourth National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China*

In January 1975, Zhou Enlai, speaking before the Fourth National People's Congress, outlined a program of what has come to be known as the Four Modernizations. The focus would now be also in developing Chinese military alongside its economy, and

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

science and technology as China is facing increasing threat from US and Soviet hegemony. By this time in the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, China had already tested its Hydrogen bomb in 1964. The PRC had, after three decades, begun rapprochement with the United States. China saw Soviet threat as real. However with the break up of the Soviet Union gave rise to another problem – of cross border ethnic affiliation increasing in China's northwest. The disintegration brought unprecedented insecurity to China which had porous borders with three Central Asian states- Kazakhstan, Kirgysthan, and Uzbekistan. The situation was alarming because there were 1million Kazakhs, and 7 million Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. The 5 Central Asian states bordering China too had around 400, 000 Uyghurs.<sup>62</sup>

The Preamble states, “For the last twenty years and more, the people of all nationalities in our country, continuing their triumphant advance under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, have achieved great victories both in socialist revolution and socialist construction and the great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” and “We should consolidate the great unity of the people of all nationalities led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants, and develop the revolutionary united front”. It says China is a “unitary multinational state”. Section IV, Article 24 deals with “The Organs of self – government of National Autonomous areas which include the autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties whose organs are people's congresses and revolutionary committees, which “may exercise autonomy specified in Chapter Two, Section III of the Constitution”.

Important development in the domestic front with the coming in of Moderate forces liberalise China's policy towards minorities.

*Constitution of the People's Republic of China, December 1982*

In general, the 1982 Constitution continues to uphold some basic ruling principles of CCP such as socialist legality and democratic centralism and safeguarding CCP's vanguard role. As PRC reopened in 1978 and capitalism is accepted as a supplement

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<sup>62</sup> Algis Prazauskas, “Ethno-political Issues and the Emergence of Nation-States in Central Asia” in Zhang, Yongjin and Azizian, Rouben, ed., *Ethnic Challenges beyond Borders: Chinese and Russian Perspectives of the Central Asian Conundrum* (Great Britain: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 44.

to the socialist economy, class struggle, a radical revolutionary movement, becomes unpopular as it may affect the stability of the society and harm the economy (Class struggle was to continue within certain bounds). This constitution mentions the “nationalities” on the first line of the Preamble as having “jointly created a culture of grandeur and have a glorious revolutionary tradition”, but they are not exclusively mentioned in the “united front” in building socialism as they used to be earlier.

Like the previous one, this Constitution too states that “China is a unitary multi national state”, and Han chauvinism and local national chauvinism is to be combated. All including the “nationalities are to uphold the Constitution in legal form”.

What is unique about this Constitution is that it lists in Article 4 in Chapter One under the General Principles, four paragraphs on “Minority Rights”, though it states similar position of earlier documents on equality, unity, and mutual assistance. It states “discrimination against and oppression of any nationality are prohibited; and any act which undermines the unity of the nationalities or instigate division is prohibited”. The Constitution of 1982 pays a great deal of attention to autonomous regions in “governmental divisions” (Article 30 of Chapter One) and Section VI of Chapter Two (lists seven articles on Autonomous areas, Representation, Nationality of the Administrative Head, Power of Autonomy, Autonomy Regulations, Financial Autonomy and Autonomous Development Plans). There is repeated emphasis on upholding the law, showing normalization of conditions after the CR and a separation of the State from the Party to some degree and the use of the People’s Procuratorate. Subsequently after two years in 1984 there came about a Document titled “The Law of Regional Autonomy of the Nationalities of the PRC”. The incidents of 1989 are well etched in everybody’s mind when China faced immense pressure on the human rights front after the Tiananmen Square incident or the Democracy movement. Situation in Tibet in 1987 and 1988 too, contributed to the instability. Prior to this period the policies and government control was rather relaxed which Norbu says in one main impetus for protests. This period marked the downfall of more liberal leaders like Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang. Thus came about leaders who were more conservative, like, Li Peng and Jiang Zemin.



*White paper on "National Minorities Policy and its Practice in China", 1999* <sup>63</sup>

Just prior to its National Day celebrations in October, 1999, the State Council hosted its first three day conference on "the nationalities problem in Beijing", and issued a new policy paper, "National Minorities Policy and its Practice in China" concerned with the rising Chinese concern over the influence of separatist sentiment spilling over from the newly independent Central Asian nations into China's Muslim areas "where more than 20 million Turkic Uyghurs, Kyrgyz, Kazaks and other Muslims are a visible and vocal reminder that China is linked to Eurasia".<sup>64</sup> The Paper says, "In China regional autonomy for ethnic minorities is a basic policy adopted by the Chinese government in line with the actual conditions of China, and also an important part of the political system of China". It concludes by saying that "fifty years of experience has proved that the policies toward ethnic minorities of the People's Republic of China are successful ones. Dru opines that "the White paper did little more than outline all the "good" programs China has carried out in minority areas, nevertheless it did indicate increasing concern and a willingness to recognize unresolved problems, with several strategic think tanks in Beijing and Shanghai initiating focus groups and research programs addressing ethnic identity and separatism issues". The China Institute for Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), under the State Council, has initiated a "nationality Studies Project" in order to examine security implications of China's minority problems.<sup>65</sup>

The lack of tolerance with anything to do with violation of this concept is manifested in the recent PC (Personal Computer) game controversy. *Xinhua* reported how the PC game, "Hearts of Iron", was accused of distorting historical facts in describing Manchuria, West Xinjiang, and Tibet as independent sovereign countries in the maps of the game. According to the report, the China's Ministry of Culture's Game Products

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<sup>63</sup> White paper, "National Minorities Policy and its Practice in China", Information Office of The State Council of the People's Republic of China, September 1999, Beijing, *China Report*, 36, 1, 2000.

<sup>64</sup> Dru C. Gladney, "China's National Insecurity: Old Challenges at the Dawn of the New Millennium", 2000.

<sup>65</sup> As a footnote (5) in *ibid*.

Censorship Committee said “All these severely distort historical facts and violate China’s gaming and Internet service regulations”.<sup>66</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

This chapter throws light on the issues of sovereignty, ethnicity and nationality as experienced and approached by China – pre modern and approaching modernity.

The Chinese communists on achieving victory over the Guomindang Nationalists in 1949 declared the formation of the PRC – which would function in the system of international relations as a sovereign nation-state. However, the pre modern “barbarians”, residents of the Chinese “frontier”, were proving to be a major thorn in the exercise of Chinese sovereignty over the territory it perceived as the PRC. The PRC’s policies towards these frontier people began to be guided by Marxist theory on the “national question”. Many changes had occurred in the Chinese Communist Party’s policy towards the frontier region. From the 1922 concept of “federation” to the 1931 policy of “self determination”, it was the concept of “regional autonomy” which had taken shape as a viable option. The Common Program too, talked about “regional autonomy” (a part of the nationalities work). Greater nationalism and chauvinism was to be opposed and so was “splittism”; unity of the various nationalities was to be upheld where all were to “become a big fraternal and cooperative family composed of its nationalities”,<sup>67</sup> of United National Front against the imperialists and the Nationalists.

Where Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kaishek’s discourse on race in China was motivated by a desire to unite the Han and the other non-Manchu groups in China into a modern multi-ethnic nationalist movement against the Manchu Qing state and foreign imperialists, the PRC’s policy of classification of 55 minorities and one majority Han nationality was motivated by a desire to de-emphasize the importance of the “Five Peoples” of China. The imperatives of “sovereignty and territorial integrity” leads to the depiction of China as a “united (later unitary) and multi-national state”.

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<sup>66</sup> “Computer Game banned for harming China’s sovereignty”, *Xinhua*, 29 May 2005.

<sup>67</sup> The Common Programme of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, Adopted by the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People’s PCC on 29 September, 1949 in Peking, p. 18.

The relationship between the present minorities of China and the central government is quite intriguing owing to the ambiguous historical relationship they shared. On the one hand, sovereignty tends to impinge on their ethnic and national identities, on the other, the minority/majority discourse tends to further alienate them from identifying themselves as one with the centre. The friction has continued and demands for secession/self determination have continued amidst major suppression from the centre. An observation that Dru C Gladney makes will help us grasp the historical ambiguity and the present anomaly. He classifies the non-Han within the Chinese border as “internal” foreigners and the Western and Japanese imperialists as the “external” foreigners. He says that the PRC’s “rationality was strategic and nationalistic – the need to build national security around the concept of one national people, with a small percentage of minorities supporting that idea”.<sup>68</sup> From the founding of the CCP in 1921 until the Communist victory in 1949, the Guomindang and the CCP competed with each other to provide a new national identity for China, a convincing vision of a rich and powerful modern China – and a viable alternative to the Confucius sense of identity that had served Chinese so well for two thousand years.<sup>69</sup>

I would like to end this attempt at studying the “Chinese discourse on sovereignty, ethnicity and nationality” with the postulation that Chinese ideas, attitudes, policies, responses to the various issues and its implications are a product of the PRC’s adoption of Western/European ideas which again are a result of PRC’s perception of its place in the international environment during that period.

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<sup>68</sup> Dru C. Gladney, “China’s National Insecurity: Old Challenges at the Dawn of the New Millennium”, 2000

<sup>69</sup> Peter van Ness, “China as a Third World State: Foreign Policy and Official National Identity”, in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China’s Quest for National Identity*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 198.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONTESTING SOVEREIGNTY: THE CASE OF TIBET

#### 1. Introduction

The previous chapters have analysed the concept of sovereignty in the context of its theoretical formulation and its application in the Chinese context. We have, to a certain degree, been able to grasp the dynamics of interaction between the notions of sovereignty, ethnicity and nationality. Evidently the adoption and application of a modern idea of sovereignty by newly formed post-colonial states, including China, has impinged on ethnic and sub-national consciousness. Sovereignty carries with it certain elements of 'nation-state building' that are inversely proportional to the ethnic and sub-national quest for identity. Thus, national sovereignty is contested by ethnic and sub-national groups - who have come to be designated as minorities within the state. In this chapter we go a step further and, using the case study of the Tibetan minority in China, attempt to test this hypothesis. My rationale for using Tibet as a case study is that Tibet was the first peripheral territory that China sought to 'peacefully liberate' from imperialism. Such a move by the Chinese Communists corroborates the theory that territorial consolidation was the first basic requirement towards attaining sovereign statehood. It highlights the development of the concept of sovereignty in China under the post-Manchu regime. The case of Tibet also indicates the problem inherent in the application of sovereign claims on ethnic groups/nations that have historically had a consciousness of their own political/religious/ethnic identity.

#### *1.1 What is Tibet?*

It is very important that the meaning and attributes of the term and the idea of 'Tibet' be elucidated before beginning any study of the subject. Most important of all is the need to enunciate the territorial extent of that entity. This is necessary because of the contested nature of the term and its territorial confines both from the Tibetan and the Chinese point of view. The historical dimension of the interpretation also comes into

play here given the fact that the geographical boundaries of Tibet have shifted periodically, not because of any peculiar characteristic attributable to it, but because of the nature of historical trends and shifting boundaries characteristic of the pre-modern period. For instance, “In the Tibetan Empire period, of the seventh to ninth centuries, a centralized Tibetan government dominated the entire Tibetan plateau and consolidated a Tibetan cultural and political identity over that area”<sup>1</sup> but also periods when the empire disintegrated into “petty states and tribes of which it has been composed”<sup>2</sup>.

When the Tibetans use the term Tibet, they refer to the area called the *Cholka Sum*, which includes the U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo regions. Their claim is based on historical precedent and repudiation of the Chinese claim to sovereignty over Tibet. The Dalai Lama’s *Strasbourg Proposal* of 1988 is based on the dynamics of the Tibetan claim.<sup>3</sup> In the People’s Republic of China (hereafter PRC), ‘Tibet’ implies only the U-Tsang region and the western part of Kham, also known as the ‘Tibet Autonomous Region’ (hereafter TAR) formed only in 1965. The TAR covers an area of only 1.2 million sq km. Other traditional Tibetan areas have been incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Gansu, Sichuan, Qinghai and Yunan. However, prior to the formation of the PRC and subsequent formation of the TAR, the notion of Tibet did not have a fixed meaning for the Chinese either.

The issue of Tibet’s territorial distinctiveness and its historical record of its own sovereign status are linked to the challenges posed by Tibetans to Chinese national sovereignty. This shifts the focus of the study/discussion to the Tibetans as a group of people who inhabit the Tibetan plateau. Moreover, my use of such a conception is appropriate given the fact that Chinese national sovereignty has been challenged not only by the Tibetans of the TAR, but also by the Tibetans who, contemporaneously, are a minority in the PRC and inhabit the entire Tibetan plateau (central as well as eastern Tibet, as Tsering Shakya chooses to define it) and not just the TAR.

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. xi

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 75

<sup>3</sup> View Appendix – XI.

It is interesting to note the degree of uncertainty among scholars regarding the area covered by the Tibetan plateau. A Tom Grunfeld<sup>4</sup> places the plateau's altitude at an average of 3,600 m above sea level. Warren Smith places it at 4,000 m above sea level. Whereas Smith underlines the Tibetan plateau as covering an area of 2.5 million square kilometers, according to A Tom Grunfeld, "Tibetans live in an area of about 3.8 million sq km". The discrepancy connotes the complexity and reinforces the question: "What is Tibet?"

Smith notes that "Tibet as a culture and a nation is...distinguished from surrounding areas by the high altitude of the plateau",<sup>5</sup> whereas "the Chinese cultural area is defined by climate and hydrology, by the area in which intensive, irrigated agriculture is possible."<sup>6</sup> Such a geographical and ecological distinction and the uniqueness of the Tibetan plateau assisted in the political unification of Tibet during the 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus, the Tibetan political entity that evolved within a brief span of little more than 200 years encompassed "the entire Tibetan plateau" and was able to "project its power into China and Inner Asia".<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Pre-modern China and Tibet

Pre-modern China's relation with Tibet has been similar to the one it had with its barbarian neighbours on its 'frontier' territories, with the relationship based on 'tributary relations'. At the same time, Professor Dawa Norbu seeks to accord Sino-Tibetan relationship a stature of a 'special type of relationship' owing to various factors: Tibet was a non-Confucian country; owing to the nature of Buddhist Tibet's relations with the Mongol, Manchu and various Chinese dynasties. Tibet posed little threat to China as a non-violent country after the "*btsan* period and the subsequent Buddhist revolution," (Norbu, p. 27) and Tibet's strategic location in Asia, the importance of which dawned on China under the Communists in 1949.

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<sup>4</sup> A Tom Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet* (Armonk: M E Sharpe), pp. 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. xxvi.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. xix

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 75.

Norbu believes that the “lamaist type of tribute relations was elevated to a higher level than intra-Confucian relations”<sup>8</sup> whereby, Tibet “since the twelfth century was progressively projected and perceived as the *Vatican* of Mahayana Buddhism.”<sup>9</sup> Even within Sino-barbarian relations, Tibet figured differently because of the position of influence that Tibetan Buddhism accorded Tibet and its leaders. In the first place, Tibetans were barbarians inhabiting frontier territories – the basic criteria of being a barbarian was that they were not Confucians, and thus did not fall within the Son of Heaven’s *tianxia* – and secondly, when “the Confucian ideocracy was transformed into a multinational empire by the Mongol warriors”,<sup>10</sup> in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, Tibet occupied a special place. For instance, despite being a barbarian, no Tibetan lama had to kowtow before the Chinese Emperor. Such privilege was not “extended to even Confucian monarchs of Korea, Vietnam and Japan”.<sup>11</sup> In the following sections, we shall briefly take a look at Sino-Tibetan relationships during various Chinese dynasties.

**Tang Dynasty:** Sino-Tibetan conflict had been the norm during 250 years of the reign of Tang dynasty in China and Yarlung dynasty in Tibet. The Tibetan dynasty is also known as the *btsan* or the Tubo dynasty. The title *btsan* follows after the then Tibetan king’s name, Sron-*btsan* Sgampo. Such antagonism was finally brought to an end in 821/822 AD with a peace treaty that was inscribed on a stone pillar placed in front of the Jokhang in Lhasa. Between 706 and 822 AD seven or eight bilateral treaties were concluded between China and Tibet, of which five or six focused on Sino-Tibetan boundary settlements. (View table 4.1)

Though the Tibetans demanded the status of equal power in the treaty of 783, it was only in the subsequent treaty of 821/822<sup>12</sup> that it was actually recognized as one. Therefore, both the treaties are significant in displaying the non-dependence of Tibet

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<sup>8</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> View Appendix – I.

**Table 4.1 Sino-Tibetan treaties, 706-822 AD**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Treaty</i>	<i>Content</i>
706 AD	First Treaty	1. Demarcation of the boundary between China and Tibet 2. Following the signing of the treaty, Princess Wencheng was given in marriage to the Tibetan king – marriage alliance.
732 AD	Second Treaty	1. After years of wars between Tang and Tibet peace treaty 2. China and Tibet set up their own stone stele
762 AD	Third Treaty	1. Tibet compels Tang to accept Tibetan ritual practice at the swearing ceremony 2. Tibet makes the Chinese Emperor Suzong to pay yearly tribute of 50,000 rolls of silk.
765 AD	Fourth treaty	1. Tibet requested Sino-Tibetan peace settlements.
767 AD	Fifth Treaty	1. To “restore farmer friendship” peace treaty.
783 AD	Sixth Treaty	1. Tang initiated peace process in order to relieve pressure on the Chinese frontier by Nanzhao-Tibetan alliance and thus concentrate on suppressing internal rebellions. 2. West of Lingzhou, the Helam Mountain should the border demarcation line. 3. Tibetan demand that Tibet should be treated as a rival or equal power.
821/822 AD	Seventh Treaty	1. Tibet should return three Chinese prefectures of Qinzhou, Yuanzhou and Anlezhou. 2. Tang and Tibet recognized each other as equal.
787 AD	False Treaty of Pinliang	On the Tang refusal to cede territory, the Tibetans retaliated by military force, and then proposed this peace treaty. But on the day of the oath-swearing ceremony in 787 Tibetan forces ambushed and kidnapped more than 60 Chinese officials. Hence, the “False Treaty”.

*Source:* Dawa Norbu, “China’s Tibet Policy”, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001, p. 35.



on China. According to Josef Kolmas, “there can, however, be as yet no talk about Tibet’s dependence, either direct or indirect, nominal or actual, upon China” during the Tang period.<sup>13</sup>

However, the reasons for the 821/822 peace treaties have been variously interpreted: According to Chinese scholars Wang Furen and Suo Wenqing, the treaty was a result of the Tibetan (Tufan) “appeal for a mutual pledge for peace”.<sup>14</sup> Furen and Wenqing’s claim that it was the Tibetans who initiated the peace is challenged by a few factors. Smith, citing the Tang Annals argues that the “Tang were anxious to make peace, even on less than desirable terms, due to the Tibetans’ constant menacing of the Tang frontiers.”<sup>15</sup> Further, Dawa Norbu cites Professor Yihong Pan who says that Tibet “posed severe problems to the Chinese, challenging more severely than any other non-Chinese state in the Tang period Chinese security and sense of superiority (and) more than any other nomadic tribes, Tibetans competed against China for territorial expansion.”<sup>16</sup> Norbu adds that, “for 160 years Tibet appeared as the most powerful and antagonistic rival power to Tang China”.<sup>17</sup> The reign of the *btsan* Emperor saw Tibet indulge in 15 conflicts with neighbouring Tarim basin countries and China. According to Norbu, the expansion of the *btsan* Empire into China’s western ‘frontier states’ which had until then served as buffer between Tibet and China for centuries was ultimately responsible for the ‘Chinese expansion’ into Tibet in 1949/50.

The Chinese call the 821/822 treaty the “Maternal Uncle-Nephew Peace Pledge Monument”. The emphasis on nephew and uncle connotes Chinese attempt to appropriate the treaty within a Confucian cosmology of hierarchical relations whereby, Tibet was assigned the post of a junior partner, the Nephew, and China that of Uncle. However, in the first place, Tibet was not a Confucian state. Tang Princess Wencheng,

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<sup>13</sup> Josef Kolmas, *Tibet and Imperial China-A Survey of Sino-Tibetan Relations up to the End of the Manchu Dynasty in 1912* (Canberra: Centre of Oriental Studies, The Australian National University), 1967, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Wang Furen and Suo Wenqing, *Highlights of Tibetan History* (Beijing: New World Press), 1984, p. 35

<sup>15</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. 72

<sup>16</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

who was married to the Tibetan Emperor, Sron-*btsan* Sgampo, had failed in exporting Confucian values to the Tibetans, and instead the period witnessed the flourishing of Buddhism in Tibet. According to Beckwith, “henceforth, neighbouring states – even haughty China – were to deal with Tibet on an equal level, and actually refer to the *btsanpo* either by his Tibetan title or, in unofficial writings, with the Chinese terms meaning ‘emperor’,”<sup>18</sup> and not as an inferior partner in the relationship, as the emphasis on the term, ‘nephew’, implies. Norbu cites semi-official Communist historians who ‘admit’ that, “of course, we do not deny the fact that both Tang and the Tubo (Tibet) were independent states at that time, and the Tang did not have official rule over the Tubo”.<sup>19</sup> According to Smith, “the Chinese were forced to treat with the Tibetans as equals, recognizing Tibet as a separate state with its own inviolable territory.”<sup>20</sup> Furen and Wenqing opine that “the peace efforts conformed to the common aspirations of Han and Tibetan nationalities and promoted the unity and friendship between both.”<sup>21</sup> Both parties have also been identified as ‘country’ rather than Han or Tibetan ‘nationality’ in the agreement.

The argument for a “Tibetan nationality” does not sound convincing because, in the first place, the Tibetans inhabited a territory in the Chinese frontier and were considered as barbarians who figured outside the Chinese Confucian cosmology. It must be remembered that the Chinese were “unspecific” about their barbarian neighbours as Smith points out. Second, the term ‘nationality’ was rarely used before the modern period in China. Further, the case for Tibetans as a nationality within the ‘Chinese motherland’ is negated by the statements in the treaty itself, which clearly demarcates territories between the two signatories, “henceforth, there shall be no fighting as between enemies, and neither side will carry war into the other’s country”.

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<sup>18</sup> Beckwith, Christopher I. *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987, pp. 19-20.

<sup>19</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 38.

<sup>20</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. 74.

<sup>21</sup> Wang Furen and Suo Wenqing, *Highlights of Tibetan History* (Beijing: New World Press), 1984, p. 32

**The Mongol-Yuan Dynasty:** With the decline of *btsan* Tibet after 842 and the political fragmentation of Tibet, thereafter, the Chinese Tang dynasty too was overthrown in 907. As a result, China disintegrated into several rival regional military commandments, “each claiming to be the emperor of China”.<sup>22</sup> Central authority in Tibet too dwindled for another 400 years until Tibet came under the dominance of the Mongols. According to Norbu, “Tibet became a special domain or indirect part of Chengiz Khan’s empire in 1207”.<sup>23</sup>

The Mongol empire’s world conquest, apart from Tibet and China, included parts of East Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, parts of the Middle East, Hungary, northern Poland, southern Romania and Russia. The Mongol dynasty is known as the Yuan dynasty as a result of its conquest of China in 1271-1368,<sup>24</sup> where it stayed the longest. The Mongols are responsible for bringing the non-Confucian and non-Han peoples of Central Asia to Chinese attention. As Norbu writes, “the Mongol emperors included their freshly conquered states and peoples of Central Asia into the Chinese Empire...(and brought) the non-Han social groups and non-Confucian states of Central Asia, who had resisted Chinese penetration for centuries, under varying degrees of Chinese control.” (Norbu, 2000, p. 26) Otherwise, “earlier Han rulers up to the thirteenth century had confined themselves to the Confucian culture areas”.<sup>25</sup> Such a Mongolian policy of territorial expansion of the Mongolian Empire had repercussions for the future turn of events in the Inner Asian region.

The nature of Mongol-Tibetan relations were cordial as a result of the establishment of the *Cho-Yon* (Cho – religion; *Yon* – secular patron) relationship between Tibetan Sakya Lamas and the Mongol rulers. Sakya Pandita, the abbot of the Sakya monastery, had been summoned to the Mongol camp in 1244 by the Mongol Prince Godan for the purpose. Subsequently, Phagpa Lama (a nephew of Sakya Pandita) was appointed as the Tibetan ruler of Tibet by the Mongols when Phagpa Lama bestowed tantric initiation on Kubhilai Khan and his imperial family and his court on three occasions.

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<sup>22</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 39

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* p 27.

In return, the Mongol ruler, Kubhilai Khan donated “thirteen myriarchies of western and central Tibet...and the three districts of Tibet: U-Tsang (central and western Tibet), Dotoh (Kham) and Domei (Amdo)” to Phag(s)pa.<sup>26</sup> Thus, pan-Tibetan authority was transferred from the Mongol emperors to the Sakya Lamas of Tibet. However, after 1264, Kham and Amdo were separated from the administration of central Tibet. This reveals that, more than anything, the donation might have been a symbolic gesture. Norbu, as well as Shakya categorise the Sakya-Mongol relationship as being more mutual, whereby the Sakyas could exercise control over Tibet with Mongol patronage, and the Mongols found spiritual guide in the form of the Sakya Lama.

This period of Tibetan relations with a foreign empire is significant owing to the subsequent effect it has had to have upon China’s claim over Tibet in the future. As long as the Mongols remained powerful, Tibet played its part as a diplomatic buffer between the Chinese Ming and the Mongolian Empire.

**The Ming Dynasty:** The Ming ruled from 1368-1644, the first native dynasty to come to power since the Tang. The first and rather instinctive reaction of the founding Ming emperor was to express his will to continue China’s tribute relations with all tributary states, as established and practiced by the previous Yuan dynasty.<sup>27</sup> In the post-Sakya period, however, Tibet plunged into another 150 years of power struggles and sectarian strife. Amidst such strife, the reign of Changchub Gyaltzen (1302-64) is considered the most significant owing to the reforms he carried out to do away with Mongol influences. However, how much of the Tibetan plateau he controlled is contested. According to Norbu, “it did not include Kham and Amdo whose lamas and chieftans carried on tribute-trade relations with the Ming dynasty”.<sup>28</sup> Though Tibet (Norbu specifically calls it U Tsang, than Tibet) was mired in sectarian strife for so many years, the Ming did not launch any conquest expeditions into Tibet as “the Ming

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<sup>26</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. 91.

<sup>27</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 58.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 57.

had no real interest in Tibet beyond Tibet's role in Ming relations with the Mongols.<sup>29</sup> Norbu stresses on U-Tsang to outline the fact that, Changchub Gyaltzen controlled only U Tsang region of Tibet, and also to argue that the Ming, after the Mongols left, resumed tribute relations only with Amdo and Kham regions of Tibet and not the whole of Tibet. At the same time, though Tibet was considered a tributary state its Buddhist leanings acquired for itself a special place within the system. Such a status continued even during the early Ming period, though not with as much influence as during the Mongol dynasty.

The period witnessed the triumph of the Gelugpa sect of Tibetan Buddhism, also known as the *Yellow Hat* sect, over its domestic rival, the Kargyugpa. The former is headed by the Dalai Lamas and the latter, by the Karmapas. Both had found support in Mongolian chieftans. As a result when conflict almost reached its zenith, Gushri Khan, the Qosot chieftan and a staunch supporter of the Gelugpa cause, came to its rescue and defeated Kargyugpa's supporter, the Chogthu Mongols. The Gelugpa, thenceforth, emerged as the most predominant sect in Tibet. Gelugpa-Mongol relations began in 1578 when the III<sup>rd</sup> Dalai Lama converted the Eastern and Western Mongols to the Gelugpa sect. In return, the III Dalai Lama, Sonam Gyatso, received the title, "Dalai Lama" from Altan Khan of the Tumat Mongols. Previously, Kubhilai Khan was converted by the Phagpa Lama during the Sakya rule.

In 1638, when Gushri Khan visited Lhasa, he was given the title of *btsan-zin chos-kyi rgyalpo*, meaning Dharma-rajah and the "defender of faith". In 1642, Gushri Khan conferred on the Fifth Dalai Lama temporal authority over 'nearly the whole of Tibet' after defeating anti-Gelugpa forces in Kham as well as the pro-Karmapa ruler of Tsang. The period, thus, saw the partial unification of Tibet after a hiatus of eight centuries under the auspices of the Gelugpa sect of Tibetan Buddhism, the head of which was the Dalai Lama. Lhasa emerged as the undisputed center of Tibetan culture and political administration. Though Kham was incorporated into the Tibetan polity, Amdo remained under the control of Gushri Khan, thus "creating the precedent for the

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<sup>29</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. 105.

later separation of Amdo from central Tibet”.<sup>30</sup> Earlier too, in 1264, the Mongols had separated the administration of Kham and Amdo from the central control of Lhasa. Simultaneously, incessant wars between the Mongols and the Ming ultimately led to “the collapse of that Chinese-ruled dynasty”.<sup>31</sup>

**The Manchu Dynasty:** The Manchu-Tibetan relation was again another attempt at serving mutual needs: Tibetans wished to revive *Cho-Yon* relations with the dominant power in China and Inner Asia, and the Manchu needed Tibetan influence in their relations with the Mongols.<sup>32</sup> It is notable that the name Manchu derives from the Buddhist deity Manjushri. This title was given to the Manchu Emperor by the Fourth Dalai Lama in 1615, signifying Tibetan eagerness to revive the *Cho-Yon* relations between China and Tibet. In 1648, the Dalai Lama accepted an invitation to visit the Manchu court in Peking. Because, the sending of an invitation to a barbarian ruler was ‘unprecedented’, the emperor sought opinion from Manchu princes about the visit in a letter. The letter to a large extent reflects Manchu China’s acknowledgement of the Dalai Lama being a barbarian from outside of ‘China proper’:

During the reign of Tai-tsung (1626-43) because We had not conquered one corner (of the earth), Khalka, and because the Mongols of our outer frontier obeyed only the words of Lamas, messengers were sent to summon the Dalai Lama. Before his envoy arrived, Emperor Tai’tsung died.

After We took the rein of state, We summoned him; whereupon the Dalai Lama immediately departed from Tibet with a suite of 3000 men to come to Us. At present we would like to welcome him in person outside the Great Wall, so as to keep the Lama outside China Proper. We, therefore, order the Mongol princes of our outer frontier who desire to see the Lama to visit him there. If We allow the Lama to enter the Interior when the harvest of this year is poor and the followers of the Lama are so numerous, perhaps it will not benefit Us. If We do not welcome him, We fear that the Lama may be offended since We have invited him to come. Then he would have to return home having only come half way. Thus the Khalkas also will not submit to Us. As to

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 108.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China – From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. 109.

whether We should welcome him in person, you, the ministers, should report to Us your opinions.<sup>33</sup>

The Emperor's meeting with the Dalai Lama which had been rescheduled outside 'China proper' was disrupted by court officials who wrote to the Emperor: "The Dalai Lama is coming from a distant country. To send a high official to receive him will be enough to show our intention of according him good treatment". (Smith, p. 111) The Dalai Lama however, did visit the Manchu Emperor at Peking on 15 January 1653. The visit has been interpreted as a "nominal political submission" and a "beginning of Tibet's subservience to China".<sup>34</sup>

It is evident that Tibet's importance in Inner Asian politics in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century was a result of the Dalai Lama's good relations with the Mongols. Wherein, the III, IV and V Dalai Lamas played important roles in the consolidation of Gelugpa power under the auspices of Mongol patronage, the VI Dalai Lama proved to be different, showing interest in women and poems. Nonetheless, the Zungkhars had absolute 'unshakable' faith and devotion in him and Tibetan Buddhism. The IV Dalai Lama was a Mongol. At the same time, the Manchu Qing was wary that the relationship might turn against their favour. Therefore, the Qing Emperor Kang Hsi "attempted to eliminate the Dalai Lama's role as intermediary" between him and the Mongols and "also began recognizing religious reincarnations and political successions among Mongols rather than merely confirming the Dalai Lama's recognition as was the previous practice."<sup>35</sup> Subsequently, the Qing demarcated the boundaries between Amdo and Kham. By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. in 1720, the Qing entered Lhasa, and China established the right to have resident commissioners, called *Amban*, in Lhasa in 1721 who supervised Lhasa officials, who were to administer Tibet, west of the watershed between the Yangtze and Mekong. Owing to internal disputes, a Qing military expedition also arrived in 1728. The Qing also cultivated the Panchen Lama (head of Shigatse monastery) by granting him temporal authority over Tsang and Ngari in the absence of the Dalai Lama who was sent away by the Qing to another part of Tibet. Such a divide

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 110.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p. 113.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p. 117.

and rule policy became a feature of Chinese policy in Tibet. As a result, the Qing Emperor, through the *ambans*, was, “more than ever in actual control of Tibetan affairs”.<sup>36</sup>

After 1750, foreign relations increasingly became a major issue of attention between Tibet and the Qing *Ambans*. The successful Qing assistance to Tibetans over the Gurkha invasion from Nepal further strengthened Qing control over Tibet. However, when the Dogra rulers of Jammu and Kashmir invaded western Tibet, the Qing garrison in Lhasa proved unhelpful and incapable, thus, marking a decline in its power. The Gurkhas, likewise, aware of Qing incapacity, again attacked Tibet in 1855. This time, the Tibetan request for help from the Qing was met with disappointment and the Tibetans had to pay tribute to the Nepalese after facing defeat. Declining Qing authority was accompanied by the evolution of a political system in Tibet, “that was a combination of ecclesiastical and secular interests and thus, had the potential to resolve the faults of Tibet’s exclusively ecclesiastical method of rule.”<sup>37</sup> The 1863 Tibetan government’s takeover of Nyarong, altered the administrative division created by the Yuan and confirmed by the Qing, whereby Lhasa administration’s authority was confined to the area west of the Yangtze-Mekong watershed. At the end of the century, the states of northern Kham were still under the authority of Lhasa while those of southern Kham (Lithang and Ba) were under the loose supervision of the Qing viceroy of Szechuan.<sup>38</sup> Simultaneously, in Lhasa, the Tibetan government formed the *Kashag* and the *Tsongdu*, which, “as actual governing bodies in Tibet formed the political and administrative basis for an independent Tibetan polity”.<sup>39</sup>

### **3. Modernity and its impact on Tibet**

The beginning of the twentieth century heralded a period of major changes in China as well as in Inner Asia. Tibet too, went through a major upheaval. The period of imperial rule in China and ecclesiastical rule in Tibet was approaching its end and in the process, was giving way to the emergence of the conception of a modern nation-

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p. 132.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p. 140

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p. 141

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 147.



state. The thirteenth Dalai Lama, who assumed temporal authority over Tibet in 1895, was reform minded and also conscious of the need for territorial delimitation of Tibetan borders, like his predecessor, the V Dalai Lama. In the case of China, various factors contributed to changes. Some of these were: defeat of the Qing at the hands of the Japanese in 1895, the rise of Chinese nationalism and increasing exposure to Western ideas and beliefs, the overthrow of the Manchu-Qing Empire, and the establishment of a new Nationalist state in 1911. The Tibetans took advantage of the instability in China as a result the overthrow of the Qing to claim its independence from China. As a result, it entered into various treaties – with Mongolia in 1913<sup>40</sup> which typified Tibet and Mongolia as “independent States” as a result of “having freed themselves from the Manchu dynasty”. Tibet also entered into a Convention with Britain and China in 1914, the dynamics of which will be discussed in the following section. This agreement provided for Tibet an opportunity for *de facto* alignment of its borders, though limited. From 1917 onwards, Sino-Tibetan “armed conflict...continued with renewed intensity”.<sup>41</sup> After Sun Yat-sen took control of the Nationalist government in 1928, a provisional Chinese Constitution was adopted which provided for the creation of the Mongolian Tibetan Affairs Commission. At the same time, Sun was also propagating the principle of “five peoples of China” based on racial unity of the Chinese. The basic objective was to unite the people against imperialism because the contest for empires in Inner Asia between Russia and Britain had turned Tibet into a much coveted area of interest. Tibetans, on the other hand, were wary of Nationalist China and such apprehension led to a situation which benefited the British colonialists, who being well-entrenched in the Indian sub-continent were concerned with safeguarding their possessions from Russia.

The situation at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century raised many questions that had a bearing on Tibet’s future – what was Tibet’s actual status within the colonialist policies of Britain; how did the Chinese manipulate the situation and what was the Tibetan response to Chinese claims of sovereignty. The developments between Tibet,

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<sup>40</sup> View Appendix – V.

<sup>41</sup> Amar Jasbir Singh, “How the Tibetan Problem Influenced China’s Foreign Relations”, *China Report*, 28:3, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p. 270.

China, British India and later, independent India, which will be discussed in the following section, from the beginning to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century help us to determine the nature and efficacy of the present contestation of Chinese national sovereignty by the Tibetans.

### ***3.1. Tibet and the Politics of Colonialism***

The British policy toward Tibet had two conflicting imperatives. While it recognized the importance of Tibet as a buffer state it, at the same time, recognized Chinese ‘suzerainty’ over Lhasa. The primary interest of British policy was the maintenance of security along the 2000 mile long Himalayan frontier that India shares with Tibet. Given the fact that the Tibetan government had become increasingly subservient to, and a dependency of, the Manchu-Qing Empire, the fall of the latter provided the former with an opportunity to reclaim its independent character. The declining power of the Manchu made the Tibetans look in other directions for allies. Tibet sought a potential ally in Central Asia and sent the Russian Buddhist Dorjiev, who had tutored the thirteenth Dalai Lama, twice to the court of the Russian Czar. However, such news greatly bothered the British in the Indian subcontinent who then decided to send a mission to Lhasa to negotiate directly with the Tibetan Government. Colonel Francis Younghusband led a mission in 1904 to Lhasa after crushing the weak Tibetan army. The 1903-1904 Younghusband Expedition to Tibet sensitised the Chinese to the strategic importance of Tibet to China when Tibetan forces were defeated by the British forces. A treaty known as the ‘Lhasa Convention’<sup>42</sup> acknowledging “doubts and difficulties” regarding the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and the Trade Regulations of 1893 was signed between the two contracting parties in the Potala Palace on 7 September, 1904. Albeit the terms of the treaty were designed to serve British interests in Central Asia, signing of the treaty exhibited Tibet’s sovereignty and independence.

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<sup>42</sup> View Appendix – II.

However, in 1906, Britain entered into a Convention<sup>43</sup> with China which stated the reason for the need for the agreement as – “the necessity of taking steps to secure their rights and interests”. The “their” under mention are the two agreements that Britain had earlier signed with China in 1890 and 1893, the terms of which it had agreed to amend in 1904 with Tibet. However, in Article IV of the 1906 agreement with China, Britain again changed its stance and stated that the agreements of 1890 and 1893 “shall, subject to the terms of this present Convention (of 1907) and annexe thereto, remain in full force.” The agreement that Britain entered into in 1907 with Russia<sup>44</sup> completely reneged on the Lhasa Convention. It stated the objectives in clear terms that Britain and Russia recognised the “suzerain rights of China in Thibet” and that “maintenance of *status quo* in the external relations of Thibet” as being of “special interest” to Britain given the latter’s geographical position. Prior to this, Tibet-China relations were characterized by pre-modern form of tribute/trade relations and as discussed earlier Tibet was a frontier territory of China who was considered as barbarians and not a national minority of China. This agreement is significant for the fact that it, for the first time, sought to appropriate Sino-Tibetan relations in a modern language. By stating that “The Governments of Great Britain and Russia recognize the suzerain rights of China in Thibet...” Britain opened a ‘pandora’s box’ whereby China was forced to express historical Sino-Tibetan relations in the modern Western language of nationalism vis a vis suzerainty/sovereignty. “British negotiators unwittingly helped late Imperial China and the early Republican government to redefine and reformulate their conception of China’s status in Tibet in exacting a modern political vocabulary”.<sup>45</sup> Such appropriation, according to Norbu, was unfair to Tibet as it was still pre-modern and remained so until 1950.

The Simla Agreement of 1914 between Tibet, China and Britain is another example of the British attempt at appropriation. In late 1913, “under considerable British pressure, China agreed to join Britain and Tibet in tripartite talks in India to agree upon Tibet’s

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<sup>43</sup> View Appendix – III.

<sup>44</sup> View Appendix – IV.

<sup>45</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 162.

political status”<sup>46</sup> indicated that Tibet’s status was uncertain prior to that. However, such was not the case. The XIII Dalai Lama of Tibet had used the opportunity of the Qing collapse to proclaim Tibetan independence from China. Neville Maxwell says that the Simla Conference was an “intricate exercise in diplomacy, power policy and espionage” on the part of the British “to mend relations between Tibet and China as an ‘honest broker’, to secure the best terms they could for Tibet.”<sup>47</sup> However, Britain’s role can be characterised as anything else but an ‘honest broker’.

The dynamics and the momentum with which the talks progressed reflected the complexity and opportunity behind the entire process. The Agreement of 1914 sought to divide Tibet into Outer and Inner zones. The former was declared as a Chinese ‘suzerain’ and China’s position on the latter was to be “far more substantial though not spelled out in detail in the text of the Convention”.<sup>48</sup> Britain managed to extract concessions from the Tibetan plenipotentiary, established a symbolic subordination of Tibet to China, with autonomy under the watchful eye of Britain. Though initialed by the Chinese government “in April 1914, it was repudiated by Yuan shih-kai’s government ostensibly over the alignment of the boundaries. However, the fact that the Chinese agreed to initial it in the first place, means that it did consider Tibet as equal to itself and as having treaty making powers despite the fact that it refused to ratify it. The Agreement gave full expression to British strategic designs and Tibet’s place in them. In the words of Macmohan “his objective had been to secure a strategic watershed boundary and, with it, access to the shortest trade route into Tibet”.<sup>49</sup>

Tibetans argue that the 1914 treaty confirms Tibet’s independent status and its treaty making powers and that “after the Simla Convention, Tibet remained in effect independent.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Melvyn C Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of a Lamaist State* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1993), p. 68

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 49.

<sup>48</sup> Amar Jasbir Singh, “How the Tibetan Problem Influenced China’s Foreign Relations”, *China Report*, 28:3, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p. 268.

<sup>49</sup> Neville Maxwell, *India’s China War*, London: Penguin Books, 1972.

<sup>50</sup> J P Dalvi, *Himalayan Blunder* (Bombay: Orient Paperback), 1969, p. 12.

A British mission was established in Lhasa in 1936, which was, however, “not accompanied by *de jure* recognition of Tibet’s independent status.”<sup>51</sup> Therefore, there was a discrepancy in what the Tibetans assumed was their political status and what the external powers accorded it. The Gould Mission arrived in Tibet amidst the backdrop of the Second World War, in 1944. Tibet took the opportunity to request “British help in giving Tibet a voice in postwar peace conference”.<sup>52</sup> However, Britain’s vague offer of “diplomatic support” gave little assurance to Tibet.

In March 1947, India convened an Inter-Asian Relations Conference to discuss the role of Asia in the post-war and post colonial period. The Tibetan government too was invited to the Conference. The invitation to the Tibetan government was conveyed by the British representative in Lhasa.<sup>53</sup> Tibet was seated along with the other delegations and displayed its own national flag. However, under Chinese protests, Tibetans had to remove their flag and map. The independence of India came as a hard reminder to the Tibetans that the “power that used to deter Chinese Communist leadership from occupying Tibet had departed South Asia by 1947”<sup>54</sup> with a vague assurance that Britain would “continue to take a friendly interest in the future prosperity of the Tibetan people and the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy.”<sup>55</sup> Contrary to British Indian interests, the new Indian leadership had other strategic and ideological objectives in mind when it decided to keep away from Tibet. On the one hand, it viewed the development of a pan-Asian order led by India and China as essential in thwarting the pressures for aligning with either of the two post-World War super powers, the US and Soviet Russia. And at another level, it was apprehensive of interfering in China’s ‘internal affairs’ with the fear of extracting a *quid pro quo* in the case of Kashmir. India’s reservation in signing the Convention on Civil and Political Rights in 1976 reflects India’s concern with the Kashmiri claims for self determination

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<sup>51</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Melvyn C Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of a Lamaist State* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1993), p. 409.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p. 561.

<sup>54</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 176.

<sup>55</sup> Melvyn C Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of a Lamaist State* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1993), p. 565.

being equated with the Tibetan case. It said, “the right to ‘self determination’ only apply to people under foreign domination, and do not apply to people in a sovereign independent state.”<sup>56</sup>

And finally, there was the issue of the threat posed by revolutionary China. The Indian freedom movement had achieved success mainly through its peaceful struggle. As a result, its leaders had hardly paid attention towards building its defence against potential enemies. Whereas, the Communists had years of revolutionary experience to their credit. Sardar Vallabhai Patel, who had a strategic bent of mind, had warned Nehru of the People’s Republic of China as a potential enemy. Coupled with poor defense strategy, India, under Nehru was apprehensive of offending its Communist neighbour and took to idealistic building of bridges, rather than countering with military strength. Tibet, as a result did not get support from independent India as far as its political status was concerned.

#### **4. The PRC comes to Power**

Meanwhile, the Tibetan leadership was increasingly wary of China, as the Communists took over the reigns of government from the Nationalists. The Tibetans, sensing danger, expelled the Chinese from Tibetan territory. The Chinese called this the “instigation of the British imperialists and their lackey, the Nehru administration of India.”<sup>57</sup> One reason that kept India from supporting Tibetan aspirations for joining the UN was, in the words of KPS Menon, India’s Foreign Secretary, that it might “lend colour to Chinese radio allegations of Anglo Indian”<sup>58</sup> motives over Tibet. In the meanwhile, American interest in Tibet was growing, owing to US fear of growing Communist influence in Asia.

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<sup>56</sup> Surjit Mansingh and C V Ranganathan, “Approaches to State Sovereignty”, in Alka Acharya and GP Deshpande, ed. *50 Years of India China – Crossing a Bridge of Dreams* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2001), p. 453.

<sup>57</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 8

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19

#### **4.1. 'Liberation'**

On coming to power, the Communists in October 1949 made their intention towards Tibet clear. "General Chu De, the Commander-in-Chief of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) declared that Tibet was part of the PRC and that the next task of the PLA was to 'liberate' Tibet and Taiwan."<sup>59</sup> The subsequent action by the PLA forces in Tibet has been detailed by Norbu:

On 7 October 1950, almost a year after the first announcement of 'liberation', two divisions of the PLA, the 52<sup>nd</sup> Division from the north and the 53<sup>rd</sup> Division from the south, launched a full-scale attack on Eastern Tibet. The 7,000 or 8,000 badly trained and ill-equipped Tibetan troops were no match for the 40,000 battle-seasoned PLA troops. The Chinese crushed the Tibetans, killing 5,700 men out of 7,000 in Chamdo. On 19, October 1950, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, Commander of the Tibetan crack troops and the Governor of Eastern Tibet (Kham), surrendered to General Wang Chimi.<sup>60</sup>

Ngabo surrendered almost immediately by putting up resistance only for 12 days. Chamdo, the headquarters of the Tibetan official resistance force against the Chinese invasion, fell on 7 December 1950. Ngabo conveyed to Lhasa, the fall of Chamdo along with. He also sent a copy of the '10-Point Chinese peace proposal' which was discussed in the Tibetan National Assembly (tsong'du) on 12 December 1950. In 1951, the Lhasa government sent Ngabo Ngawang Jigme to Beijing to negotiate where, on 23 May, 1951, he signed the "17 Point Agreement" or "The Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet"<sup>61</sup> with China. In the agreement, Tibet, for the first time in its history, acknowledged Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. The Tibetan government, however, is said to have heard of the agreement by radio on 26 May and

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<sup>59</sup> Cited in Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 180.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>61</sup> View Appendix – VIII.

was apparently 'shocked' by such a development. The Tibetan government refuted the sanctity of the agreement, for, according to them the delegation did not have the authority and approval from the central Tibetan government to carry out such an agreement. They pointed out that Ngabo, the Governor General of Chamdo, was carrying the seal only of the Governor-General" and not of the Central government. The seals of the Central government that Ngabo used were suspect. The Tibetans accuse the Chinese of having "made new seals"<sup>62</sup> for the final signing of the Agreement and thus claim that the agreement was signed under 'duress'. However, with no international support and PLA troops marching in, Tibetans had no option but to concede to the 1951 Agreement. The tone of the Agreement set the stage for China's policy towards Tibet in the coming decades.

The 1951 Agreement therefore, can be viewed as an instance of counter-contestation – of Tibet's challenge to China's sovereignty over it and China's claims of sovereignty over Tibet.

#### ***4.2. Accommodating Chinese sovereignty (1951-1959)***

The 1951 Agreement established the PRC's claims of sovereignty over Tibet. It also became the basis for the international recognition of Tibet as a 'Region of China'. Subsequently, it became important for China to win legitimacy for its 'peaceful liberation' of the region; the first important step being, besides gaining international recognition, winning the Tibetan people's trust so that it could achieve the "constitutional and administrative integration of Tibet"<sup>63</sup> into China with ease. Inside Tibet, "groups of propaganda teams were sent out to remote areas"<sup>64</sup> to publicise the Agreement and win over the masses. The propaganda tactics in Tibet included observation of the following rules which were fashioned along the lines of the Agreement to observe and respect local conditions:

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<sup>62</sup> Melvyn C Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of a Lamaist State* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1993), p. 770.

<sup>63</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 92.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98



1. Never occupy a house without the consent of the people
2. Never kill birds
3. Never catch fish
4. Observe and respect local customs
5. Respect all religious objects, eg prayer flags
6. No female cadre should visit a monastery.<sup>65</sup>

However, the enormous pressure levied on Tibet's fragile land, environment, and subsistence economy by the increasing inflow of thousands of PLA troops and cadres made the Chinese unpopular among the masses. "By the end of 1951, the population of Lhasa and the surrounding areas had doubled. The Chinese troops came in three main groups: 2,000 men led by Wang Qimei arrived from Chamdo; and both Zhang Guohua and Tan Guansan arrived with 3,000 men."<sup>66</sup> The Chinese troops and cadres now became the responsibility of the Tibetan government.

According to Shakya, the people had begun to develop "anti-Chinese"<sup>67</sup> feelings despite the propaganda and non-introduction of socialist reforms in Tibet (central Tibet). Nonetheless, the Chinese had succeeded in establishing an administrative structure in Tibet despite the growing anti-Chinese feeling among the people. So much so that the two Prime Ministers, Lungkhawa and Lobasng Tashi who opposed the 17 Point Agreement and also resisted Chinese moves to implement them were viewed as "folk heroes by the masses".<sup>68</sup> An organization named *Mimang Thutsog*, People's Representatives was formed, which put forward the following demands:

1. The status and power of the Dalai Lama must not be changed
2. All religious institutions and monks should be protected
3. All development programmes for a prosperous Tibet must be executed by the Tibetans
4. The Tibetan Army should not be merged with the PLA
5. Tibet should be allowed to maintain its traditional relationship with India
6. The number of Chinese troops in Tibet should not exceed the level during the period of the Ambans.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* p. 98.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* p. 93.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* p. 99.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* p. 97.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* p. 103.

The above-mentioned demands were put forward before the Chinese representative, Zhang Guohua. Some of the demands above had been assured in the 1951 Agreement. However, demand No. 4 runs contrary to the tenets of the 1951 Agreement, Article 8, which says “Tibetan troops shall be reorganized by stages into the People’s Liberation Army, and become a part of the national defence forces of the People’s Republic of China.”<sup>70</sup> On 31 March 1952, over 1000 people surrounded the house of the Chinese representative demanding “Chinese troops be immediately withdrawn and that no changes be made to the existing social political system of Tibet.”<sup>71</sup> However, the turn of events only soured the relationship. Anti-Chinese posters too had begun to be displayed all over Lhasa. The Chinese suspected Kashag’s (the Tibetan Cabinet) involvement in the organisation’s activities and ordered the former to cooperate and take action against the latter. At the end of March the situation in Lhasa was tense. The CPC Central Committee’s directive dated 6 April, 1952 elucidates the ‘tension’:

...For the time being leave everything as it is, let this situation drag on...

But things will be different in few years.

Apparently not only the two Silons (Prime Ministers) but also the Dalai Lama and most of his clique were reluctant to accept the agreement and are unwilling to carry it out. ...we can leave it for the time being and wait.<sup>72</sup>

The Chinese central government, aware of the different cultural and political conditions of Tibet, sought to curb the ‘tension’ by following a gradualist policy. The 1951 Agreement had promised that social reforms would not be carried out in Tibet, with Article 11 of the Agreement noting that: “In matters related to various reforms in Tibet there will be no compulsion... Tibet should carry out reform of its own accord...” Mao, in his *Contradictions* (February, 1957) speech said that “democratic reforms have not been carried out in Tibet because conditions are not ripe”. J. T. Dreyer calls the clause “conditions not ripe”, an ‘ingenious Marxist escape’ to bridge

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p. 451.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 107-108.

the gap between the theory that all national struggles is actually a matter of class struggle, and the reality of a gradualist policy towards China's nationalities.<sup>73</sup>

In the meanwhile, another foreign policy development between India and China sealed the fate of Tibetan aspiration for independence from China. Professor Dawa Norbu writes that, because Mao Zedong was aware of the lack of popular support for the Communist 'liberation' of Tibet, his primary task was to "seek India's legitimation of the Communist takeover."<sup>74</sup> Also, the extra-territorial rights that India had in Tibet was a source of botheration to China. On 31 December, 1953, negotiations began in Beijing between India and China which led to the signing of the "Agreement on Trade and Intercourse in the Tibet Region of China." It culminated in the "Panchsheel (1954) – Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence"<sup>75</sup> and despite the fact that the Agreement finalized the trade regulations between the two countries, the treaty ultimately acknowledged India's "unequivocal acceptance of China's sovereignty over Tibet."<sup>76</sup> According to B.N. Mullik, the then Chief of Indian Intelligence, on his visit to Kalimpong to assess the reactions of the Tibetan dissidents there, he found the Tibetans were 'shocked and anguished' by the 1954 Agreement. Acharya Kripalani said in 1958 about Panchsheel, that it had "put the seal of approval upon the destruction of an ancient nation."<sup>77</sup> The Chinese Constitution of 1954, in the meanwhile, ruled out any possibility of minority groups seceding from the motherland. Article 3 of Chapter 1, "General Principles," of the Constitution clearly stated that "The People's Republic of China is unified, multinational state", "acts that undermine the unity of the nationalities are prohibited" and that "National autonomous areas are inalienable parts of the People's Republic." The use of the terms 'unified multinational state' as well as 'inalienable' reflect the extent of Chinese concern for its sovereign control of the erstwhile Chinese frontier territories.

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<sup>73</sup> June Teufel Dreyer, "China's Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution", *China Quarterly*, 235 July-Sept, p. 98.

<sup>74</sup> Dawa Norbu, "Tibet in Sino-Indian relations: The Centrality of Marginality," *Strategic Digest*, Vol-28, Jan-June, 1998, p. 537.

<sup>75</sup> View Appendix – IX.

<sup>76</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 119

<sup>77</sup> L L Mehrotra, *India's Tibet Policy* (TPPRC, New Delhi, 1998), p. 21.

In 1955, the Dalai Lama led a delegation, on invitation, to Peking, despite opposition from the Tibetan people. He also celebrated the Tibetan New Year there. His visit can be interpreted as an attempt on the part of the Tibetan government to coexist with China under the 1951 Agreement.

Likewise, China tried all means to constitutionally incorporate Tibet into China by setting up a Preparatory Committee for the eventual establishment of the Autonomous Region of Tibet (PCART). The Dalai Lama was made the Chairman of the Committee because the Chinese recognized that he was important and it also helped in projecting Beijing's adherence to the Agreement of 1951 that promised 'non-interference in internal matters'. The PCART was inaugurated in 22 April 1956. According to Shakya, it caused "serious anxiety among the Tibetan people".<sup>78</sup> By 1956, the Communists had created a number of Tibetan autonomous districts in Kham and Amdo.<sup>79</sup> Though Kham and Amdo consisted of people of Tibetan ethnicity and cultural traits, "some of these areas had accepted nominal Chinese rule since the Qing period and many of the local leaders had been appointed to various posts under the Nationalist Government."<sup>80</sup> Therefore, the 17 Point Agreement of 1951 was not applicable to these areas under Communist China. Kham came under the jurisdiction of the South-West Military-cum-Administrative Committee and Amdo came under the North-West-Committee. In 1955, the province of Sikang which was set up by the Guomintang was abolished and integrated into the province of Sichuan. "In other parts of Amdo, the Communists kept the Guomintang province of Qinghai. But six new autonomous *zhou* were established in areas of Amdo...Here the Communists set up Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Zhou".<sup>81</sup>

In 1956, there was a change of policy with the collectivization movement sweeping China, and the period of "reforms can wait" attitude changed. Full scale 'democratic reforms' were launched in 1955 and in Amdo and Kham measures to settle the nomads led to "sporadic uprisings". By late 1955, serious fighting had erupted

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<sup>78</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 144.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, p. 137.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, p. 136.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p. 137.

between Tibetans and Chinese in some parts of Tibetan populated areas in Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan. In the middle of 1956, the Chinese found themselves under attack from all sections of Tibetan society.<sup>82</sup> In 1956, Mao speaking of “The Relationship between the Han Nationality and the minority Nationalities” in his *Ten Major Relationships* speech, acknowledged that minorities inhabited vast territories while the Han was the majority population, and argued that local nationalism as well as Han chauvinism must be opposed. Basically, Mao acknowledged the rich resources of the minority lands and noted that ‘human’ resources there were equally important in order that the materials there “can be exploited and utilized”.<sup>83</sup> By the end of 1956, *A Discussion of the National Question in the Chinese Revolution and of Actual Nationalities Policy* (Draft), was released ‘hastily’ as a position paper to provide a basis for discussion within the Party on nationality policy.<sup>84</sup>

In October 1956, the Indian government sent an official invitation to both the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama to visit India, providing an opportunity to the Tibetans to renew contact with the outside world. The Chinese were apprehensive of this and tried to dissuade the Dalai Lama but could not. They feared that the Tibetans might take the opportunity to denounce the 17 Point Agreement as was being encouraged by the émigré Tibetan community consisting of Prime Minister Lungkhawa, Tsipon Shakabpa, Gyalo Dhondup, and Thupten Norbu. Premier Zhou Enlai too arrived in India after the Dalai Lama and his entourage without denouncing the 17 Point Agreement. The Dalai Lama returned in March 1957, to the immense relief of the Chinese. The Dalai Lama’s accommodation to Chinese sovereignty only ended when he finally denounced the Agreement after he escaped from Tibet and reached Tezpur, India in 1959.

Meanwhile, anti-China activities were increasing. The Khampa revolt had moved to Lhasa owing to the PLA’s securing of most parts of Kham and Amdo. However, “neither the Dalai Lama nor the Tibetan government was willing to support the

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>84</sup> Chang Chi-i, George Moseley, trans., *The Party and the National Question in China*, (London: MIT Press, 1966), p. 23.

Khampa revolt because they feared the Chinese would adopt more forceful measures in central Tibet.”<sup>85</sup> Shakya argues that the growing opposition to the reforms in eastern Tibet and other areas forced the CCP to review its policy towards minority areas.<sup>86</sup> He notes that in May 1957, the CCP held a special meeting of the Nationalities Affairs Commission and announced the formal launch of a Rectification Campaign among Chinese cadres working in minority areas. The issue of ‘nationalities’ and how to deal with them was increasingly occupying a significant amount of the Party’s time and work

The minorities were allowed to voice their grievances towards Han presence in their areas during the “hundred flowers bloom and a hundred thoughts contend” campaign (1956). However, they were silenced in the rectification and anti-rightist campaigns (1957). One of the victims of the campaign was Baba Phuntsog Wangyal, an interpreter during the 17 Point Agreement in 1951. He held the post of Director of the Propaganda Department of the 18<sup>th</sup> PLA Corps, stationed in Tibet. He was purged for suggesting that the Khampas “could be placated if the Communists were to extend their ‘no reforms’ policy to eastern Tibet.”<sup>87</sup> The other reason for his purge was that he “advocated a Soviet type of federal arrangement for the minority groups”<sup>88</sup> which was unacceptable to the Chinese leaders. According to Shakya, his comments were seen as criticism of the policies of the party. Simultaneously, by the summer of 1957, the Chinese were becoming more firm. A new policy line was set by a Nationalities Work Conference held in the coastal city of Tsingtao. A report by Zhou Enlai “singled out local nationalism as the principal obstacle rather than Han chauvinism in the implementation of the CCP’s nationalities policy of socialist reforms”.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, ‘local nationalism’ of the minorities was seen as responsible for impeding the CCP’s efforts.

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<sup>85</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 163.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p. 167.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, p. 168.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, p. 380.

<sup>89</sup> Chang Chi-i, George Moseley, trans., *The Party and the National Question in China*, (London: MIT Press, 1966), p. 23.

The justification for a conception of Tibet as implying the entire Tibetan plateau and not just the TAR is appropriate owing to the fact that Chinese national sovereignty has faced challenge from the Tibetans who inhabit the entire Tibetan plateau, and not just the TAR and is validated by the outbreak of revolt in 'eastern Tibet'. The revolt in the Kham areas (which Shakya calls eastern Tibet) had broken out because the 1951 Agreement did not apply to those areas as they did not come under the jurisdiction of the Lhasa administration at that time. According to Shakya, "by late 1957, Khampa resistance could not be regarded merely as an uprising by a few reactionary landlords – it had become a nationwide rebellion".<sup>90</sup> (Shakya, p. 166)

Meanwhile, the Great Leap Forward undermined the gradualist policy of the initial years even more, with its concentration on 'more, better, faster, and cheaper'. On the question of nationalities, the Great Leap aimed at reducing differences among peoples, ideological and otherwise, as quickly as possible. Though Tibet had escaped the democratic reforms it could not escape the Great Leap: lamas were forced to work, religion was attacked and even the costumes of the minorities were attacked. Dreyer remarks that "If Great Leap was a failure in Han China, it was a fiasco in the minority areas", pointing to the fact that "major rebellions occurred in Sinkiang in 1958 and in Qinghai<sup>91</sup> and Tibet in 1959."<sup>92</sup>

By the beginning of 1958 the implementation of socialist reforms in eastern Tibet had resulted in "more than 15,000 families had sought refuge in Lhasa and surrounding areas."<sup>93</sup> The revolt altered the situation even for the émigré Tibetans living in India (Kalimpong) who had, from 1950 to 1954 accepted the "situation in Tibet as *fait accompli*."<sup>94</sup> The news of the formation of the 'Four Rivers, Six Ranges'<sup>95</sup> came as a

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<sup>90</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 166.

<sup>91</sup> Qinghai province was established by the Guomindang out of parts of traditional Tibetan area of Amdo and continues to exist under Communist China.

<sup>92</sup> June Teufel Dreyer, "China's Minority Nationalities in the Cultural Revolution", *China Quarterly*, 235 July-Sept, p. 100.

<sup>93</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 166.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, p. 170.

<sup>95</sup> Four Rivers Six Ranges is known as *Chushi Gang Druk* in Tibetan. The 'organisation' of resistance fighters was formed in early 1958 and consisted of Khampa men (in exile, the issue whether the

welcome surprise to the Tibetan émigré community in India who (especially Gyalo Dhondup and Shakabpa) had developed contacts with the Americans. The revolt interested the Americans because of the simple fact that China was a Communist country. Also, “a number of the refugees arriving from Kham were recruited by Guomindang agents in Kalimpong.”<sup>96</sup>

Accusing “reactionary elements in the Tibetan government of instigating the Khampa revolt”, the Chinese “encouraged the Dalai Lama to issue orders to the Khampas to disband”. Such an appeal reveals the Chinese inability to control the situation. However, the Tibetan authorities, unwilling to take a stand, reiterated “that the revolt had started in areas under Chinese control and it was their responsibility to prevent it from spreading into central Tibet”.<sup>97</sup> The revolt had begun in eastern Tibet where the 17 Point Agreement was enforceable and thus the implementation of democratic reforms there incited local Khampa people’s opposition. Also, the Lhasa government’s reluctance to support them made the fighters dependent on their own means. Nonetheless, by the late fifties, the Khampa guerillas “had enormous destabilizing effect in the region (Central Tibet) and the Communists had lost any social base for their rule in the area.”<sup>98</sup>

#### ***4.3. The 1959 Rebellion and the Tibetan Exodus***

The Lhasa administration found itself in a very difficult position towards the end of 1950’s as it was unable to placate the ‘resistance fighters’ on the one hand, and implement the Chinese orders on the other. As Shakya argues from the middle of 1958 until the Lhasa uprising in March 1959 there existed a peculiar situation, in which neither the traditional Tibetan government nor the Chinese had much control over the course of events in Tibet. (p. 181) The outbreak of revolt in 1959 in central Tibet’s

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organization also included men from central Tibet remains a controversial topic) who were organized into different regiments based on different regions, such as Lithang, Bathang, Gyalhang and Changtrengpa. The first, second and the third places come under Yunnan area. Andrug Gonpo Tashi led the organization.

<sup>96</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 170.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, p. 174.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p. 173.



capital, Lhasa in 1959 is indicative of how the Chinese policy of 'liberation' and subsequent 'democratic reforms' had an adverse effect on the consciousness of the Tibetan masses. Whereas the Tibetan government made attempts to accommodate Chinese sovereignty and coexist under the 'The Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet with China', (1951) the masses increasingly contested Chinese sovereignty. The policies of the PRC which attempted to incorporate Tibet into the Chinese central government's administrative structure soured the historically conflictual relationship both the people shared. Communist China's assertion of its sovereign rights over the territory of Tibet only managed to strengthen Tibetan's own sense of national identity. As an ethnic group, "the subjective sense of common ethnicity of already affiliated tribes was strengthened by their association for collective political and military purposes during the expansion of the Tibetan empire and its conflicts with China."<sup>99</sup> The ethnic Tibetans of the entire Tibetan plateau had now become nationalistic and united in their opposition to Chinese rule.

As the revolt grew, so did the PRC's policies of control over Tibet. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1959, China hoisted its national flag over the Potala Palace for the first time since Lhasa was 'liberated'. The PLA captured the Potala and the Norbulingka and brought an end to the revolt which was mainly concentrated around Lhasa. On 28<sup>th</sup> March, the Government of Tibet was dissolved and on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1959, the Dalai Lama crossed the border into India.

### **5. Contesting Sovereignty from 'Exile'**

After the Tibetans fled to India in 1959, the issue of Tibet increasingly became a bone of contention for China as the Tibetans launched an assault on Chinese sovereignty over Tibet from 'exile'. On 16 April, 1959, the Dalai Lama issued his first statement from Tezpur, which gave an account of Sino-Tibetan relations since 1950 and said that China had violated the terms of the 17 Point Agreement by interfering in Tibet's internal affairs. On 20 June, in his first press conference, the Dalai Lama openly

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<sup>99</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. 75

refuted the 1951 Agreement by saying, “the Sino-Tibetan Agreement was imposed by the Chinese in accordance with their own desires and has been violated...by themselves, thus giving rise to a contradiction. Therefore, we cannot abide by this”.<sup>100</sup> On arrival in India, when the Tibetans sought some guarantee of intervention from India in the form of sponsoring the Tibetan case in the United Nations (hereafter UN) and also seeking guarantee from China for the Dalai Lama’s personal safety, Nehru made it clear that India would not jeopardize its relationship with China nor compromise on its policy of non-alignment. Many Indian newspapers and Indian leaders were unhappy with India’s non-committal nature. *The Indian Express* noted that, “discretion and restraint are too often alibis for moral and political poverty”. *The Times of India* wrote: “the Indian government can do little to restore Tibetan autonomy, but there is no reason for it to stretch the concept of non-interference to the point where it has to maintain an uneasy silence in the matter”.<sup>101</sup>

Where there was reluctance on the part of many governments to support Tibet or sponsor its case in the UN, there were many independent bodies, people and organisations that openly supported the case of Tibet. The International Commission of Jurists on 5 June published an interim report on *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law* which said that “there is a *prima facie* case that on the part of the Chinese, there has been an attempt to destroy the national, ethical, racial and religious group of Tibetans by killing members of the group and causing serious bodily harm to members of the group.”<sup>102</sup> Many also believed that Tibet had the right to self determination. Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama’s brother, Gyalo Dhondup and others had desperately been using all means to gain international support. The UN was, on the other hand, reluctant to take a position owing to the constraint put on it by Article 2 (7) of the Charter that called for non-interference in the internal affairs of a country. Ultimately, Malaya and Ireland tabled a resolution on Tibet on 13 October, 1959 which was approved by 45 countries, 9 against and 26 abstentions. However, the resolution only

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<sup>100</sup> Cited in Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 223.

<sup>101</sup> L L Mehrotra, *India’s Tibet Policy* (TPPRC, New Delhi, 1998), p. 22

<sup>102</sup> *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law*, International Commission of Jurists, 1959

highlighted the issue of violation of Tibet's 'human rights' rather than calling for negotiations between the Dalai Lama and China.

In the end of February 1960, the US publicly declared its position on Tibet in a letter to the Dalai Lama,

As you know, while it has been the historical position of the US to consider Tibet as an autonomous country under the suzerainty of China, the American people have also traditionally stood for the principle of self determination. It is the belief of the United States Government that this principle should apply to the people of Tibet and that they should have the determining voice in their own political destiny.<sup>103</sup>

China became increasingly wary of the statement from the US, viewing it as a Cold War containment policy aimed against China.

A resolution on Tibet was again sponsored in July 1960 by Malaya and Thailand which was favoured by 49 countries, 13 against and 35 abstentions. In 1961, both the countries again, with the support of Ireland and El Salvador, moved to include the question of Tibet in the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly. Significantly, this time, besides human rights, the resolution also "solemnly renewed its call for the cessation of practices which deprive the Tibetan people of their fundamental human rights and freedom including their rights to self determination."<sup>104</sup> Human rights, a major challenge to a state's sovereignty is on the one hand a tool for alleviating state subjugation of its subjects by a third party, and on the other, it is an effective tool for interference in the internal matters of a country. One of the means to alleviate human rights problems is through 'humanitarian intervention'. Post 'liberation' of Tibet, and its demand for self determination, the issue of Tibet had begun to take the form of issue of human rights which was helpful in attracting international attention, but at the same time sidetracked support for its political demands. The international campaign against China's Human Rights record picked momentum as a result of the Tiananmen Square Incident of 1989. With it, Tibet gained major attention.

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<sup>103</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 232

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, p. 235.

## 6. Sovereignty contested from inside Tibet

Any state at inception is usually faced with a variety of crisis. After the exodus of the Dalai Lama from Tibet to India, and along with him of many high lamas and officials, there was a power vacuum in Lhasa which the Chinese were quick to fill. In their attempt to consolidate power, they were faced with the crisis of legitimacy, penetration, distribution and integration. After 1959, as Dreyer points out there were 'curtailment of news on minority areas', a policy that was less successful than the policy of gradualism. At the same time, it was important for China that it handle its nationalities problem properly after already having experienced a revolt from a minority region. For the integration of Tibet and also legitimation of its rule, it was important that the power vacuum in Tibet be filled by a symbolic head, Panchen Rinpoche, and that it followed a gradualist policy of reform, especially after the experience of the GLF in China. Panchen Rinpoche was appointed Vice Chairman of the NPC integrating the Tibetan leadership into organs of the state. The Chinese leaders also understood that mobilisation of the masses was an important condition for the success of the reforms. Therefore, the CCP conducted campaigns, such as the Anti-Rebellion Campaign, to 'heighten the class and political consciousness of the Tibetan masses'. The Anti-Rebellion campaign targeted people that were perceived to have participated in the 1959 revolt (Tibetans know it as the 1959 uprising) and thus, "betraying" the motherland. Meetings and 'political campaigns' were organized "in all villages and nomadic communities" to "coerce cooperation and compliance".<sup>105</sup> Such campaigns contributed to the Panchen Rinpoche's resentment towards the nature of policies that were being implemented in Tibet.

In consonance with the Panchen Rinpoche's voicing of concern that "in the campaign against the reactionary rebels, many patriotic figures had been wrongly labeled and that reforms had been carried out without due attention to the local conditions", Zhang Jingwu, the Chinese Representative in Lhasa, announced that, since the main task in

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, p. 249 and 250.

Tibet was to consolidate the Party's achievements, the socialist transformation of Tibet would be deferred for another five years.<sup>106</sup>

At the same time, a 'Five Point Policy' towards the monasteries was issued in 1962, in order to dismantle the privileges of the religious institutions. The monasteries were to give up their privileges, implement democratic administration, work within the framework of the constitution of China and the monks were required to engage in production while the government would be responsible for old and young lamas and monks.<sup>107</sup> Such a directive on the economic position of the monks and monasteries irked the Tibetans, for whom their national identity was based on their faith in religion and the monastic order.<sup>108</sup> To tamper with this aspect of Tibetan life was to deliberately invite trouble. Such a policy clearly violated the 17 Point Agreement which had guaranteed non-interference in such matters. Section 6 of the Agreement said: "The religious beliefs, customs and habits of the Tibetan people shall be respected and lama monasteries shall be protected. The central authorities will not effect a change in the income of the monasteries."

By the early 60's, the Tibetan way of life and traditional economic structures were replaced by mutual aid groups, and taxes were paid to the state instead of the 'estate owners'. China had also begun to abandon its gradualist policy in order to incorporate Tibet into the rest of China. Panchen Rinpoche's 70,000 Character petition, formally submitted to Premier Zhou Enlai on 18 May 1962<sup>109</sup>, provides a succinct assessment of Chinese policy in Tibet and other Tibetan regions. It argued that the rapid social and economic changes were endangering the Tibetan people as a nationality: "the Tibetan population had dwindled and Buddhism had been virtually annihilated. At this rate the Tibetan nationality would cease to exist or would become unrecognisable through assimilation into other groups."<sup>110</sup> However, for his opinion, the Panchen

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 264-266.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, p. 268.

<sup>108</sup> The Dalai Lama's *Strasbourg Proposal*, 1988 states, "...religion constitutes the source of Tibet's national identity, and spiritual values lie at the very heart of Tibet's rich culture..." (For the full text, View Appendix – XI)

<sup>109</sup> The petition was later read at a meeting attended by Zhou other Chinese leaders as Zhou was not able to read it owing to his imminent tour to north-east regions of China.

<sup>110</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 271

Rinpoche “suffered nine years and eight months of imprisonment, much of which was in solitary confinement.”<sup>111</sup>

In 1965, the TAR was formed and Tibet was finally integrated into China. Prior to this, the Panchen Rinpoche was purged in a major purge session for his criticism of Party policies. After 1965, Shakya says that “events in Tibet were a mere reflection of larger events in Chinese politics.”<sup>112</sup> (p. 314)

During the Cultural Revolution (CR) the minority nationalities were the target of attacks from the Red Guards who opposed the ‘vestiges of the old society and “decadent” customs’, traditions and religion. In Tibet, the anti-Lin Biao and anti-Confucius campaign was translated into the ‘anti-Dalai, anti-Panchen campaign’. Though revolutionary committees were formed in all of the 29 administrative units (21 provinces, five autonomous regions, and three municipalities) in Communist China, it was only in the end, on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1968,<sup>113</sup> that one revolutionary committee was established in the autonomous regions of Tibet and Sinkiang. This indicates that the resistance in the latter two places were strong. In Tibet most Tibetans tended to join the Revolutionary Rebels rather than the Red Guards and revolted against the Han regime and struck at the Han positions of power in Tibet.<sup>114</sup>

By the end of the Cultural Revolution period the Chinese leaders had begun to reflect on Tibet policy. Concurrently, after Mao’s death the PRC itself underwent major changes as a result of the reform-minded orientation of its leaders. In 1980, Hu Yaobang made apologies to Tibet for past ‘leftist excesses’, and acknowledged that the Communist party had failed in Tibet. He announced the following six point policy directives:

1. Tibet must be given full rights to exercise regional autonomy.

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<sup>111</sup> Tashi Wangdi (of the Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration of HH the Dalai Lama, Dharamsala), “The Panchen Lama speaks , 28<sup>th</sup> March 1987”, in Pierre-Antoine Donnet, Tica Broch (trans). *Tibet: Survival in Question* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990). p. 230.

<sup>112</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 314.

<sup>113</sup> Jurgen Domes, “The Role of the Military in the Formation of Revolutionary Committees 1967-68”, *China Quarterly*, p.114.

<sup>114</sup> Dawa Norbu, “Han Hegemony and Tibetan Ethnicity”, *International Studies*, 32, 3 (1995), p. 308.

2. There would be a period of recuperation during the first three years of which people in Tibet would be exempt from paying taxes and meeting state purchase quotas.
3. A flexible economic policy suited to Tibet's special conditions should be adopted.
4. A greater part of the state subsidy should be used for the development of agriculture and animal husbandry.
5. Tibetan culture, language and education should be developed following socialist orientation.
6. The Party's policy on minority cadres should be implemented and should promote unity between Chinese and Tibetan cadres.<sup>115</sup>

Hu's six point policy directive that stresses on 'full rights to exercise regional autonomy' is reminiscent of the Agreement of 1951 for the 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet. As the latter Agreement had been violated by the Chinese cadres in the TAR and also refuted by the Dalai Lama in exile, Hu's points were a welcome substitution and even though limited, were significant of the attention to economy and on 'local conditions'.

However, subsequent Chinese policy did not allay anti-Chinese feeling. Despite the relaxation of government controls, protests occurred in Tibet in September 1987 and disturbances continued since then.

***Events of 1987-1989:*** Demonstrations in Tibet followed the Dalai Lama's speech at the US Congress outlining the "Five Point Peace Proposal"<sup>116</sup> directed at China in 1987. The Chinese accused the Dalai Lama of instigating Tibetans inside Tibet and the exile community saw this as an opportunity to showcase the support of Tibetans inside Tibet to the 'freedom movement'. While it might be true that the demonstrators felt encouraged that the Dalai Lama was allowed to speak in the world's most powerful Congress, and thus felt encouraged to openly show their disagreement with the Chinese rule, it would be far-fetched to say that he or the exile community 'instigated' the demonstration. "Following a demonstration in Lhasa on 10 December 1988, a group of Tibetan students from the Central Institute of Nationalities in Beijing held a

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<sup>115</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 382

<sup>116</sup> View Appendix – X.

demonstration in Tiananmen Square.”<sup>117</sup> And on 5 March 1989, Lhasa was overtaken by “the largest anti-Chinese demonstration in the capital since 1959.”<sup>118</sup> It resulted in the imposition of martial law in Tibet on 8 March 1989 by Hu Jintao, the then provincial Party Secretary and the current President of China. The sequence of events and the symbolism of the dates are noteworthy. The urgency of the crackdown on 8<sup>th</sup> March was probably prompted by the alarm of the approaching date – 10 March. This was the date when open revolt had broken out in Lhasa in 1959 and is celebrated as the ‘National Uprising Day’ in exile ever since.

It is interesting to note that the religious community, composed of ordinary monks and nuns, led almost all the demonstrations that took place between September 1987 and 1990.<sup>119</sup> This could be a result of the relaxation in governmental control from “1979 to 1987” and because of the coming to power of moderate forces in China. In fact from 1979, Deng Xiaoping opened negotiations with the Dalai Lama. The events in Tibet towards the end of the 1980s, followed by the Tiananmen incident in Beijing and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, resulted in more stringent policies at home. The Soviet Union’s disintegration brought home the realization that the Soviet method of dealing with its ‘national question’ was unhelpful and in fact, counter-productive. Just prior to the National day celebrations in Oct 1999, China State Council hosted its first 3 day conference on “the nationalities problem in Beijing, and issued a new policy paper, “National Minorities Policy and its Practice in China” (1999) It reflected the rising Chinese concern over the influence of separatist sentiment spilling over from the newly independent Central Asian nations into China’s Muslim areas “where more than 20 million Turkic Uyghurs, Kyrgyz, Kazaks and other Muslims are a visible and vocal reminder that China is linked to Eurasia”.<sup>120</sup> While the White Paper did little more than outline all the “good” programs China has carried out in minority areas, nevertheless it did “indicate increasing concern and a willingness to recognize unresolved problems, with several strategic think tanks in Beijing and Shanghai

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, p. 429.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, p. 430.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, p. 419.

<sup>120</sup> Dru C. Gladney, “China’s National Insecurity: Old Challenges at the Dawn of the New Millennium”, 2000.



initiating focus groups and research programs addressing ethnic identity and separatism issues.”<sup>121</sup>

## **7. Renewal of Tibet issue in the International Arena**

After the 1959 exodus of the Dalai Lama and many Tibetans to India, the Tibetan issue received a certain amount of international attention reflected in the three UN resolutions – Resolution 1353 (XIV), Resolution 1723 (XIV) and Resolution 2079 (XX). The Tibetan people, who had for centuries been divided on the basis of religious sect based rivalry, or ecclesiastical rivalry over who would assume power in Lhasa, was suddenly catapulted into a modern era as a result of China’s application of sovereign concept of a statehood beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The bringing of Tibet under the direct control of the PRC gave rise to immense sense of Tibetanness and Tibetan unity, as is witnessed in the symbol of the Dalai Lama and his universal appeal. Such Tibetan solidarity has been accorded the status of nationalism. Given the fact that the Tibetans now constituted a minority nationality in China, it was much easier to fight their claim as a nation with the right to self determination. The exodus reconfigured Tibetan contest of China’s sovereignty in a modern framework and contributed to the internationalisation of the issue.

In 1973, the Dalai Lama traveled abroad for the first time for religious purposes but the visit marked the renewal of international interest in Tibet. This was also a period when China was normalizing its relations with America. After the death of Mao in 1976, China tended to relegate the cause for rift between China and Tibet to the deficiency in ‘work style’ and to the necessity of reconciliation with the Dalai Lama. The new leadership, therefore, followed a more flexible policy towards the minorities. The leadership also realized the importance of the minority regions for their rich resources that would help in modernization of China. In 1979, Deng called on the Dalai Lama to negotiate on anything but the issue of independence and the Dalai Lama reviewed his position on the Tibetan demands. He hinted at the possibility of accepting a ‘federation’ rather than demanding independence. The following is a brief

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

look at the chronology of events as a result of the 1979 opening of dialogue between Beijing and Dharamsala.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1979, Deng Xiaoping invited Gyalo Thondup, the elder brother of the Dalai Lama to Peking and told him that apart from the issue of total independence all other issues could be discussed and resolved. We must review the dynamics of extending an invitation to the Dalai Lama's brother rather than a member of the government in-exile. Such a policy is viewed as an attempt by the Chinese to show their disapproval of the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGIE) and to reduce the issue of Tibet to that of the position of the Dalai Lama, a great source of embarrassment to the Chinese government owing to his personal charisma internationally. Nonetheless, the Tibetan side acquiesced to the invitation because the Dalai Lama had realized that there was no "alternative but to negotiate for a greater degree of autonomy from the PRC".<sup>122</sup> The US had abandoned the Tibetan cause as a result of the Sino-US rapprochement in the 1970s, and the PRC had assumed its position as a permanent member of the Security Council of the UN in 1971. For the Chinese the Dalai Lama's return would legitimize its rule in Tibet as well as seek to placate forces within Tibet who still resisted its rule. From August 1979 to October 1985, four fact-finding delegations – 5 August-21 December, 1979; 1980; 1 June-3 October, 1982; 16 June-11 September, 1985<sup>123</sup> – were allowed to visit Tibet (both Inner and Outer) from exile to review the conditions at first hand.

However, what they encountered on their visit was not satisfactory. "90 % of the Tibetans were suffering both mentally and physically... This deplorable situation was not caused by natural calamities, but by human actions."<sup>124</sup> The Dalai Lama conveyed in his letter to Deng in 1981 that the three fact-finding missions found "sad conditions" in Tibet and therefore, genuine efforts were required to solve the problem in accordance with the existing realities. Also, the warm welcome the team received from Tibetans inside Tibet revealed that the latter revered the Dalai Lama despite his absence. The Chinese were alarmed by such a response. Prior to the third Tibetan

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<sup>122</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 315.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, p. 327.

<sup>124</sup> Amar Jasbir Singh, "How the Tibetan Problem Influenced China's Foreign Relations", *China Report*, 28:3, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p. 285.

delegation, Hu Yaobang had led China's own fact-finding delegation to central Tibet, the result of which was the six point policy directive of 1980. After a year, Hu Yaobang put forward a *Five Point Proposal* personally to the Dalai Lama through Gyalo Dhondup:

1. The Dalai Lama should recognize that China has now entered a new period of stability and economic change. If he doubts the reforms, he should observe the changes for the next few years.
2. The Dalai Lama should not raise the history of repression that followed the suppression of 1959 rebellion.
3. The Chinese Government 'sincerely welcomes' the Dalai Lama and his followers to return to the motherland. China hopes that the Dalai Lama would contribute to upholding China's unity and promote solidarity between Han and Tibetan nationalities.
4. The Dalai Lama would have the same status as he had enjoyed before 1959. he may be appointed Vice-Chairman of the NPC. But it would be necessary that he should not live in Tibet or hold any position in Tibet as there are younger Tibetans who have taken office and are doing their jobs well. He may visit Tibet as often as he likes.<sup>125</sup>

Such a policy has been criticized on the grounds that the issue of Tibet is not the issue of the Dalai Lama's return or his personal position, but that of the Tibetan people. The status of the Dalai Lama within the Tibetan scheme of things is of a dual nature. He is considered the temporal as well as the spiritual leader of the Tibetans, a position accorded since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the Gelugpa order became the dominant school of Tibetan Buddhism and the Gelugpa leader Sonam Gyatso was given the title of 'Dalai Lama' by the Mongolian Leader Altai Khan. Since then the Dalai Lamas have come to wield both political and spiritual authority in Tibet.

The proposal that "it would be necessary that he (the Dalai Lama) should not live in Tibet or hold any position in Tibet" aggravated the already strained relationship. At the same time, the proposal implicitly admitted Chinese repression in Tibet following the 1959 rebellion. Basically China was motivated to welcome the Dalai Lama back because "once returned, the Dalai Lama can promote national unity, improve relations

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<sup>125</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), pp. 384-385.

among nationalities and accelerate the progress of the four modernizations”.<sup>126</sup> Subsequently, two delegations – in 24 April-8 June, 1982 and 19 October-10 December, 1984<sup>127</sup> – in order to hold exploratory talks headed for Tibet and Beijing, however, with no substantial breakthrough.

Two major developments in the internationalization of the Tibet issue in the late 1980s had major implications for the following years. These were followed by demonstrations of 1987, 1988 and 1989 and the subsequent hardening of China’s policy inside Tibet. In 1987, the Dalai Lama presented a Five-Point Peace Plan<sup>128</sup> for solving the Tibetan problem at the Human Rights Caucus of the US Congress at Washington, DC and in 1988 he presented his *Strasbourg Proposal* as a framework for a negotiated solution to the Tibetan problem, at the European Parliament.

The Chinese rejected outright the Five Point Peace Proposal of 1987. A peace zone in Inner Asia would require withdrawal of its troops from Tibet. Interestingly, it supported Nepal’s plans for a peace zone.

China responded indirectly to the Strasbourg proposal on 23 September 1988: “We welcome the Dalai Lama to have talks with the central government at any time, and talks may be held in Beijing, Hong Kong or any of our embassies or consulates abroad. If the Dalai Lama finds it inconvenient to conduct talks at these places. He may choose any place he wishes.”<sup>129</sup> The offer made the talks conditional on the Dalai Lama “dropping the idea of an independent Tibet” and rejected the Strasbourg Proposal as the “basis for talks”. Tibetan representatives conveyed the following response to the Chinese message: “We welcome China’s positive response to His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s call for talks on the Tibetan issue. We similarly welcome their leaving the choice of the venue for the talks to us. We would like the talks to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, which is the most convenient and neutral venue. We would also like the first round of talks to be held in January (1989)”.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 317.

<sup>127</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 327.

<sup>128</sup> View Appendix – IX.

<sup>129</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 323.

<sup>130</sup> www.tibet.com (Tibetan exile government website)

However, Chinese policies of repression inside Tibet as a result of the demonstrations of 1987 and 1988, led to the termination of all contacts between Beijing and Dharamsala by the Dalai Lama, who joined the “global waves of condemnation” against China’s Human Rights atrocities post 1989 Tiananmen Incident. Meanwhile, China became more wary and gradually made use of ‘propaganda tactics’ to assuage international skepticism. From 1991-2000, China released six White Papers relating to Human Rights. They are: Human Rights in China, 1991; Tibet its Ownership and Human Rights Situation, 1992; The Progress of Human Rights in China, 1995; Progress in China’s Human Rights Cause in 1996; New Progress in Human Rights in the Tibet Autonomous Region, 1998; Fifty Years of Progress in China’s Human Rights, 2000. Nonetheless, international skepticism of China’s human rights record continue unabated, excepted that their concerns have not materialized into concrete action. This is because of China’s membership in the p5 seat in the UN Security Council. Action however, has managed to take some form constraining China’s ability to reserve the Tibetan question as an ‘internal matter’. One important development was the appointment of Greg Craig as the *Special Coordinator for the Tibetan Issue* at the US Department of State in 1997. A central objective of the position was to promote a dialogue to resolve the issue of Tibet.

The contacts between Dharamsala and Beijing resumed after a hiatus of almost a decade. In September 2002, June, 2003 and 2004, the Dalai Lama’s special envoy, Gyari Lodoe Gyaltzen led a delegation to Tibet. However they were not able to achieve desired results. On this, the Chinese preconditions for negotiations act as the basic impediment to any success of the talks. The oft-repeated pre-conditions are: that the Dalai Lama give up his pursuit for ‘Tibet independence’, stop separatist activities against China, declare in public that he recognises Tibet as an inalienable part of China and so is Taiwan.

The September 2002 visit by the Dalai Lama’s Special Envoy Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari and Envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen to Lhasa, Shigatse, Chengdu, Shanghai and Beijing marked the first formal contact between the Dalai Lama’s representatives and China since 1993. Lodi Gyari later stated that the delegation had two tasks on the trip: “to re-establish direct contact with the leadership in Beijing and to create a conducive

atmosphere enabling direct face-to-face meetings on a regular basis in the future; and to explain His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach towards resolving the issue of Tibet."<sup>131</sup>

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) issued several statements<sup>132</sup> on the visit, indicating that the visits by the envoys were not talks but a "private" "return" to see relatives and view Tibet's development. Such responses might be to demonstrate to international observers that China does not consider the Tibetan question to be as important to require negotiation. In a September 10 briefing, MFA spokesperson Kong Quan stated that the Chinese Government had agreed to the visit of a "group of Tibetan expatriates" who would visit "in a private capacity" in order to tour and see relatives, and would also have a chance to exchange views with people at all levels. "China welcomes their return and views the visit as an opportunity for the group to observe Tibet's development," Quan continued. "It is also helpful for the expatriates to witness the religious freedom of Tibetans. China believes that in recent years, the Dalai Lama has used support provided by international organizations to engage in separatist activities." Kong stressed that the Dalai Lama must cease those activities and accept that Tibet and Taiwan are parts of China.

Shortly after the trip concluded, PRC MFA Spokesman Kong said in a press conference that Beijing approved of Tibetan "compatriots" visiting China in a private capacity. Kong noted that Lodi Gyari and Kelsang Gyaltzen have close ties with the Dalai Lama, and stated that their visit illustrates that the Chinese government maintains channels of communication with the Dalai Lama. Kong also hoped that through their greater understanding of developments in China and Tibet, the Dalai Lama will be able to assess the situation and make "correct choices."

On 22 June, 2003, Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister of India, made a six day visit to China. With the signing of a Joint Declaration between the PRC and Indian Republic (after the Dalai Lama's envoys had already completed their visit), the Indian side reiterated its long-standing view more explicitly, that Tibet Autonomous Region

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<sup>131</sup> Source: <http://usinfo.state.gov>

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

(U-Tsang) is a part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. Though different Tibetan organisations like the youth and women organisations reacted strongly to this declaration, the TGIE chose to maintain a silence and said the developments were beneficial for resolving the Tibet issue.

**2004** – A more recent exposition of China's position on Tibet is enunciated in the White Paper on "Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet" released on 23 May, 2004. Viewed in the context of the recent establishment of talks between the Dalai Lama's envoys and Beijing, the White Paper clearly states that Tibet is autonomous and prosperous and that there is nothing to negotiate.

The Chinese also rejected the US State Department's "Report on Tibet Negotiations" on 23 May, 2004 which said Washington continues "to press both sides to open a dialogue without preconditions" and that "the lack of resolution of these problems leads to greater tensions inside China and will be a stumbling block to fuller political and economic engagement with the United States and other nations."<sup>133</sup>

China has also condemned the third US Presidential Report on the "Tibet issue" published in 2005, by calling it interference in China's 'internal affairs'. The Dalai Lama's envoys made a subsequent visit in 2004 and are expected to visit again this year (2005). In a recent 23 March 2005 *Voice of America* radio broadcast, Lodi Gyari, the envoy of the Dalai Lama said, "We are in touch with the Chinese leadership." As far as the stance on dialogue was concerned he said, the problem was an "extremely complex" and could not be resolved within a short period of time. For that, he reiterated the TGIE's stand which believed "restraint" was in the interest of the Tibetan people. Restraint translates as patience.

## **8. Conclusion**

Tibet, historically, had been a frontier territory on China's periphery. The absence of a concept of 'sovereignty' in pre-modern China, allowed the frontier territories on China's periphery to exercise independence during some periods of relative autonomy

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<sup>133</sup> "Tibet Contacts Between China, Dalai Lama Encouraging, US says, 23 May, 2004", *Tibetan World*, Vol I, Issue 11, p. 22.

during the period of indirect rule. Tibet came under indirect rule of China during the Manchu-Qing dynasty. Just as there were periods when Tibet was subservient to China, likewise, there were also periods when Tibet functioned as an independent entity, i.e. during the 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the pre-modern form of dynastic system of governance in China (Qing dynasty) came to an end. With it various issues confronted the new Republic, one of them being the exercise of the sovereign rights of the new state on periphery regions, which were moving towards declaring autonomy and independence. Tibet, under the leadership of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, for instance, took the opportunity to proclaim independence and thereafter, experienced ‘de facto’ independence until 1951, when Tibet signed the Seventeen Points Agreement with China.

The newly formed PRC was very aware of the need for a territorially distinct state because of the various factors, domestic and international, that confronted it in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The 1951 Agreement for the Liberation of Tibet reflected the concerns of the newly formed state over the need to eliminate “the influences of aggressive imperialist forces” in Tibet, and to unify “territory and sovereignty of the People’s Republic of China” as well as to safeguard national defense. China chose to ‘liberate’ Tibet because it saw an imminent threat from “aggressive imperialist forces” out to defy China’s ‘national defence’. Therefore it was important for China to ‘safeguard’ and unify its ‘territory’ to protect the ‘sovereignty of the People’s Republic of China’.

Thus, the formation of the Chinese nation-state and the imperative to consolidate the territory of the PRC, in order to unite the motherland, gave rise to the policy of the ‘liberation’ of Tibet. Otherwise, “all previous Chinese rulers had been content to exercise territorial claims over Tibet through a symbolic presence in Tibet.”<sup>134</sup> This, in turn aroused the nationalism of the ‘Tibetan nation’ which until then was content with either a *Cho-Yon* relationship under the Mongol Yuan dynasty or an indirect form of rule under the Manchu-Qing. The policies that the PRC followed towards its minority

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<sup>134</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2000), p. 92.



nationalities and particularly towards areas inhabited by Tibetans (eastern Tibet or Inner Tibet), but outside the jurisdiction of the 1951 Agreement, aggravated Sino-Tibetan relationship. As discussed in chapter two, had the PRC followed a more prudent policy of governance by recognizing the 'actual conditions' of not only the autonomous region of Tibet, but also the other Tibetan speaking regions and followed a gradualist policy of reform there, the Khampa (inhabitants of eastern Tibet) rebellion which precipitated the final uprising in 1959 in Lhasa might have been averted.

Basically, the problem seems to have arisen out of the contested notion of what constitutes Tibet. China believed that only central Tibet constitutes Tibet, since, after 1264 (Mongol dynasty) Kham and Amdo were separated from the administration of central Tibet. Later, though Kham was incorporated into the Tibetan polity, Amdo remained under the control of Gushri Khan, thus "creating the precedent for the later separation of Amdo from central Tibet."<sup>135</sup> In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the Qing too demarcated the boundaries between Amdo and Kham and through its *Amban* administered Tibet which for them lay west of the watershed between the Yangtze and Mekong. However, in 1863, the Tibetan government managed to alter the administrative division whereby Lhasa administration's authority was confined to the area west of the Yangtze-Mekong watershed. Also, the Mongol ruler Kubhilai Khan had donated "thirteen myriarchies of western and central Tibet...and the three districts of Tibet: U-Tsang (central and western Tibet), Dotoh (Kham) and Domei (Amdo)" to Phagpa Lama.<sup>136</sup> At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the states of northern Kham were still under the authority of Lhasa while those of southern Kham (Lithang and Ba) were under the loose supervision of the Qing viceroy of Szechuan.

Chinese sovereignty over all of Tibet has been contested by the leadership that fled into exile in 1959. Inside Tibet, the dissent and resentment of Chinese rule was demonstrated in the protests of 1987, 1988 and 1989. The internationalization of the Tibetan issue in the 1970's has had positive as well as negative implications. Whereas,

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<sup>135</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. 108.

<sup>136</sup> Phagpa Lama (he was the nephew of Sakya Pandita) was appointed as the Tibetan ruler of Tibet by the Mongols when Phagpa Lama bestowed tantric initiation on Kubhilai Khan and his imperial family.

it has contributed to the awareness within the international community of the contested nature of the status of Tibet, China has viewed the development as violation of and interference in its sovereignty and internal affairs. Such has led to stiffening of the Chinese stance. As far as international concerns translating into action are concerned, the issue of Tibet has merely been highlighted as a Human Rights concern rather than a political issue. The issue has received international attention also owing to the Tibetan Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama's charisma. Therefore, the skepticism of 'what after the Dalai Lama' has become rife among China watchers and amongst the Tibetan population itself giving rise to a sense of urgency, to resolve the issue during his lifetime. Such urgency has led to moderation of Tibetan demand to that of 'genuine autonomy' or "a self governing democratic political entity founded on law...in association with the People's Republic of China".

Various efforts at reconciliation and negotiation began after 1979 between Dalai Lama and the Beijing government. The Dalai Lama's demand that both sides forget history and instead look to the future seems to be a practical proposal. One of the problems on the road to resolution of the issue of Tibet is the Chinese distrust of the Dalai Lama's motives, which it views as attempt at 'splitting the motherland'. Likewise, the preconditions of recognizing Tibet along with Taiwan as 'inalienable' parts of China impede on the Dalai Lama's ability to negotiate. The Dalai Lama's demand for 'genuine autonomy', also supported by the TGIE, within the framework of the sovereign People's Republic of China could be a positive beginning towards the resolution of the issue of Tibet.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 1. Introduction

The Empire-state of pre-modern China and the Chinese nation-state of modern times differ in their understanding of the concept of sovereignty. Sovereignty, during the imperial period was derived from a Confucian understanding of the world; it was vested in the Emperor who commanded power and authority from the subjects as a result of his claim to divine authority. Externally, being the Son of Heaven, *tian*, and ruling 'all under heaven', the *tianxia*, his empire did not require international recognition. He automatically commanded sovereignty over all that existed under heaven. However, there were limitations to such an understanding of the reach of imperial power. As a result, China, for centuries functioned as an empire with fluid frontiers and boundaries. Because, pre-modern China's understanding of sovereignty was derived from a Confucian understanding of the world, anything that did not fall within its purview was treated as an exception. Therefore, the people on its periphery, who did not adhere to Confucianism, were known as 'barbarians'. Another criterion for being a 'barbarian' was their ecological distinction – whereas, the Han Chinese practiced intensive agriculture, the barbarians were mostly nomads. Taking the case of the crowding of the Chinese in the Yellow River and Yangtze valleys, Owen Lattimore opines that "in spite of direct access by land to territories...the Chinese never established themselves permanently and effectively beyond the Great Wall."<sup>1</sup> Since the area within the Great Wall was fertile and suitable for agrarian economy which the Chinese practiced, they did not feel the need to venture beyond it.

In the modern era, sovereignty is embodied in the agency of the state which commands sovereignty as a result of popular will as well as international recognition, unlike in pre-modern times, where an empire imposed its rule through conquests and territorial expansion. A defined boundary and territory have become an intrinsic part

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<sup>1</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 13.

of the modern concept of sovereignty; domestically, territory assumed importance for within its boundaries the state could legitimately exercise its sovereignty over a given population and resources. Externally, the sovereign state represented its people on the international stage and made important decisions on their behalf with the authority bestowed upon it by the people. Also, participation in international foras, like the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation served to legitimize the newly formed state's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Most of all, one's recognition as a nation-state allowed it to act on an equal footing on the international stage. Chapter 1, Article 2 of the UN Charter affirms the principle of "sovereign equality of all its members".

Though the modern concept of sovereignty had its origins in Europe, it was exported to other parts of the world as a result of the spread of European colonialism. Modern China too adopted vigorously the modern concept of sovereignty. When China became free of colonial control, it was important to establish itself as a modern state. New Asian states like China and India, "In order to metamorphose...into modern states having definite borders...territorial formation became the fundamental condition for their existence and functioning as modern states."<sup>2</sup> Republican China recognised the importance of territoriality owing to the loss of parts of its territory and partial sovereignty to the colonialists after the Opium War and later to the Japanese after World War I. Internally, the anti-foreign sentiment was directed at Manchu rule.

Communist China was faced with similar issues. First, while the end of the civil war in 1948-49 catapulted the Communist Party (CCP) to power, it still had to deal with "counter-revolution"; second, the international environment after the Cold War, division of the world into two power blocs resulted in China's 'lean to one side policy' whereby United States (US) imperialism was to be opposed. Because the counter-revolutionaries colluded with the latter during the Civil War of foremost importance for the newly victorious CCP was the need to consolidate its territorial possessions so that it could oppose effectively both threats. Concurrently, the formation of territory

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<sup>2</sup> Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea, "1962 Revisited", in Alka Acharya and GP Deshpande, ed., *50 Years of India China – Crossing a Bridge of Dreams* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2001), p. 428.

required that China redefine its centuries old fluid boundaries, with implications for the 'barbarians' that inhabited those territories. Imperatives for territorial consolidation which germinated during the Republican period achieved full bloom after the victory of the Communists.

Apart from this, China adopted a modern conception of state sovereignty for strategic reasons. As Dru C Gladney points out, the PRC's "rationality was strategic and nationalistic – the need to build national security around the concept of one national people, with a small percentage of minorities supporting that idea".<sup>3</sup> The minority nationalities of China, though comprising only 8.24 percent of its total population are strategically located along China's borders. The Tibetan frontier had historically played the role of a 'buffer'. George Ginsburg and Michael Matthew, who made the first study of Communist China and Tibet, explained the strategic importance of Tibet : "He who holds Tibet dominates the Himalayan piedmont; he who dominates the Himalayan piedmont threatens the Indian subcontinent and may well have all of South Asia within its reach, and with that all of Asia".<sup>4</sup> This explains the Norbu's question about why, when even Confucian tribute paying states like Vietnam and Korea have "graduated beyond dependency", Tibet, a barbarian frontier still figures as a part of China.

The PRC, at its inception was a poor state and had to rely on self-generation of resources to sustain its government. The erstwhile frontier territories were in this respect, rich in natural resources and minerals. At the same time, China's large population also served as a basis for territorial expansion. During the period of the Qing, there occurred "dramatic demographic growth of the Han Chinese population"<sup>5</sup>. The population of China "within the Great Wall, or China proper, comprising the Eighteen Provinces of the last imperial period under the Manchu dynasty"<sup>6</sup> was 400-

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<sup>3</sup> Dru C. Gladney, "China's National Insecurity: Old Challenges at the Dawn of the New Millennium", 2000

<sup>4</sup> Satish Kumar, "Clash of Interest", *Sahara Time*, November 22, 2003, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> James A Millward, "New Perspectives on the Qing Frontier", in Gail Hershatter, Emily Honig, Jonathan N Lipman, and Randall Stross, ed., *Remapping China: Fissures in Historical Terrain* (California: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 113

<sup>6</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 12.

500 million. On the other hand, the frontier regions that were incorporated into the PRC in 1949 were sparsely populated and thus, an attractive destination for the resettlement of Han Chinese. In modern parlance, such a policy is called “transfer of population” and is illegal under international law owing to the negative effect it might have on the local culture and economy.

Intrinsic to the modern conception of state sovereignty is the notion of national identity. In order to command popular support from its subjects and represent them with legitimate authority in the international system, it becomes imperative for the modern state to command allegiance from the population within its boundaries. It is important that its people identify with the state which translates into the idea that the state must have a national identity. The PRC, on its formation, seriously lacked a national identity. Such a scenario was a result of the lack of a concept of sovereignty in pre-modern China where boundaries were indefinite and fluid. Therefore, when China came to define its territorial limits after 1949, a host of issues cropped up, in relation to – state sovereignty impinging on ethnicity and nationality issues. The modern Chinese state’s active construction of its national identity sensitised group consciousness within its boundaries.

State sovereignty began to impinge on ethnicity and nationality issues when national identity formation became an obsession with the ruling elite of modern China. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century China put forward two notions of the Chinese people. The first, by Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, said that there were “Five Peoples” in China – the Han, the Men, the Meng, the Zang and the Huis. According to them, the Chinese belonged to the ‘yellow race’ and that if there are five categories of people in China, it is not because of “differences in race or blood” but due to “religion and geographical environment”. The second notion of Chinese people was put forward as a result of the formation of the PRC in 1949. This time, instead of five peoples, a total of fifty-six groups were recognized with one Han majority and fifty-five “national minorities”.

The Tibetans, the erstwhile barbarians and inhabitants of China’s Inner Asian frontier and who comprised Sun’s ‘five peoples’, became one of those fifty-five minority

nationalities in the PRC. Tibetan nationalism, little developed under the politically benign conditions of indirect rule, was aroused by China's attempt to transform its previous 'suzerainty' into direct sovereignty.<sup>7</sup> As a result, Chinese national sovereignty came to be challenged by Tibetans who pronounced their own right to sovereign statehood in 1913. Under the PRC, the Tibetan government of Lhasa attempted to co-exist and accommodate Chinese sovereignty post 'liberation' of Tibet in 1951. However, the conduct of reforms in Tibetan inhabited areas in eastern Tibet plateau, which did not fall within the purview of the 1951 Agreement, resulted in widespread anti-China sentiments there, which spilled over into central Tibet where the Khampa fighters had based themselves after facing difficulties from Chinese forces in the eastern part of the plateau. Accommodation failed, and the Tibetan spiritual and temporal leader, along with many followers fled into exile in 1959. The internationalisation of the issue of Tibet in the modern era recast the contest of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. China's sovereign claims face challenges from propagators of the principle of self determination and human rights; ironically, both concepts have their origin in modern times.

The modern proclivity for sovereignty has its own limitations in the form of the 'paradox' that modernity creates for its actors. Territorial sovereignty assumes significance to such an extent that formation of the territorial state is treated with utmost urgency. Territorial boundaries, in the process, have mostly come to be demarcated haphazardly by newly formed states. In such a case, it is likely that they cut across territories inhabited by ethnic, cultural and national groups which may not necessarily identify with the demarcating state. As a result various nations are often clubbed together inside one state. Opposition to such a process has been met with coercion. Wherein modernity challenged imperial, colonial and feudal modes of government, it simultaneously, in the name of defending the territorial and national sovereignty of the state, reinforced and regressed into the very thing that was being opposed, namely, internal colonialism/authoritarianism. Colonialism, because economic imperatives to harness resources of frontier regions is an act of colonialism,

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<sup>7</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. xi.

and authoritarianism, because use of coercion to dictate terms – for instance, ‘liberation of Tibet was achieved by attacking it in 1949/50 – is an authoritarian tactic. As a result, modern aspirations for self determination and human rights are suppressed and dispensed with, to form and sustain the modern state. Therefore, the consequences of the application of a modern conception of sovereignty to modern China can be relegated to the paradox that modernity accrues for it.

In the following sections, I shall thematically summarize the various points and issues that have been raised and addressed in this dissertation regarding issues of sovereignty, ethnicity and nationality in the People’s Republic of China pertaining to the case of Tibet.

## **2. External Stimulation, Chinese adaptation**

External agents, in pre-modern as well as modern China have played a very significant role in stirring Chinese consciousness towards its territory. Otherwise, “in spite of direct access by land to territories...the Chinese never established themselves permanently and effectively beyond the Great Wall.”<sup>8</sup> Some of the agents that I have discussed in this dissertation are – the Mongolians during the thirteenth century and the British during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The British stimulation was manifold – in terms of ideas as well as direct interference and confrontation with Chinese affairs and affairs relating to its frontier.

The Mongols were responsible for bringing the non-Confucian and non-Han peoples of Central Asia to Chinese attention. “Earlier Han rulers up to the thirteenth century had confined themselves to the Confucian culture areas”.<sup>9</sup> As Norbu writes, in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, “the Mongol emperors included their freshly conquered states and peoples of Central Asia into the Chinese Empire...(and brought) the non-Han social groups and non-Confucian states of Central Asia, who had resisted Chinese penetration for centuries, under varying degrees of Chinese control.”<sup>10</sup> It is on this

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<sup>8</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 26.



basis that the PRC 'liberated' Tibet because it too had been conquered by the Mongols in the thirteenth century.

The advent of British colonialists to Chinese shores had manifold effects in arousing Chinese consciousness regarding the importance of territory. Firstly, the concept of sovereignty with regard to the Tibetan frontier was exported to China by the British for the first time in the beginning of the twentieth century when they used the term 'suzerainty' to refer to Sino-Tibetan relations. Sovereignty's agent, the state, the form of which is of western origin and was adopted by the PRC in 1949, too was applied in the Chinese context as a result of contact with British colonialism. In relation to Tibet, which had for long remained a frontier territory of China, inhabited by 'barbarians', the "British negotiators unwittingly helped late Imperial China and the early Republican government to redefine and reformulate their conception of China's status in Tibet".<sup>11</sup> The 1914 Simla Agreement of 1914 unnecessarily complicated matters for the Tibetans because the invitation to China by Britain to the Simla Convention needlessly prompted China to rethink its strategy towards Tibet which was previously settled, at least unitarily, by the Tibetans themselves who had declared independence from China as a result of the fall of the Manchu-Qing empire. The various agreements that Britain entered into with Russia and China relating to Tibet in early twentieth century managed to reinforce the Chinese claim towards Tibet.

### **3. Emulation and the limits of adaptability**

One of the arguments on which this dissertation hinges is the postulate that there are limitations to the emulation of a concept that originates in a different place, during a specific period and in a given condition. In regard to sovereignty, Herz says, "it is when we start applying it to the non-western world, and especially to the new states of Asia and Africa, that we run into difficulties."<sup>12</sup> Rightly so, sovereignty and its modern connotations of territoriality have been applied in modern China with various ramifications for its ability to forge national solidity and consciousness. Tibetan and

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>12</sup> John H Herz, "The Territorial State Revisited: reflections on the Future of the Nation-State", in James N Roseneau, ed., *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory* (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 91.

Uyghur nationalities persist in their demand for self determination even after more than five decades of their existence as minorities within the PRC. The phenomenon of the adoption of a European conception of sovereignty by ex-colonial states is ironical because they themselves had struggled to free themselves from the yoke of colonialism for centuries. And when they finally did, they ended up suppressing the very freedom for which they had aspired. Freedom was denied to the frontier people, now ethnic and national groups within China, to determine their course of history. China's consolidation of its territorial sovereignty, couched in Marxist semantics of 'liberation' from imperialism has been alleged to be an act of colonialism.

#### 4. Barbarians Then, Chinese Now

An analysis of what constitutes Chineseness proves helpful in reviewing the place of ethnic and national minorities in contemporary China. These were previously termed the frontier people – the barbarians. In ancient as well as modern China, the *Han* who constitutes the majority nationality in contemporary China, is synonymous with being a Chinese, *Zhongguoren*. Given such an understanding, the barbarians nowhere figure as being Chinese. Two instances reveal the postulation that I have put forward above.

The words *hua*, *huaren*, *Zhongguoren*, *Zhonghua minzu*, *tangren*, mean Chinese or Chinese people or people of the central country. *Hua*, *Xia*, or *Han* could be used interchangeably to mean China the nation-state, Chinese race (or tribe), and China the geographic location".<sup>13</sup> *Hanren* means Chinese person – implying that Han is synonymous with being Chinese. In the words of Frank Dikotter, 'Han' and 'Chinese' have become virtually identical not only within official rhetoric and scholarly discourse in the PRC, but also in the eyes of many foreign scholars.

The most salient feature of being Chinese is to trace one's biological lineage to the Yellow Emperor. He was the first great warrior monarch and called himself so

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<sup>13</sup> David Yen-ho Wu, "The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities", in Tu Wei Ming, ed., *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1994), p. 150.

“perhaps in allusion to the colour of the soil in the rich loess country of Shansi”.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the idea of a cultural core area first located in the Wei river valley, a tributary of the Yellow river and later encompassing parts of the Yangtze River, has persisted in the Chinese consciousness. To the Chinese, the traditional view of being at the center of existence is based on a deep-rooted sense of belonging to a unified civilization, surrounded by culturally inferior barbarians on the peripheries. The barbarians were basically nomads and did not practice intensive agriculture as they inhabited the steppes rather than the fertile river valleys.

The pre-established conception of the Han as the people of China (*Zhongguo*) and the idea of Chinese people (*Zhongguoren*) being synonymous with the Han person (*Hanren*), has complicated nationality relations in contemporary China. On the one hand, it projects an exclusivist Han image and on the other, it provides a degree of legitimation for the secessionist demands of the non-Han people who seek justification on the basis of not being historically Chinese. Therefore, the notion of being Chinese has had to be reconstructed to include the culturally inferior barbarians. This has been done by identifying them as the various nationalities of China which has resulted in a trend, also acknowledged by all Chinese constitutions as well as important speeches and writings of Chinese leaders – called “Han chauvinism”. Reconstruction of national identity, in turn has had its own ramifications for ethnic and sub-national group identities. The fact that the minorities of China, the erstwhile barbarians never considered themselves as people of China acts as a major impediment in the PRC’s quest for a nation based on harmonious relations between all the people of China. Though the Manchurians as well as the Mongolians of Inner Mongolia have more or less been assimilated into Han ways, Uyghurs and Tibetans still maintain their own identity.

## **5. Politics of Representation**

The division of the Chinese population into Han majority and non-Han minorities is more complex than it seems on the surface. The politics of representation in the PRC

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<sup>14</sup> Lionel Giles, “China: Its Past Dynasties and Present Republic”, in J. Hammerton, ed. *Encyclopedia of Human Races all over the World*, Vol. 2, 1985, p. 1423.

reveal much about the “state’s project of constructing in often binary minority/majority terms an ‘imagined’ national identity”.<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sun Yat-sen attempted to appropriate the national identity of China in terms of the racial homogeneity of the “five peoples” of China because previously “the meanings of being Chinese in the sense of ethnicity, culture, citizenship, or residence were almost never addressed”.<sup>16</sup>

The new national identity after 1949 was guided by the Marxist approach to the ‘national question’. In the 1950’s investigative teams were dispatched by Beijing to categorize the various minority populations along the line of the Soviet model of the definition of a “nation”. China randomly recognized these minorities based on the criterion of common language, a common geographic living area, a common economic life, and a common psyche<sup>17</sup> or as Unger suggests, common culture instead of a common psyche.<sup>18</sup> With the permission to register and claim minority status, there resulted in a claim of “400 new ethnic groups in 1956”<sup>19</sup> because minority status supposedly had privileges attached to it in the context of educational opportunities and childbearing opportunities. Apart from the eagerness to be identified as minorities, the Soviet model of recognition resulted in a haphazard demarcation of groups. The Zhuangs were recognized on the basis of common language and were quite surprised when they were classified as separate from the Hans as their language was similar to that of the Cantonese who were now considered as Hans. Even the Naxis, till today seek to establish a separate identity from the Musuos with whom they have been grouped under one minority.

The disparate and incongruous recognition of many minorities and a single majority was motivated by three basic factors: first, to deemphasize the “equal” status which

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<sup>15</sup> Dru C. Gladney, “Alterity Motives: Representation and National Identification” <http://cio.ceu.hu>.

<sup>16</sup> David Yen-ho Wu, “The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities”, in Tu Wei Ming, ed., *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 150.

<sup>17</sup> Huang I-shu, “National Minorities of China”, *China Report* 32:1 Sage Publications, New Delhi, (1996), p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Unger, “Report from the Field, Not Quite Han: The Ethnic Minorities of China’s Southwest”, *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (1997), p. 74.

<sup>19</sup> Huang I-shu, “National Minorities of China”, *China Report* 32:1 Sage Publications, New Delhi, (1996), p. 16.

was accorded to the frontier people of China by Sun Yat-sen in his theory of the “Five Peoples” of China where the other four people were treated as equal to the Han. Second, to define the advanced majority, acting as the vanguard of the people as leading the fifty-five minority nationalities to socialist revolution and economic prosperity. Thus, the Han, assuming majority position, occupied positions of power, whereby, it could exercise sovereignty over the resources of the nation. Finally, it was an attempt to placate international attention that was drawn to the issue of nationalities’ demand for self determination. The recognition of many nationalities complemented Chinese argument about how the minorities were incapable of self-government and thus require the Han majority to lead them to prosperity and protect them from exploitation by the imperialists and their ruling classes. It evidently made it difficult for international observers to comprehend the dynamics of Tibetan or Uyghur demand as the rest of the fifty or so nationalities seemed to make no identical demands. Thus, the magnitude of the larger groups’ demands was diminished in comparison.

However, the Marxist approach to the national question came under scrutiny as a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The resulting effect was the shift in the language used to identify the minorities in China. Previously, the term used to identify them was ‘national minorities’. However, recently, the term “ethnic” has been used more consciously.<sup>20</sup> The disintegration of the Soviet Union might have contributed to such a realisation. First, it dawned upon the Chinese that if a Communist state of the size of the Soviet Union could disintegrate into a number of small states then it was time that PRC reoriented its nationality policy. Second, the disintegration of the Soviet Union created unprecedented insecurity for China which has porous borders with three Central Asian states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Islamic resurgence in the CIS states concerns China owing to the Uyghurs’ cross-border affiliations. The 5 Central Asian states bordering China had around 400,000 Uyghurs<sup>21</sup> and the Uyghurs

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<sup>20</sup> This is based on comparison of the various Chinese constitutions to the White Paper “National Minorities Policy and its Practice in China, 1999”.

<sup>21</sup> Algis Prazauskas, “Ethno-political Issues and the Emergence of Nation-States in Central Asia” in Zhang, Yongjin and Rouben Azizian, ed., *Ethnic Challenges beyond Borders: Chinese and Russian Perspectives of the Central Asian Conundrum* (Great Britain: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 44.

constitute 40 per cent of the population of Xinjiang. The Uyghur demand for self determination has taken an irredentist form owing to “Pan-Turkish” and “Pan-Islamic” influence. Likewise, Tibetan contestation of Chinese sovereignty has taken the form of a demand for self determination. Therefore, developments in its neighbourhood and ethno-nationalistic upsurge at home might have led to the realization that since ‘nations’ are more inclined to and legitimate in their demand for ‘self determination’, it would be advisable to abandon the use of the term ‘nation’ to identify the minorities. The latest White Paper on Tibet, “Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet, 2004” too, desists from using the term ‘nation’ for the Tibetans and instead says, “ethnic groups are customarily called ethnic minorities”.

## **6. Assimilation and Minority Politics**

A ‘minority group’ is a term that ranks ethnic/national groups inside a state. As discussed in the preceding sections, recognition of fifty-five minorities and one Han majority has political objectives. One of the means to achieve this was to assimilate the minority cultures into Han culture. Assimilation would, naturally, transform even the non-Han minorities into Han ways and, thus, into becoming Chinese and identifying with the Chinese state. This would rid, once and for all, any demands for secession or autonomy by groups who claim not to be of Chinese origin. The policy of assimilation has been successful to some extent. For instance, most of the minorities in the Southwest region of China like the Bai, Miao, Yi, Zhuang, Yao, Buyi have undergone some form of acculturation or assimilation and a corresponding pride in identifying with Han ways. The Manchus too have been assimilated into mainstream culture. The Hui muslims are basically Han Chinese and differ only because of their religion.

However, the policy of assimilation has its limits. The minorities in China’s northwest region, the Uyghurs and Tibetans, resist assimilation and assert their own identity to the extent of contesting national sovereignty. Assimilation, both in terms of theorizing and in terms of public policy views ethnic minority groups “as inferior and expected to

shed the bulk of their cultural traditions to become much like the majority”.<sup>22</sup> In the case of the Uyghurs and Tibetans, whose national identity is based on their religion, there has been an attempt to eliminate such differences by the Communist state. Since there is a close connection between the national question and the religious question in China, the CCP’s policy has been to “efface both characteristics, replacing them with a proletarian outlook”.<sup>23</sup>

Such a policy was counter-productive in the case of the above two minorities of China. Various factors can be attributed to such resistance. For one, “these peoples’ sense of self-identity has been bolstered by the belief in a major world religion- Islam or Buddhism”.<sup>24</sup> Apart from ideological factors, discrimination – economic, political, social and psychological – have contributed to the assertion of identity and rights. Besides, “minority peoples not only feel themselves bound together by race, nationality, culture, common history, but also share a common fate, and common experiences of discrimination and social disadvantage – all of which serve to strengthen in-group cohesiveness and solidarity and to enhance self-consciousness of their minority group membership.”<sup>25</sup> The more the discrimination, the more isolated and alienated they become. The Tibetan people tried to accommodate Chinese sovereignty after being ‘liberated’. However, shortcomings in the Marxist approach to the national question, whereby local conditions were ignored and culture and religion attacked, led to increased solidarity among the people. Even the Tashilunpho monastery headed by the Panchen Lama who had not participated in the 1959 uprising in Lhasa, felt alienated as a result of the PRC’s policies as is evident in the open dissension of the Panchen Lama in the 1970s and his subsequent house arrest.

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<sup>22</sup> Nimmi Hutnik, *Ethnic Minority Identity: A Social Psychological Perspective*, 1991 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 154.

<sup>23</sup> George Moseley, ed., *The Party and the National Question in China* (London: MIT Press, 1966), p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Unger, “Report from the Field, Not Quite Han: The Ethnic Minorities of China’s Southwest”, *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (1997), p. 69.

<sup>25</sup> Cited in Nimmi Hutnik, *Ethnic Minority Identity: A Social Psychological Perspective*, 1991 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 21.

A minority group often shares “special traits”<sup>26</sup> which are responsible for the “special disabilities”<sup>27</sup> that they have to face, the foremost being in terms of “power and resources”.<sup>28</sup> Apart from the privileges that the status of being a minority accrues, it also obtains certain inbuilt prejudices and disabilities such as majority chauvinism and the treatment of the minority as second class citizens. A minority is generally unable to move up the ladder of the existing social hierarchy as positions of power are entrenched in the hands of a few majority Han people. For those people who do not speak and write the majority language, i.e. *hanyu* or Han language, which is also the Chinese language, individual progress is impeded. Hence, many are forced to give into assimilationist tendencies of learning the Han language from childhood which results in the underdevelopment and neglect of one’s own language. Therefore, assimilation is perpetuated right at the school level in the education system.

Assimilation is definitely not a ‘happy’ option for the minority, nor is it for the government, given the fact that the label of ‘minority’ tends to increase in-group cohesiveness and solidarity, and to some degree, in visualizing the dominant group as the ‘other’. Thus, mutual coexistence is discouraged, evident in the increase of ethnic nationalism. Heightened awareness of one’s ethnic identity also often graduates into political awareness of one’s national identity. The problem begins when the national identity that a minority group visualizes is not in congruence with the national identity projected by the state, thus proving a liability to state sovereignty.

## **7. Contesting Sovereignty**

China’s historical claim to ‘sovereignty’ over Tibet hinges on four basic arguments: The marriage of King Srong-*btsan* Sgampo to Chinese Princess Wencheng; the Uncle-Nephew relationship between China and Tibet; the establishment of a Priest-Patron (*Cho-Yon*) relationship between Tibet and the Mongol dynasty; and Qing control of Tibet and its power to recognize reincarnation of lamas through ‘the golden urn system’.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*



The first claim has been contested on the grounds that the 7<sup>th</sup> century Tibetan king sought marriage alliance not only from Tang China but also from neighbouring areas, such as Nepal. Norbu writes, “it was largely Tibetan fighting power and determination that compelled the Tang ruler to give Princess Wencheng, to Srong-*btsan* Sgampo.”<sup>29</sup> Moreover, “usually, a Tang princess was given in marriage to a barbarian chieftan whose fighting power the Chinese could not match...to resolve problems of war and inequality in inter-state relations...by establishing kin-ship ties with a barbarian power, the latter’s fighting power against China was subdued”.<sup>30</sup> Christopher I Beckwith writes, in reference to the reign of King Sron-*btsan* sgambo’s “marriage alliances, such as that with still-powerful Zanzun, and murders of convenience...complemented the military campaigns”.<sup>31</sup>

The second claim follows from the first claim. After the marriage of Princess Wencheng to Srong-*btsan* Sgampo, the relations between Tibet and China came to be called as one between “Uncle” and “Nephew”. Such a categorization transformed inter-state relations into one of kinship relations and achieved the Chinese purpose of establishing peace with the ‘menacing’<sup>32</sup> Tibetan Empire. China paid attention to its maritime security only during the period of the Ming, that too for a very short period. All the while, the major threat was perceived to come from its land frontiers – from the barbarians. Therefore, Giri Deshinger adds that “Often, Chinese princesses were married off to these barbarian chieftains to make peace with them and for centuries peace was also maintained through the tribute system.”<sup>33</sup>

Waldron too comments on the nature of kinship relations as being “fictive”, “through which non-Chinese rulers accepted a position of ritual subordination to the Chinese

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<sup>29</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 37.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Christopher I Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 1987, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. 72.

<sup>33</sup> Giri Deshingkar, “Strategic Doctrines”, in Alka Acharya and GP Deshpande, ed., *50 Years of India China – Crossing a Bridge of Dreams* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2001), p. 333.

Emperor.”<sup>34</sup> The relationship was “characterized by ceremonialism rather than political domination.”<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the stress on the hierarchical nature of the relationship, as signified by the usage of terms where China is the ‘Uncle’ and Tibet, the ‘Nephew’ is not to be seen as a mark of Chinese superiority in terms of power but rather as that of “seniority order, determined not by power but by age.”<sup>36</sup>

As far as the third claim is concerned, though Tibet was integrated into the administration of the Mongol empire, it did not mean integration into the administration of China. The Mongol dynasty is also known as the Yuan dynasty. Smith writes, “The Yuan administrative structure in Tibet and the *de facto* military occupation of Tibet by Mongol troops made that country in reality, an integral part of the Mongol Empire. It was, however, not treated as a Chinese province but as a separate subjugated country.”<sup>37</sup> We must also note the timing of the Mongol conquest of China and Tibet. Tibet came under actual Mongol control in 1247, whereas, China came under Mongolian control only in 1270. It was then that the Mongol dynasty became the Yuan dynasty, because, the Mongol warriors “stabilized their empire (in China) due in part to the prior existence of bureaucratic and institutionalized infrastructures as well as rich cultural and economic resources”.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, since the Tibetan-Mongolian *Cho-Yon* relationship hinged on personal contact between Kubhilai and Phagspa, who died in 1294 and 1280 respectively, the relationship “lasted only so long”<sup>39</sup> as both lived.

Regarding the last claim, Dawa Norbu’s observation is valuable. He says that Manchu-Tibet relations was more of a continuation of Mongol-Tibet relations – like that between Kubhilai and Phagspa, Altan Khan and the III Dalai Lama, Gushri Khan and the V Dalai Lama. Each of these relations was characterized by mutual give and

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<sup>34</sup> Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China – From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 84.

<sup>35</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> Cited in Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. 92

<sup>38</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 47.

<sup>39</sup> Warren W Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (United States of America: Westview Press, 1996), p. 96.

take whereby the Tibetans sought military support from its patron and the latter received spiritual guidance from the former. In the case of the Manchu-Tibetan relationship too, the Gelugpa sect sought patronage from the Manchus similar to that which Sakya Tibet received from Kubilai Khan. Patronage was necessary to remain in power given competing religious sects craving for power. However, unlike in the past, Tibet, during the Manchu-Qing period, became increasingly subservient to China as a result of which the Qing placed its *ambans* in Lhasa in 1721 to administer the region west of Yangtze-Mekong.

Subservience meant that the Chinese could have its say in Tibetan affairs such as in the recognition of Tibetan lamas. China claims sovereignty over Tibet also on the basis of its right to recognize reincarnations of highest lamas of Tibet, including the spiritual and temporal head of Tibet, the Dalai Lama, through the “golden urn system” of recognition of reincarnations. The golden urn system was a process instituted by the Qing where names of prospective candidates would be placed in an urn from which lots would be drawn to pick the real incarnation. Such a policy was formulated to have an ultimate say in the political succession in Tibet. During this period trade and travel was restricted, Tibetan currency was taken under Qing supervision which also controlled Tibetan frontier defense and foreign affairs under the reforms of 1793. However, most of the reforms “were never fully implemented or fell into disuse. The most important reform in terms of implications for Tibet’s sovereignty, the right to approve reincarnations, became essentially symbolic or was ignored altogether.”<sup>40</sup> It is symbolic that the thirteenth Dalai Lama was not chosen through the Qing instituted ‘golden urn’ system, thus, signifying the declining influence of the Qing in Tibetan affairs. After the XIII Dalai Lama declared independence in 1913, the reincarnation of the XIV Dalai Lama was also selected through the traditional Tibetan system.

Qing-Tibet relations, thus, underwent many phases whereby initially Tibet was a useful tool to keep an eye on Inner Asian politics. Subsequently, with the decline of Mongol power and consolidation of Qing power in China, Tibet became subservient to Qing rule. However, the nineteenth century witnessed the decline of Manchu power

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p. 137

owing to foreign aggression and its own domestic rebellions. By the late nineteenth century, Tibetans had created their own governmental institutions and realized the limitation of Manchu-Qing patronage when it failed to aid the Tibetans during the Gurkha incursions. To counter constant British incursions into its territory, it looked north to Russia for support. Thus, the nature of Tibet-Qing relations, according to Smith, was somewhat between an “empire and a semi-autonomous peripheral state.”<sup>41</sup>

## **8. Postscript**

Various factors limit the ability of the ex-colonial states, in this case, the PRC, to function as a modern state. Some of the factors that would assist in the realization of a modern Chinese state are: its capacity to penetrate and equally distribute economic resources within its borders; the ability to recognise and celebrate difference in language, culture, tradition, religion and ideology of the various peoples of China; the ability to take local conditions into consideration while formulating economic policies that affect the people of that region; the abandonment of Han chauvinism as a prerequisite to the obliteration of local national chauvinism; the practice of regional national/ethnic autonomy in its true sense. In this respect, Machiavelli was correct to recognise that institutions are by nature fragile and thus their maintenance required great “skill”. And rightly, it is on skill that the Chinese state is now dependent; on how it conducts itself in relation to the national question.

Concurrently, the penchant for sovereignty and its appendage – supreme authority within a territory – seems to be heading the world towards the assertion of sovereignty. From those who are not already sovereign, the principle of self determination acts as a catalyst in legitimating their demand for a sovereign state. Even the forces that oppose the sovereignty of established states seem to be making their own claim for absolute sovereignty. The Tibetans have sealed down their demand for sovereignty and reformulated their aspirations since the 1980s to call not for secession, but only “genuine autonomy” within the PRC. This includes not only the present Tibetan Autonomous Region but the ethnic Tibetan areas of China or the

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 137.

entire Tibetan plateau. However, the PRC is discomfited by a demand that seeks to redefine its boundaries. It is skeptical about the demands of the Dalai Lama, whom they view as “splittist” and as a leader of the “Dalai clique”. Such references reflect complete distrust of his motives. Talks between the two sides resumed in 1980s and again in 2001, but apparently, China was reluctant to regard the visit of the Tibetan delegation to China as that of ‘talks’. Rather, soon after their departure, their visit was portrayed as that of compatriots returning home to assess the situation. Thus, the more mellow Tibetan contestation of Chinese sovereignty has not witnessed an equal response, to the dismay of the Tibetans.

At the same time, the contestation of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet has continued from other actors who are an intrinsic part of the Tibetan diaspora – the various non-governmental organisations in exile, like the Tibetan Youth Congress (Delhi), the Tibetan Women’s Organisation (Delhi), Students for a Free Tibet (New York), and numerous Tibet Support Groups (TSGs) all over the world. Though most of these organisations do not toe the official Tibetan Government in Exile’s (TGIE) line, they do not oppose its “Middle path policy” either. They claim the right to have an alternative voice within the Tibetan community and concurrently show great reverence for the person of the Dalai Lama and his policy initiatives. Within Tibet, reverence for the Dalai Lama was strong even in the late 1980s, when his speech in the American Congress was enough to indirectly inspire the people to revolt against Chinese rule. Interestingly, the opposition inside China has not assumed the character which it has in exile within the Tibetan diaspora. Their position could be in tandem with whatever the Dalai Lama deems fit. Therefore, the success of the resolution of the Tibetan question in China is to a large extent dependent on the Dalai Lama who commands spiritual as well as temporal authority over the Tibetan people of the entire plateau. Therefore, despite the prevalence of demand for independence and secession from China amongst sections of the community, resolution of the issue during the lifetime of the leader would lend legitimacy and popularity to the concomitant agreement, of whatever nature.

Meanwhile, the PRC's minority policy could adopt "cultural pluralism" as a means of pacifying dissent. Rather than the policy of the Han as the vanguard, leading all minorities to socialist revolution and economic prosperity, ethnic pluralism treats all as 'equals'. The chauvinistic attitude of the Hans in minority areas can be overcome only if the government takes genuine measures to promote healthy interactions and genuine equality. Dawa Norbu talks about better or improved 'centre-periphery relation' as a good solution in resolving the centuries old animosity. Mutual co-existence and harmony among all nationalities can be promoted by respecting local specificities of minority areas and people. This would direct the course of minority policy towards a shift from annihilation of difference to that of celebration of difference and help in minimising minority/majority hostility. Ethnic groups and nations inside a nation-state need to be able to feel a sense of belonging to and be able to identify with the state in order for the state to command its loyalty. Otherwise, "as long as people feel pulled between two worlds and without roots in any society, they cannot have the firm sense of identity necessary for building a stable, modern nation-state,"<sup>42</sup> and hence, Chinese sovereignty will always face contestation from sub-national groups.

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<sup>42</sup> Cited in Lynn White and Li Cheng, "China Coast identities: Regional, National and Global" in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (ed.), *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 158.

## APPENDIX I

### TREATY BETWEEN CHINA AND TIBET DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE EIGHT CENTURY A.D.

#### **(Recorded on the western face of the stone pillar near the Temple in Lhasa)**

The Sovereign of Tibet, the Divine King of Miracles, and the great King of China, Hwang Te, the Nephew and the Maternal Uncle, have agreed to unite their kingdoms. Having made this great Agreement, that it may be held faithfully and never be changed, all gods and men were invoked *to bear to bear witness to the oath*. That it may remain *from generation to generation, the sacred terms of the relationship have been duly inscribed* on the pillar.

*The king of miracles Ti-de-tsen and the Chinese King Bun Pu He-u Tig Hwang Te, Nephew and Uncle, united their kingdoms, considering the mutual welfare of Tibet and China, and thus conferred great benefits upon the people of the inside and outside, making many and all happy and prosperous for a long time. They agreed to hold as sacred the respect of the old relationship and the happiness of the neighbours. Tibet and China shall guard the land and frontier, of which they have hitherto held possession. All to the east of the frontier is the country of Great China. All to the west is certainly the country of Great Tibet.*

Henceforth there shall be no fighting as between enemies, and neither side will carry war into the other's country. Should there be any suspected person, he can be arrested, questioned, and sent back. Thus the great Agreement has been made for uniting the kingdoms, and the Nephew and Uncle have become happy. In gratitude for this happiness it is necessary that travelers with good messages should go backwards and forwards. The messengers from both sides will also travel by the old road as before. According to the former custom ponies shall be exchanged at Chang-kun-yok, on the frontier between Tibet and China. At Che-shung-shek Chinese territory is met; below this China will show respect. At Tsen-shu-hwan Tibetan territory is met; above this Tibet will show respect

The Nephew and Uncle, having become intimate, will respect each other according to custom. No smoke or dust shall appear between the two countries. There shall be no sudden anger and the word 'enemy' shall not even be mentioned. Not even those guarding the frontier shall feel apprehension or take fright. Land is land, and bed is bed; thus happiness will reign. Happiness will be established; prosperity will be gained for ten thousand generations. The sound of praise shall cover all the places reached by the Sun and Moon.

This Agreement that the Tibetan shall be happy in Tibet and the Chinese happy in China and the great kingdoms united, shall never be changed. The Three Precious Ones, the Exalted Ones, the Sun and Moon, the Planets and Stars have been invoked to bear witness. Solemn words were also uttered. Animals were sacrificed and oaths taken, and the Agreement was made.

Is this Agreement held to be binding? If this Agreement be violated, whether Tibet or China violates it first, that one has committed the sin. Whatever revenge is

taken in retaliation shall not be considered a breach of Agreement. In this way the Kings and Ministers of Tibet and China took oath and wrote this inscription of the Agreement in detail. The two great Kings affixed their seals. The Ministers, considered as holding the Agreement, wrote with their hands. This *inscribed* Agreement shall be observed by both sides.

**Source:** Charles Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1994), pp. 271-272.



## APPENDIX II

### CONVENTION BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND TIBET, 1904

**(Signed at Lhasa on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1904. Ratified at Simla on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1904)**

Whereas doubts and difficulties have arisen as to the meaning and validity of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, and the Trade Regulations of 1893, and as to the liabilities of the Tibetan Government under these agreements; and whereas recent occurrences have tended towards a disturbance of the relations of friendship and good understanding which have existed between the Government of Tibet; and whereas it is desirable to restore peace and amicable relations, and to resolve and determine the doubts and difficulties as aforesaid, the said Governments have resolved to conclude a Convention with these objects, and the following articles have been agreed upon by Colonel F. E. Younghusband, C.I.E., in virtue of full powers vested in him by his Britannic Majesty's Government and on behalf of that said Government, and Lo-Sang Gyal-Tsen, the Ga-den Ti-Rimpoche, and the representatives of the Council, of the three monasteries Se-ra, Dre-pung and Ga-den, and of the ecclesiastical and lay officials of the National Assembly on behalf of the Government of Tibet :-

I. The Government of Tibet engages to respect the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and to recognise the frontier between Sikkim and Tibet, as defined in Article I of the said Convention, and to erect boundary pillars accordingly.

II. The Tibetan Government undertakes to open forthwith trade marts to which all British and Tibetan subjects shall have free right of access at Gyantse and Gartok, as well as at Yatung.

The Regulations applicable to the trade mart at Yatung, under the Anglo-Chinese Agreement of 1893, shall, subject to such amendments as may hereafter be agreed upon by common consent between the British and Tibetan Governments, apply to the marts above mentioned.

In addition to establishing trade marts at the places mentioned, the Tibetan Government undertakes to place no restrictions on the trade by existing routes, and to consider the question of establishing fresh trade marts under similar conditions if development of trade requires it.

III. The question for the amendment of the Regulations of 1893 is reserved for separate consideration, and the Tibetan government undertakes to appoint fully authorized delegates to negotiate with representatives of the British government as to the details of the amendments required.

IV. The Tibetan Government undertakes to levy no dues of any kind other than those provided for in the tariff to be mutually agreed upon.

V. The Tibetan Government undertakes to keep the roads to Gyantse and Gartok from the frontier clear of all obstruction and in a state of repair suited to the needs of the trade, and to establish at Yatung, Gyantse, and Gartok, and at each of the other trade marts that may hereafter be established, a Tibetan Agent who shall receive from the British Agent appointed to watch over British trade at the marts in question

any letter which the latter may desire to send to the Tibetan or to the Chinese authorities. The Tibetan Agent shall also be responsible for the due delivery of such communications and for the transmission of replies.

VI. As an indemnity to the British Government for the expense incurred in the dispatch of armed troops to Lhasa, to exact reparation for breaches of treaty obligations, and for the insults offered to and attacks upon the British Commissioner and his following and escort, the Tibetan Government engages to pay a sum of pounds five hundred thousand – equivalent to rupees seventy-five lakhs – to the British Government.

The indemnity shall be payable at such place as the British Government may from time to time, after due notice, indicate whether in Tibet or in the British districts of Darjeeling or Jalpaiguri, in seventy-five annual instalments of rupees one lakh each on the 1<sup>st</sup> January in each year, beginning from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1906.

VII. As security for the payment of the above-mentioned indemnity, and for the fulfillment of the provisions relative to trade marts specified in Articles II, III, IV, and V, the British Government shall continue to occupy the Chumbi Valley until the indemnity has been paid and until the trade marts have been effectively opened for three years, whichever date may be the later.

VIII. The Tibetan Government agrees to raze all forts and fortifications and remove all armaments which might impede the course of free communication between the British frontier and the towns of Gyantse and Lhasa.

IX. The Government of Tibet engages that, without the previous consent of the British Government,-

- (a) no portion of Tibetan territory shall, be ceded, sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise given for occupation, to any Foreign Power;
- (b) no such Power shall be permitted to intervene in Tibetan affairs;
- (c) no Representatives or Agents of any Foreign Power shall be admitted to Tibet;
- (d) no concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining or other rights, shall be granted to any Foreign Power, or to the subject of any Foreign Power. In the event of consent to such concessions being granted, similar or equivalent concessions shall be granted to the British Government;
- (e) no Tibetan revenues, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to any Foreign Power, or to the subject of any Foreign Power.

X. In witness whereof the negotiators have signed the same, and affixed hereunto the seals of their arms.

Done in quintuplicate at Lhasa, this 7<sup>th</sup> day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and four, corresponding with the Tibetan date, the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month of the Wood Dragon year.

DECLARATION SIGNED BY THE VICEROY OF INDIA ON THE 11<sup>TH</sup>  
NOVEMBER 1904, AND APPENDED TO THE RATIFIED  
CONVENTION OF 7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 1904

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, having ratified the Convention which was concluded at Lhasa on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1904 by Colonel Younghusband, C.I.E., British Commissioner for Tibet Frontier Matters, on behalf of His Britannic Majesty's Government; and by Losang Gyal-Tsen, the Ga-den Ti-Rimpoche, and the representatives of the Council, of the three monastries Sera, Drepung, and the Ga-den, and of the ecclesiastical and lay officials of the National Assembly, on behalf of the Government of Tibet, is pleased to direct as an act of grace that the sum of money which the Tibetan Government have bound themselves under the terms of Article VI of the said Convention to pay to His Majesty's Government as an indemnity for the expenses incurred by the latter in connection with the dispatch of armed forces to Lhasa, be reduced from Rs. 75,00,000 to Rs 25,00,000; and to declare that the British occupation of the Chumbi valley shall cease after the due payment of the three annual instalments of the said indemnity as fixed by the said Article, provided, however, that the trade marts as stipulated in Article II of the Convention shall have been effectively opened for three years as provided in Article VI of the Convention: and that, in the meantime, the Tibetans shall have faithfully complied with the terms of the said Convention in all other respects.

**Source:** Charles Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1994), pp. 284-297

### APPENDIX III

#### ANGLO- CHINESE CONVENTION OF 1906

**(Convention between Great Britain and China respecting Tibet. Signed at Peking, April 27 1906. Ratification exchanged at London July 23, 1906)**

WHEREAS His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty the Emperor of China are sincerely desirous to maintain and perpetuate the relations of friendship and good understanding which now exists between their perspective Empires;

And whereas the refusal of Tibet to recognize the validity of or to carry into full effect the provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of March 17, 1890, and Regulations of December 5, 1893, placed the British Government under the necessity of taking steps to secure their rights and interests under the said Convention and Regulations;

And whereas a Convention of 10 articles was signed at Lhasa on September 1904, on behalf of Great Britain and Tibet, and was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India on behalf of Great Britain on November 11, 1904, a declaration on behalf of Great Britain modifying its terms under certain conditions being appended thereto;

His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the Emperor of China have resolved to conclude a Convention on this subject and have for this purpose named Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:-

His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland:

Sir Ernest Mason Satow, Knight Grand of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, His said Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to His Majesty the Emperor of China;

And His Majesty the Emperor of China;

His Excellency Tong Shoa-yi, His said Majesty's High Commissioner Plenipotentiary and a Vice-President of the Board of Foreign Affairs; who having communicated to each other their respective full powers and finding them to be in good and true form have agreed upon and concluded the following Convention in six articles:-

- I. The Convention concluded on September 7, 1904, by Great Britain and Tibet, the texts of which in English and Chinese are attached to the present Convention as an annexe, is hereby confirmed, subject to the modifications stated in the declaration appended thereto, and both of the High Contracting Parties engage to take at all times such steps as they may be necessary to secure the due fulfillment of the terms specified therein.
- II. The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibetan territory or to interfere in the administration of Tibet. The Government of China also undertakes not to permit any other foreign state to interfere with the territory or internal administration of Tibet.

- III. The Concessions which are mentioned in Article IX(d) of the Convention concluded on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1904 by Great Britain and Tibet are denied to any state or to the subject of any state other than China, but it has been arranged with China that at the trade marts specified in Article II of the aforesaid Convention, Great Britain shall be entitled to lay down telegraph lines connecting with India.
- IV. The provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and Regulations of 1893 shall, subject to the terms of this present Convention and annexe thereto, remain in full force.
- V. The English and Chinese texts of the present Convention have been carefully compared and found to correspond, but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them the English text shall be authoritative.
- VI. This Convention shall be ratified by the Sovereigns of both countries and ratifications shall be exchanged at London within three months after the date of signature by the Plenipotentiaries of both Powers.

In token whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed and sealed this Convention, four copies in English and four copies in Chinese.

Done at Peking this twenty-seventh day of April, one thousand nine hundred and six, being the fourth day of the fourth month of the thirty-second year of the reign of Kuang-hsu.

ERNEST SATOW  
(Signature and Seal of the  
Chinese Plenipotentiary)

**Source:** Melvyn C Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of a Lamaist State*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1993), pp. 827-828.

## APPENDIX IV

### ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION OF 1907

#### **(Convention between Great Britain and Russia relating to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet. Signed at St. Petersburg, August 31<sup>st</sup> 1907)**

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, animated by the sincere desire to settle by mutual agreement different questions concerning the interests of their States on the Continent of Asia, have determined to conclude Agreements destined to prevent all cause of misunderstanding between Great Britain and Russia in regard to the question\ s referred to, and have nominated for this purpose their respective Plenipotentiaries, to wit:

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, the Right Honourable Sir Arthur Nicholson, His Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias;

His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, the Master of His Court Alexander Iswolsky, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Who, having communicated to each other their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following:-

#### ARRANGEMENT CONCERNING THIBET

The Governments of Great Britain and Russia recognizing the suzerain rights of China in Thibet, and considering the fact that Great Britain, by reason of her geographical position has a special interest in the maintenance of the status quo in the external relations of Thibet, have made the following arrangements:-

Article I. The two High Contracting Parties engage to respect the territorial integrity of Thibet and to abstain from all interference in the internal administration.

Article II. In conformity with the admitted principle of the suzerainty of China over Thibet, Great Britain and Russia engage not to enter into negotiations with Thibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese government. This engagement does not exclude the direct relations between British commercial agents and the Thibetan authorities provided for in Article V of the Convention between Great Britain and Thibet of the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1904, and confirmed by the Convention between Great Britain and China on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1906; nor does it modify the engagements entered into by Great Britain and China in Article I of the said Convention of 1906.

It is clearly understood that Buddhists, subjects of Great Britain or of Russia, may enter into direct relations on strictly religious matters with the Dalai Lama and other representatives of Buddhism in Thibet; the Governments of Great Britain and Russia engage, as far as they are concerned, not to allow those relations to infringe the stipulations of the present arrangement.

Article III. The British and Russian Governments respectively engage not to send representatives to Lhasa.

Article IV. The two High Contracting Parties engage neither to seek nor to obtain, whether for themselves or their subjects, any Concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, and mines, or other rights in Thibet.

Article V. The two Governments agree that no part of the revenues of Thibet, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to Great Britain or Russia or to any of their subjects.

Annexe to the arrangement between Great Britain and Russia concerning Thibet.

Great Britain reaffirms the declaration, signed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India and appended to the ratification of the Convention of the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1904, to the effect that the occupation of the Chumbi Valley by British forces shall cease after the payment of three annual installments of the indemnity of 25,00,000 rupees, provided that the trade marts provided in Article II of that Convention have been effectively opened for three years, and that in the meantime the Thibetan authorities have faithfully complied in all respects with the terms of said Convention of 1904. It is clearly understood that if the occupation of the Chumbi Valley by the British forces has, for any reason, not been terminated at the time anticipated in the above Declaration, the British and Russian Governments will enter upon a friendly exchange of views on this subject.

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the ratification exchanged at St. Petersburg as soon as possible.

In witness whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Convention and affixed thereto their seals.

Done in duplicate at St. Petersburg, the 18<sup>th</sup> (31<sup>st</sup>) August 1907.

**Source:** Melvyn C Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of a Lamaist State*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1993), pp. 829-831.

## APPENDIX V

### ALLEGED MONGOL-TIBETAN TREATY, 1913.

(Said to have been signed at Urga in January 1913)

Whereas Mongolia and Tibet, having freed themselves from the Manchu dynasty and separated themselves from China, have become independent States, and whereas the two States have always professed one and the same religion, and to the end that their ancient mutual friendships may be strengthened: on the part of the Government of the Sovereign of the Mongolian people – Nikta Biliktu da Lamba Rabdan, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Assistant Minister-General and Manlai Caatyr Bei-Tzu Damdinsurun: on the part of the Dalai Lama, ruler of Tibet – Gujir tsanshib Kanchen Lubsan-Agwan, donir Agwan Choinzin, Tshichamtso, manager of the bank, and Gendun-Galsan, secretary, have agreed on the following:-

Article 1. The Dalai Lama, Sovereign of Tibet, approves of and acknowledges the formation of an independent Mongolian State, and the proclamation on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the year of the Swine, of the master of the Yellow Faith Je-tsun Dampa Lama as the Sovereign of the land.

Article 2. The Sovereign of the Mongolian people Je-tsun Dampa Lama approves and acknowledges the formation of an independent State and the proclamation of the Dalai Lama as the Sovereign of Tibet.

Article 3. Both States shall take measures, after mutual consideration, for the prosperity of the Buddhist faith.

Article 4. Both States, the Mongolian and the Tibetan, shall henceforth, for all time, afford each other aid against dangers from without and from within.

Article 5. Both States, each on its own territory, shall afford mutual aid to their subjects, traveling officially and privately on religious or on State business.

Article 6. Both States, the Mongolian and the Tibetan, shall, as formerly, carry on mutual trade in the produce of their lands – in goods, cattle, and c., and likewise open industrial institutions.

Article 7. Henceforth transactions on credit shall be allowed only with the knowledge and permission of official institutions; without such permission no claims shall be examined by Government Institutions.

Should such agreements have been entered into before the conclusion of the present treaty, and should the parties thereto be unable to settle matters amicably, while the loss suffered is great, the payment of such debts may be enforced by the said institutions, but in no case shall the debts concern the *Shabinars* and *Hoshuns*.

(*Shabinars* – people who depend from the court of Hu-tuk-tu and pay taxes to the Court Department.)

(*Hoshun* – principality.)

Article 8. Should it be necessary to supplement the articles of this special treaty, the Mongolian and the Tibetan Governments shall appoint special



Plenipotentiaries, who shall come to an Agreement according to the circumstances then existing.

Article 9. The present treaty shall come into force on the date of the signature thereof.

Plenipotentiaries of the Mongolian Government: Acting Ministers of Foreign Affairs Biliktu da-Lama Rabdan and Assistant Minister-General and Manlai Caatyr Bei-Tzu Damdinsurun.

Plenipotentiaries of the Dalai Lama, Sovereign of Tibet: Gujir Tsanshib Kanchen Lubsan-Agwan Choinzin, Tshichamtso, manager of the Bank of Tibet, and Gendun-Galsan, secretary.

According to the Mongolian chronology, on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the second year of 'him who is exalted by all'.

According to the chronology of Tibet, in the year of the Water-mouse, on the same month and day.

**Source:** Charles Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1994) pp. 304-305.

## APPENDIX VI

### CONVENTION BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN, CHINA AND TIBET: SIMLA, 1914

His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Excellency the President of the Republic of China, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, being sincerely desirous to settle by mutual agreement various questions concerning the interests of their several States on the Continent of Asia, and further to regulate the relations of their several Governments, have resolved to conclude a Convention on this subject and have nominated for this purpose their respective plenipotentiaries, that is to say:

His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, the Hon'ble Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Knight Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire, Companion of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department;

His Excellency the President of the Republic of China, Monsieur Ivan Chen, Officer of the Order of the Chia Ho;

His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, Lönchen Ga-den Shatra Pal-jor Dorje; who having communicated to each other their respective full powers and finding them to be in good and due form have agreed upon and concluded the following Convention in eleven Articles:

Article I. The Conventions specified in the Schedule to the present Convention shall, except in so far as they may have been modified by, or may be inconsistent with or repugnant to, any of the provisions of the present Convention, continue to be binding upon the High Contracting Parties.

Article II. The Governments of Great Britain and China recognizing that Tibet is under the suzerainty of China, and recognizing also the autonomy of Outer Tibet, engage to respect the territorial integrity of the country, and to abstain from all interference in the administration of Outer Tibet (including the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama), which shall remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa.

The Government of China engages not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province. The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibet or any portion of it.

Article III. Recognising the special interest of Great Britain, in virtue of the geographical position of Tibet, in the existence of an effective Tibetan Government, and in the maintenance of peace and order in the neighbourhood of the frontiers of India and adjoining States, the Government of China engages, except as provided in Article 4 of this Convention, not to send troops into Outer Tibet, nor to station civil or military officers, nor to establish Chinese colonies in the country. Should any such troops or officials remain in Outer Tibet at the date of the signature of this Convention, they shall be withdrawn within a period not exceeding three months.

The Government of Great Britain engages not to station military or civil officers in Tibet (except as provided in the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet) nor troops (except the Agents' escorts), nor to establish colonies in that country.

Article IV. The foregoing Article shall not be held to preclude the continuance of the arrangement by which, in the past, a Chinese high official with suitable escort has been maintained at Lhasa, but it is hereby provided that the said escort shall in no circumstances exceed 300 men.

Article V. The Governments of China and Tibet engage that they will not enter into any negotiations of agreements regarding Tibet with one another, or with any other Power, excepting such negotiations and agreements between Great Britain and Tibet as are provided for by the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet and the Convention of April 27, 1906, between Great Britain and China.

Article VI. Article III of the Convention of April 27, 1906, between Great Britain and China is hereby cancelled, and it is understood that in Article IX(d) of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet the term 'Foreign Power' does not include China.

No less favourable treatment shall be accorded to British commerce than to the commerce of China or the most favoured nation.

Article VII

(a) The Tibet Trade Regulations of 1893 and 1908 are hereby cancelled.

(b) The Tibetan Government engages to negotiate with the British Government new

Trade Regulations for Outer Tibet to give effect to Articles II, IV and V of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet without delay; provided always that such Regulations shall in no way modify the present Convention except with the consent of the Chinese Government.

Article VIII. The British Agent who resides at Gyantse may visit Lhasa with his escort whenever it is necessary to consult with the Tibetan Government regarding matters arising out of the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet, which it has been found impossible to settle at Gyantse by correspondence or otherwise.

Article IX. For the purpose of the present Convention the borders of Tibet, and the boundary between Outer and Inner Tibet, shall be shown in red and blue respectively on the map attached hereto.

Nothing in the present Convention shall be held to prejudice the existing rights of the Tibetan Government in Inner Tibet, which include the power to select and appoint the high priests of monasteries and to retain full control in all matters affecting religious institutions.

Article X. In case of differences between the Governments of China and Tibet in regard to questions arising out of this Convention the aforesaid Governments engage to refer them to the British Government for equitable adjustment.

Article XI. The present Convention will take effect from the date of signature. The English, Chinese and Tibetan texts of the present Convention have been carefully examined and found to correspond, but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them the English text shall be authoritative.

In token whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed and sealed this Convention, three copies in English, three in Chinese and three in Tibetan.

Done at Simla this 27th day of April, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and fourteen.

Initials and seals of Sir H. McMahon, Chen I-fan, The Lönchen Shatra.

### SCHEDULE

1. Convention between Great Britain and China relating to Sikkim and Tibet, signed at Calcutta the 17th March 1890.

2. Convention between Great Britain and Tibet, signed at Lhasa the 7th September 1904.

3. Convention between Great Britain and China respecting Tibet, signed at Peking the 27th April 1906.

The notes exchanged are to the following effect:

1. It is understood by the High Contracting Parties that Tibet forms part of Chinese territory.

2. After the selection and installation of the Dalai Lama by the Tibetan Government, the latter will notify the installation to the Chinese Government, whose representative at Lhasa will then formally communicate to His Holiness the titles consistent with his dignity, which have been conferred by the Chinese Government.

3. It is also understood that the selection and appointment of all officers in Outer Tibet will rest with the Tibetan Government.

4. Outer Tibet shall not be represented in the Chinese Parliament or in any other similar body.

5. It is understood that the escorts attached to the British Trade Agencies in Tibet shall not exceed seventy-five per centum of the escort of the Chinese Representative at Lhasa.

6. The Government of China is hereby released from its engagements under Article III of the Convention of March 17, 1890, between Great Britain and China, to prevent acts of aggression from the Tibetan side of the Tibet-Sikkim frontier.

7. The Chinese high official referred to in Article IV will be free to enter Tibet as soon as the terms of Article III have been fulfilled to the satisfaction of

representatives of the three signatories to this Convention, who will investigate and report without delay.

*Initials and seals of Sir H. McMahon, Chen I-fan, The Lönchen Shatra.*

***Declaration appended to the 3 July 1914 text of the Simla Convention.***

We, the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and Tibet, hereby record the following Declaration to the effect that we acknowledge the annexed Convention as initialled to be binding on the Governments of Great Britain and Tibet, and we agree that so long as the Government of China withholds signature to the aforesaid Convention, she will be debarred from the enjoyment of all privileges accruing therefrom.

In token whereof we have signed and sealed this Declaration, two copies in English and two in Tibetan.

Done at Simla this third day of July, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, corresponding with the Tibetan date, the tenth day of the fifth month of the Wood-Tiger year.

Seal of the Dalai Lama

A. HENRY MCMAHON, British Plenipotentiary  
Signature and seal of the Lönchen Shatra

Seal of the British Plenipotentiary

Seal of the Drepung Monastery

Seal of the Sera Monastery

Seal of the Gaden Monastery

Seal of the National Assembly

**Source:** Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line Vol. II.* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 620-625.

## APPENDIX VII

### “RESOLUTION OF THE FIRST ALL-CHINA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS ON THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN CHINA”

**(Adopted by the Congress at Juichin Kiangsi, November 1931)**

1. There are many national minorities living on Chinese territory, as for example, Mongolians, Tibetans, Mohammedans, Koreans, Annamites, Miao, Yao, and others in Sinkiang, Hunan, and Kwangsi Provinces, and the Moslems in Kansu, Szechuan, and other provinces. For a very great number of years Chinese emperors, landlords, government officials, and merchant' and usurers' capital have oppressed them and domineered over them. After the formation of the Chinese Republic, these national minorities were not only left without national emancipation, but on the contrary the yoke of exploitation of the Chinese militarists, landlords, government officials, and merchant' and usurers' capital became heavier still. Unprecedented famine and ruin devastated the area populated by the national minorities (for example Kansu and Sinkiang). Every form of resistance, every protest movement on the part of these national minorities was put down with unheard-of cruelty (for example, the punitive tactics of Feng Yu-hsiang against Moslems).

The Kuomintang, which represents the Chinese landlords among the bourgeoisie, still further increased the oppression, exploitation, and persecution of the national minorities. All the talk about so-called 'equality of nations' and a "Five Nations' Republic" is just so much deception on the part of the Kuomintang Government.

The First All-China Congress of Soviet of Workers, Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies calls upon the Chinese workers and peasants as well as all the toiling masses of the national minorities living on the territory of China to fight resolutely against Sun Yat-sen's so-called "nationalism", since it fully satisfies the interests of the landlords and the bourgeoisie but cannot in any way or by any means be acceptable to the Chinese Soviet Republic.

2. The Chinese workers, peasants, soldiers, and all the toiling masses shall fight determinedly against the oppression of the national minorities, and strive for their complete emancipation. In view of this, the First All-China Congress of Soviet of Workers, Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies declares that the Chinese Soviet Republic categorically and unconditionally recognizes the right of national minorities to self-determination. This means that in districts like Mongolia, Tibet, Sinkiang, Yunan, Kweichow, and others, where the majority of population belongs to non-Chinese nationalities, the toiling masses of these nationalities shall have the right to determine for themselves whether they wish to leave the Chinese Soviet Republic and create their own independent state, or whether they wish to join the Union of Soviet Republics, or form an autonomous area inside the Chinese Soviet Republic. The Chinese Soviet Republic shall do its utmost to assist and encourage all the struggles of the national minorities against imperialism, against the Chinese militarists, landlords, government officials, and merchant' and usurers' capital. The Chinese Soviet

Republic shall also support the national-revolution movement and the struggle waged against the attacks and threats of the imperialists and the Kuomintang militarists by these national minorities that have already won their independence as, for example, the Outer Mongolian National Republic.

3. At the same time the First All-China Congress of Soviet of Workers, Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies deems it necessary to point out that it is not only the toiling masses of the national minorities but also the masses of the Chinese workers and peasants themselves who suffer oppression, exploitation, and persecution at the hands of the imperialists and Chinese militarists, landlords and bourgeois. At the same time the toiling masses of the national minorities are oppressed and exploited not only by the imperialists and Chinese militarists, landlords and the bourgeois but also by their own ruling classes: in Mongolia, by the princes and "Living Buddhas"; in Tibet by the lamas; in Korea, by the gentry; while the Miao, the Yao, and other nationalities are exploited by their own *t'u-ssu* ans so on. These ruling classes are the tools of the imperialists, the landlords, and the bourgeoisie, for they assist the national minorities.

Consequently the First All-China Congress of Soviet of Workers, Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies calls upon the toiling masses of the national minorities to unite with the Chinese masses of workers and peasants in a joint struggle against their common oppressor and exploiters, against imperialism and the rule of the native landlords and bourgeoisie, and for the creation of the Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Government. At the same time the First All-China Congress of Soviet of Workers, Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies calls upon the toiling masses of the national minorities to fight against their own oppressors, against their own ruling classes, which, behind a smokescreen of nationalist slogans, savagely denounce the Soviet Union and the Chinese Soviet Republic, for the sole reason that both these states belong to the workers and the peasants and engage in irreconcilable battle against the imperialists and the exploiters.

4. The First All-China Congress of Soviet of Workers, Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies openly declares before the toiling masses of all nationalities in China that it is the purpose of the Chinese Soviet Republic to create a single state for them, without national barriers, and to uproot all national enmity and national prejudices. In order to achieve this object, the Chinese Soviet Republic shall extend the operation of all its laws – agrarian, labour, suffrage, and so on – unconditionally to all the toiling masses living on the territory of the Chinese Soviet Republic, irrespective of the nationality to which they belong.

The Chinese Soviet Republic must pay special attention to the development of the productive forces and to raising the level of culture in the backyard national autonomous areas of the Chinese Soviet Republic. Schools must be opened in which the instruction shall be in the native language of the national minorities; publishing houses must be founded, and the use of native language, both written and oral, must be permitted in all government departments; the local workers and peasants from the small nationalities must form cadres for the work of state administration, and Chinese bog-power chauvinism must be resolutely combated.

5. The First All-China Congress of Soviet of Workers, Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies is of the opinion that today there is only one country in the whole world – namely, the Soviet Union – which has actually overthrown the power of landlords and bourgeoisie once and for all, and where the worker and the peasant masses have achieved complete emancipation. The Soviet Union is the only country in which there is no persecution of one nation by another, where there are no national animosities, where the national question has indeed been solved.

The First All-China Congress of Soviet of Workers, Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies holds that the yoke of international imperialism can be thrown off and oppression and exploitation be abolished only in alliance with the worker and the peasant masses of the whole world, only in alliance with all oppressed nations and under the guidance of the Soviet Union.

Therefore, the First All-China Congress of Soviet of Workers, Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies resolves:

- (a) In the Fundamental Law (Constitution) of the Chinese Soviet Republic it shall be clearly stated that all national minorities within the confines of China shall have the right to national self-determination, including secession from China and the formation of independent states, and that the Chinese Soviet Republic fully and unconditionally recognizes the independence of the Outer Mongolian People's Republic.
- (b) The toiling masses of all national minorities on the territory of the Chinese Soviet Republic, especially in those areas where the majority of the population is Chinese, shall enjoy absolute equality with the latter, nor shall any of their legal rights or obligations be denied or abridged on account of nationality.
- (c) The Provisional Soviet Government is hereby instructed to devote special attention to the development of the productive forces in the national republics and autonomous areas that may be attached to the Chinese Soviet Republic. It shall raise their cultural level, shall train and promote local cadres so as to abolish completely all national animosities and national prejudices and create a single workers' and peasants' state without any national barriers whatsoever.
- (d) The Provisional Soviet Government is hereby further instructed to take all steps necessary to render active and concrete aid and support to the national emancipation struggle of minor nationalities against the Kuomintang militarists, against all Chinese and non-Chinese landlords and capitalists.
- (e) Finally, the Provisional Soviet Government is hereby instructed immediately to establish the closest political, economic, and cultural ties with the Soviet Union.



## APPENDIX VIII

### THE AGREEMENT OF THE CENTRAL PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF TIBET ON MEASURES FOR THE PEACEFUL LIBERATION OF TIBET

The Tibetan nationality is one of the nationalities with a long history within the boundaries of China and, like many other nationalities, it has done its glorious duty in the course of the creation and development of the great Motherland. But, over the last 100 year or more, imperialist forces penetrated into China and in consequence also penetrated into the Tibetan region and carried out all kinds of deceptions and provocations. Like previous reactionary Governments, the Kuomintang reactionary Government continued to carry out a policy of oppression and sowing dissension among the nationalities, causing division and disunity among the Tibetan people. The local government of Tibet did not oppose the imperialist deception and provocation and adopted an unpatriotic attitude towards the great Motherland. Under such conditions the Tibetan nationality and people were plunged into the depths of enslavement and suffering.

In 1949, basic victory was achieved on a nation-wide scale in the Chinese people's war of liberation; the common domestic enemy of all nationalities- the Kuomintang reactionary Government- was overthrown and the common foreign enemy of all nationalities - the aggressive imperialist forces - was driven out. On this basis the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and of the Chinese Government (CPG) was announced. In accordance with the *Common Programme* passed by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the CPG declared that all nationalities within the boundaries of the CPR are equal and that they shall establish unity and mutual aid and oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the CPR will become a big family of fraternity and cooperation, composed of all its nationalities. Within the big family of all nationalities of the CPR, national regional autonomy shall be exercised in areas where national minorities shall have freedom to develop their spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their customs, habits and religious beliefs, and the CPG shall assist all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural, and educational construction work. Since then, all nationalities within the country- with the exception of those in the areas of Tibet and Taiwan- have gained liberation. Under the unified leadership of the CPG and the direct leadership of the higher levels of people's governments, all national minorities have fully enjoyed the right of national equality and have exercised, or are exercising, national regional autonomy.

In order that the influences of aggressive imperialist forces in Tibet might be successfully eliminated, the unification of the territory and sovereignty of the PRC accomplished, and national defence safeguarded, in order that the Tibetan nationality might be freed and return to the big family of the PRC to enjoy the same rights of national equality as all other nationalities in the country and develop their political, economic, cultural, and educational work, the CPG, when it ordered the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to march into Tibet, notified the local government of Tibet to send delegates to the central authorities to conduct talks for the conclusion of an

agreement on measures for the peaceful liberation of Tibet. In the latter part of April 1951 the delegates with full powers of the local government of Tibet arrived in Peking. The CPG appointed representatives with full powers of the local government of Tibet. As a result of the talks, both parties agreed to conclude this agreement and guarantee that it be carried into effect.

(1) The Tibetan people shall unite and drive out imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet; the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the Motherland- the People's Republic of China.

(2) The local government of Tibet shall actively assist the PLA to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defence.

(3) In accordance with the policy towards nationalities laid down in the Common Programme of the CPPCC, the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the CPG.

(4) The central authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet. The central authorities also will not alter the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama. Officials of various ranks shall hold office as usual.

(5) The established status, functions and powers of the Panchen Ngoerh-teh-ni shall be maintained.

(6) By the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama and of the Bainqen Erdini are meant the status, functions and powers of the thirteenth Dalai Lama and of the ninth Bainqen Erdini when they were in friendly and amicable relations with each other. The policy of freedom and religious belief laid down in the Common Programme of the CPPCC shall be carried out. The religious beliefs, customs and habits of the Tibetan people shall be respected and lama monasteries shall be protected. The central authorities will not effect a change in the income of the monasteries.

(8) Tibetan troops shall be reorganized step by step into the PLA and become a part of the national defence forces of the CPR.

(9) The spoken and written language and school education of the Tibetan nationality shall be developed step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.

(10) Tibetan agriculture, livestock-raising, industry and commerce shall be developed step by step and the people's livelihood shall be improved step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet.

(11) In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the central authorities. The local government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and, when the people raise demands for reform, they shall be settled by means of consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet.

(12) In so far as former pro-imperialist and pro-Kuomintang officials resolutely sever relations with imperialism and the Kuomintang do not engage in sabotage or resistance, they may continue to hold office irrespective of their past.

(13) The PLA entering Tibet shall abide by all the above-mentioned policies and shall also be fair in all buying and selling and shall not arbitrarily take a needle or thread from the people.

(14) The CPG shall have centralized handling of all external affairs of the area of Tibet; and there will be peaceful co-existence with neighbouring countries and establishment and development of fair commercial and trading relations with them on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territory and sovereignty.

(15) In order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the CPG shall set up a Military and Administrative Committee and a Military Area HQ in Tibet and apart from the personnel sent there by the CPG- shall absorb as many local Tibetan personnel as possible to take part in the work. Local personnel taking part in the Military and Administrative Committee may include patriotic elements from the local government of Tibet, various district and various principal monasteries; the name-list shall be set forth after consultation between the representatives designated by the CPG and various quarters concerned and shall be submitted to the CPG for appointment.

(16) Funds needed by the Military and Administrative Committee, the Military Area HQ and the PLA entering Tibet shall be provided by the CPG. The local government of Tibet should assist the PLA in the purchase and transport of food, fodder and other daily necessities.

(17) This agreement shall come into force immediately after signature and seals are affixed to it.

Signed in Beijing on 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1951.

Chinese Representatives: Li Wei-han, Zhang Jhingwu, Zhang Guohua, Sun Zhiyuan.

Tibetan Representatives: Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, Khame Sonam Wangdu, Lhawutara Thupten Tenthar, Thupten Lekmon, Sampho Tenzin Dhundup.

**Source:** Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, (New York: Penguin Compass, 1999), pp. 449-452.

## APPENDIX IX

### AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TRADE AND INTER-COURSE BETWEEN TIBET REGION OF CHINA AND INDIA

The Government of the Republic of India and the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China:

Being desirous of promoting trade and cultural intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India and of facilitating pilgrimage and travel by the people of China and India;

Have resolved to enter into the present agreement based on the following principles:

- (1) Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
- (2) Mutual non-aggression;
- (3) Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
- (4) Equality and mutual benefit: and
- (5) Peaceful coexistence

and for this purpose have appointed as their respective plenipotentiaries:

The Government of the Republic of India:

H.E. Nedyam Raghavan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of

India accredited to the

People's Republic of China,

The Central People's Government of the

The People's Republic of China:

H.E. Chang Han-Fu, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Central People's Government,

Who, having examined each other's credentials and finding them in good and due form, have agreed upon the following:

#### ARTICLE I

The High Contracting Parties mutually agree to establish trade agencies:

(I) The Government of India agree that the Government of China may establish trade agencies at New Delhi, Calcutta and Kalimpong.

(II) The Government of China agree that the Government of India may establish trade agencies at Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok.

The Trade Agencies of both parties shall be accorded the same status and same treatment. The Trade Agents of both parties shall enjoy freedom from arrest while exercising their functions, and shall enjoy in respect of themselves, their wives and children who are dependent on them for their livelihood freedom from search.

The Trade Agencies of both parties shall enjoy the privileges and immunities for couriers, mail bags and communications in code.

## **ARTICLE II**

The High Contracting Parties agree that traders of both countries known to be customarily and specifically engaged in trade between the Tibet region of China and India may trade at the following places:

(1) The Government of China agree to specify (1) Yatung, (2) Gyantse and (3) Phari as markets for trade: the Government of India agree that trade may be carried on in India including places like (1) Kalimpong, (2) Siliguri and (3) Calcutta, according to customary practice.

(2) The Government of China agree to specify (1) Gartok, (2) Pulanchung (Taklakot), (3) Gyalima-Khargo, (4) Gyanima-Chakra, (5) Ranura, (6) Dongbra, (7) Pulling-Sumdo (3) Nabra, (9) Shangtse and (10) Tashigong as markets for trade; the Government of India agree that in future when in accordance with the development and need of trade between the Art district of the Tibet region of China and India, it has become necessary to specify markets for trade in the corresponding districts in India adjacent to the Art district of the Tibet region of China, it will be prepared to consider on the basis of equality and reciprocity to do so.

## **ARTICLE III**

The High Contracting Parties agree that pilgrimages by religious believers of the two countries shall be carried on in accordance with the following provisions:

(1) Pilgrims from India of Lamaist, Hindu and Buddhist faith may visit Kang Rimpoche (Kailash) and Mavam Tse (Mansarowar) in the Tibet region of China in accordance with custom.

(2) Pilgrims from the Tibet region of China of Lamaist and Buddhist faiths may visit Banaras, Sarnath, Gaya and Sanchi in India in accordance with custom.

(3) Pilgrims customarily visiting Lhasa may continue to do so in accordance with custom.

## **ARTICLE IV**

Traders and pilgrims of both countries may travel by the following passes and routes:

- (1) Shipki La Pass
- (2) Mana Pass
- (3) Niti Pass
- (4) Kungri Bingri Pass

(5) Dana Pass, and

(6) Lipu Lekh Pass.

Also the customary route leading to Tashigong along the valley of Elek Gatasangpu (Indus river) continue to be traversed in accordance with custom.

#### **ARTICLE V**

For traveling across borders, the High Contracting Parties agree that diplomatic personnel, officials and nations of the two countries shall hold passports issued by their own respective countries and visas by the other party except as provided in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 of this article.

(1) Traders of both countries known to be customarily and specifically engaged in trade between the Tibet region of China and India, their wives and children, who are dependent on them for livelihood and their attendants will be allowed entry for purposes of trade into India or the Tibet region of China, as the case may be, in accordance with custom on the production of certificates duly issued by the local Government of their own country by its duly authorised agents and examined by the border check posts of the other party.

(2) Inhabitants of the border districts of the two countries, who cross borders to carry on petty trade or to visit friends and relatives, may proceed to the border districts of the other party as they have customarily done heretofore and need not be restricted to the passes and route specified in Article IV above and shall not be required to hold passports, visas or permits.

(3) Porters and mule-team drivers of the two countries who cross the border to perform necessary transportation services need not hold passports issued by their own country, but shall only hold certificates for a definite period of time (good for three months, half year or one year) duly issued by the local agents and produce them for registration at the border checkpost of the other party.

(4) Pilgrims of both countries need not carry documents of certification but shall register at the border checkpost of the other party and receive a permit for pilgrimage.

(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of the foregoing paragraph of this article, either Government may refuse entry to any particular person.

(6) Persons who enter the territory of the other party in accordance with the foregoing paragraphs of this article may stay within its territory only after complying with the procedures specified by the other party.

#### **ARTICLE VI**

The present agreement shall come into effect upon ratification by both Governments and shall remain in force for eight years. Extension of the present agreement may be negotiated by the two parties if either party requests for it six months prior to the expiry of the agreement and the request is agreed to by the other party.

Done in duplicate in Peking on April 29, 1954, in Hindi, Chinese and English languages, all text being equally valid.

Plenipotentiary of the Central Government of the People's Republic of China -  
CHANG HAN-FU

Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Republic of India - N RAGHAVAN

## APPENDIX X

### FIVE POINT PEACE PLAN FOR TIBET 1987

**This landmark address to the United States Congressional Human Rights Caucus, delivered in Washington, DC, on September 21, 1987, forms the basis of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's later initiatives to bring about dialogue with Beijing.**

This peace plan contains five basic components

1. Transformation of the whole of Tibet into a zone of peace;
2. Abandonment of China's population transfer policy, which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people;
3. Respect for the Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms;
4. Restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and the abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste;
5. Commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

**Source:** *DIIR*



## APPENDIX XI

### STRASBOURG PROPOSAL

**Address to members of the European Parliament by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Strasbourg, 15 June 1988. The Proposal was withdrawn in September 1991.**

We are living today in a very interdependent world. One nation's problems can no longer be solved by itself. Without a sense of universal responsibility our very survival is in danger. I have, therefore, always believed in the need for better understanding, closer cooperation and greater respect among the various nations of the world. The European Parliament is an inspiring example. Out of the chaos of war, those who were once enemies have, in a single generation, learned to coexist and to cooperate. I am, therefore, particularly pleased to be honoured to address this gathering at the European Parliament. As you know, my own country - Tibet - is undergoing a very difficult period. The Tibetans - particularly those who live under Chinese occupation - yearn for freedom and justice and a self-determined future, so that they are able to fully preserve their unique identity and live in peace with their neighbours.

For over a thousand years we Tibetans have adhered to spiritual and environmental values in order to maintain the delicate balance of life across the high plateau on which we live. Inspired by the Buddha's message of non-violence and compassion and protected by our mountains, we sought to respect every form of life and to abandon war as an instrument of national policy. Our history, dating back more than two thousand years, has been one of independence. At no time, since the founding of our nation in 127 B.C., have we Tibetans conceded our sovereignty to a foreign power. As with all nations, Tibet experienced periods in which our neighbours - Mongol, Manchu, Chinese, British and the Gorkhas of Nepal - sought to establish influence over us. These eras have been brief and the Tibetan people have never accepted them as constituting a loss of our national sovereignty. In fact, there have been occasions when Tibetan rulers conquered vast areas of China and neighbouring states. This, however, does not mean that we Tibetans can lay claim to these territories.

In 1949 the People's Republic of China forcibly invaded Tibet. Since that time, Tibet has endured the darkest period in its history. More than a million of our people have died as a result of the occupation. Thousands of monasteries were reduced to ruins. A generation has grown up deprived of education, economic opportunity and a sense of its own national character. Though the current Chinese leadership has implemented certain reforms, it is also promoting a massive population transfer onto the Tibetan plateau. This policy has already reduced the six million Tibetans to a minority. Speaking for all Tibetans, I must sadly inform you, our tragedy continues.

I have always urged my people not to resort to violence in their efforts to redress their suffering. Yet I believe all people have the moral right to peacefully protest injustice. Unfortunately, the demonstrations in Tibet have been violently

suppressed by the Chinese police and military. I will continue to counsel for non-violence, but unless China forsakes the brutal methods it employs, Tibetans cannot be responsible for a further deterioration in the situation.

Every Tibetan hopes and prays for the full restoration of our nation's independence. Thousands of our people have sacrificed their lives and our whole nation has suffered in this struggle. Even in recent months, Tibetans have bravely sacrificed their lives to achieve this precious goal. On the other hand, the Chinese totally fail to recognise the Tibetan people's aspirations and continue to pursue a policy of brutal suppression. I have thought for a long time on how to achieve a realistic solution to my nation's plight. My cabinet and I solicited the opinions of many friends and concerned persons. As a result, on September 21, 1987, at the Congressional Human Rights Caucus in Washington, D.C., I announced a Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet. In it I called for the conversion of Tibet into a zone of peace, a sanctuary in which humanity and nature can live together in harmony. I also called for respect for human rights and democratic ideals, environmental protection, and a halt to the Chinese population transfer into Tibet. The fifth point of the Peace Plan called for earnest negotiations between Tibetans and the Chinese. We have, therefore, taken the initiative to formulate some thoughts which, we hope, may serve as a basis for resolving the issue of Tibet. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the distinguished gathering here of the main points of our thinking. The whole of Tibet known as Cholka-Sum (U'Tsang, Kham and Amdo) should become a self-governing democratic political entity founded on law by agreement of the people for the common good and the protection of themselves and their environment, in association with the People's Republic of China.

The Government of the People's Republic of China could remain responsible for Tibet's foreign policy. The Government of Tibet should, however, develop and maintain relations, through its own Foreign Affairs Bureau, in the fields of religion, commerce, education, culture, tourism, science, sports and other non-political activities. The Government of Tibet should be founded on a constitution of basic law. The basic law should provide for a democratic system of government entrusted with the task of ensuring economic equality, social justice and protection of the environment. This means that the Government of Tibet will have the right to decide on all affairs relating to Tibet and the Tibetans. As individual freedom is the real source and potential of any society's development, the Government of Tibet would seek to ensure this freedom by full adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the rights to speech, assembly, and religion. Because religion constitutes the source of Tibet's national identity, and spiritual values lie at the very heart of Tibet's rich culture, it would be a special duty of the government of Tibet to safeguard and develop its practice.

The government of Tibet should be comprised of a popularly elected Chief Executive, a bi-cameral legislative branch, and an independent judicial system. Its seat should be in Lhasa.

The social and economic system of Tibet should be determined in accordance with the wishes of the Tibetan people, bearing in mind especially the need to raise the standard of living of the entire population.

The Government of Tibet would pass strict laws to protect wildlife and plant life. The exploitation of natural resources would be carefully regulated. The manufacture, testing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other armaments must be prohibited, as well as the use of nuclear power and other technologies which produce hazardous waste. It would be the Government of Tibet's goal to transform Tibet into our planet's largest natural preserve. A regional peace conference should be called to ensure that Tibet becomes a genuine sanctuary of peace through demilitarisation. Until such a peace conference can be convened and demilitarized and neutralisation achieved, China could have the right to maintain a restricted number of military installations in Tibet. These must be solely for defence purposes.

In order to create an atmosphere of trust conducive to fruitful negotiations, the Chinese Government should cease its human rights violations in Tibet and abandon its policy of transferring Chinese to Tibet.

These are the thoughts we have in mind. I am aware that many Tibetans will be disappointed by the moderate stand they represent. Undoubtedly, there will be much discussion in the coming months within our own community, both in Tibet and in exile. This, however, is an essential and invaluable part of any process of change. I believe these thoughts represent the most realistic means by which to re-establish Tibet's separate identity and restore the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people while accommodating China's own interests. I would like to emphasize, however, that whatever the outcome of the negotiations with the Chinese may be, the Tibetan people themselves must be the ultimate deciding authority. Therefore any proposal will contain a comprehensive procedural plan to ascertain the wishes of the Tibetan people in a nationwide referendum. I would like to take this opportunity to state that I do not wish to take any active part in the Government of Tibet. Nevertheless I will continue to work as much as I can for the well-being and happiness of the Tibetan people as long as it is necessary.

We are ready to present a proposal to the Government of the People's Republic of China based on the thoughts I have presented. A negotiating team representing the Tibetan Government has been selected. We are prepared to meet with the Chinese to discuss details of such a proposal aimed at achieving an equitable solution.

We are encouraged by the keen interest being shown in our situation by a growing number of governments and political leaders, including former President Jimmy Carter of the United States. We are also encouraged by the recent changes in China which have brought about a new group of leadership, more pragmatic and liberal.

We urge the Chinese Government and leadership to give serious and substantive consideration to the ideas I have described. Only dialogue and a willingness to look with honesty and clarity at the reality of Tibet can lead to a viable solution. We wish to conduct discussions with the Chinese Government bearing in mind the larger interests of humanity. Our proposal will therefore be made in a spirit of conciliation and we hope that the Chinese will respond accordingly.

My country's unique history and profound spiritual heritage render it ideally suited for fulfilling the role of a sanctuary of peace at the heart of Asia. Its historical

status as a neutral buffer state can be restored. In the future, Tibet need no longer be an occupied land, oppressed by force, unproductive and scarred by suffering. It can become a free haven where humanity and nature live in harmonious balance; a creative model for the resolution of tensions afflicting many areas throughout the world.

The Chinese leadership needs to realize that the colonial rule over occupied territories is today wholly anachronistic. A genuine union or association can only come about voluntarily, when there is satisfactory benefit to all parties concerned. The European Community is a clear example of this. On the other hand, even one country or community can break into two or more entities when there is a lack of trust or benefit, and when force is used as the principal means of rule.

I would like to end by making a special appeal to the honourable members of the European Parliament and through them to their respective constituencies to extend their support to our efforts. A resolution of the Tibetan problem within the framework that we propose will not only be for the mutual benefit of the Tibetan and Chinese people but will also contribute to regional and global peace and stability. I thank you for providing me the opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

*Source: TIBET FILE NO.4, Published December 1993*<http://www.freetibet.org/info/file/file4.html>

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