


# *The Tibet Mirror*, “Friends” of Tibet, and the Internationalisation of the Tibet Question<sup>1</sup>

Natalia Mikhailova

(Université Laval, SOAS University of London)

 ssued from 1925 to 1963 in the Indian city of Kalimpong by Dorje Tharchin Babu (1890–1976), *The Tibet Mirror* has gained fame as one of the few early Tibetan periodicals and as the only newspaper which consistently promoted pro-Tibetan nationalist views in the Tibetan language in the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> Modern Tibetan nationalism can be said to have emerged first among the Tibetan-speaking elite and then, a little later, among the rest of the population of the Tibetan Plateau when they fully realised the determination of the new communist government in Beijing to integrate all Tibetan peoples and their territories into the big multinational “family” of China. Building on George Dreyfus’s claim that “to a large extent Tibetans did not have a full-fledged nationalism before 1950,”<sup>3</sup> this paper argues that *The Tibet Mirror* was the first Tibetan-language media organ to promote a modern form of Tibetan nationalism, serving as an important instrument for shaping a pro-Tibetan

---

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to express sincere gratitude and acknowledge the generous support of her research provided by the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) and Université Laval.

<sup>2</sup> For more details, see Moskaleva 2016, 2018, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> As an example of Tibetan proto-nationalism, Dreyfus (2005: 10–11) cites the unifying narratives found in the collection of texts known as the *Maṅi Kambum* (*ma ṅi bka’ ’bum*), which describe the special role of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara as a protector of the Tibetan people and establishes his connection to the Tibetan king, Srong btsan sgam po (c. 605–650).

nationalist ideology and educating Tibetans on how the Tibet Question might best be presented to the world.

Print media is often termed “the fourth branch of power,” after the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, and is seen as able to shape public thought in major ways by implanting particular ideas, images, associations, and stereotypes in the minds of readers and thus directing the attitude of the readership towards a specific subject or even completely altering their world outlook (Danilova 2014: 11–12). The editor of *The Tibet Mirror* was clearly aware of the power vested in his hands (cf. Moskaleva 2020: 433) and, from the very early 1950s onwards, regularly published articles on Tibetan independence in his newspaper. He enthusiastically contended that Tibet had been independent for centuries, that Tibet would have still been independent if it had not been for the “vicious”<sup>4</sup> politics of the “treacherous” Chinese communists,<sup>5</sup> and that Tibet would become independent again in the future. In *The Tibet Mirror*, Tharchin presented antagonistic images of the Other (i.e., the Chinese communists) as the evil aggressor and the Self (i.e., the population of the Tibetan Plateau) as its helpless victim. In his writings of the 1950s and early 1960s, the editor set forth the elements of a national narrative which is now widespread within the Tibetan diaspora. He suggested concrete steps to be taken to pursue the goal of Tibetan independence, including direct appeals to rise against the Chinese communist forces and to resist them with arms, as well as described more intricate ways to secure Tibet’s independence. Among the modes of action that Tharchin proposed was the acquisition of support for the Tibetan cause from the international community and the cultivation of foreign “friends” of Tibet, whether individuals or entire countries, who, in his view or in that of “learned” experts, favoured the idea of an independent Tibet and provided help to the people of Tibet either in word or deed, or both.

In the following pages, I will use selected abstracts from *The Tibet Mirror* from the 1950s and early 1960s to illustrate Tharchin’s attempts

---

<sup>4</sup> *sdug po* (*The Tibet Mirror* (TIM), Vol. XXI, No. 8, Nov. 1953, p. 2).

<sup>5</sup> *ngan g.yo can dmar lugs 'dzin pa* (TIM, Vol. XXI, No. 5, Aug. 1953, p. 6).

to establish the category of Tibet's "allies" and his strategies to articulate the Tibet Question most effectively.

## 1 "Friends" of Tibet

### 1.1 Great Britain

One of the earliest examples of Tharchin's focus on foreign friendship from the period under review can be found in *The Tibet Mirror* issued on September 1, 1950. In that issue, Tharchin published two brief statements expressing thanks to two British "friends" of Tibet. In the first of these two articles, entitled "Support for Tibetan Independence,"<sup>6</sup> the editor gave credit to the Graeco-British scholar Marco Pallis (1895–1989):

The esteemed Mr. Marco Pallis, [also] known by his spiritual name Thub bstan Bstan 'dzin, who has acquired a perfect knowledge of the beautiful ancient traditions of the Tibetan Religious State and the teaching of the Buddha, recently spread the [following] information in English newspapers: "If all countries, having negotiated their support for the independence of the Tibetan Religious State, find a way to leave [Tibet] as an ornament of the world, it will surely be very beneficial for all countries of the world."

[I would like to] express my gratitude for this [public statement] and thank him.<sup>7</sup>

In the second statement, Tharchin expressed his gratitude to the British diplomat Arthur Hopkinson (1894–1953):

The esteemed Hopkinson, the renowned former Political Officer in Sikkim, also spread the word via radio and newspapers that Tibet was independent. I am very much obliged [to him] as well.<sup>8</sup>

Tharchin described both "friends" of Tibet in a rather flattering manner and in this way reinforced the authority of their opinions on

<sup>6</sup> *bod rang btsan la brgyab skyor* (TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 10, Sept. 1950, p. 9).

<sup>7</sup> TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 10, Sept. 1950, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 10, Sept. 1950, p. 9.

Tibetan independence. Arthur Hopkinson had limited himself to a brief remark on Tibetan independence, but Marco Pallis, according to Tharchin, with his “perfect knowledge of the beautiful ancient traditions of the Tibetan Religious State and the teaching of the Buddha”<sup>9</sup> was well acquainted with Tibetan history and culture and had appealed to other countries in the world not simply to support the idea of Tibetan independence, but to treat Tibet as “an ornament of the world.”<sup>10</sup> Tharchin, however, did not elaborate as to how or why this gesture would, as Pallis claimed, “surely be very beneficial for all countries of the world.”

Both Hopkinson and Pallis were connected with British intelligence. Hopkinson, the last British Political Officer in Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet (in office 1945–1947), had worked as the British Trade Agent in the third largest town in Tibet, Gyantse (Rgyal rtse), from 1927 to 1928 (McKay 1995: 263–264). In the words of Alex McKay, “trade was of little concern” to British Trade Agents; their main task was to cultivate friendly relations with Tibetans and to collect relevant information about the political and socio-economic situation on the Tibetan Plateau (McKay 2001: 94). The so-called “Trade Agents” belonged to the diplomatic corps of the Government of British India and were under the direct control of the Political Officer for Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet who was based in the Sikkimese capital, Gangtok (McKay 2001: 94). The Political Officer for Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet was directly responsible for British relations with these territories and oversaw the British Mission in Lhasa during his visits to the Tibetan capital (McKay 1995: 1, 270). Hopkinson and the editor of *The Tibet Mirror* collaborated in the context of Tharchin’s work for British intelligence (Fader 2009: 181–184, Sawerthal 2018: 132, n. 188).

As for Pallis, he was known for his fondness of mountaineering and for his interest in Tibetan Buddhism. According to the elder brother of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, Gyalo Thondup (Rgyal lo don ’grub, b. 1927), Pallis was so “deeply immersed in the study of Tibet” that he used to

---

<sup>9</sup> *bod chos ldan rgyal khab kyī gna’ srol bzang po dang sangs rgyas kyī bstan par yid kyis rab tu bsten.*

<sup>10</sup> *’dzam gling mdzes brgyan du ’jogs thabs gnang.*

dress in a Tibetan *phyu pa* (Rgyal lo don grub 2015: 168). Pallis was also associated with British intelligence: Gyalo Thondup reports that in the early 1960s, it was Pallis who arranged his meeting with the head of MI6, the British Secret Intelligence Service, in London (Rgyal lo don grub 2015: 168). The involvement of Pallis in intelligence activities in connection to Tharchin and financial support for *The Tibet Mirror* has been corroborated by Anna Sawerthal (2018: 109–111, 121, 124, 267).

In McKay's opinion, the political status of Tibet did not play a significant role for the British, but it was important for them that Tibet stood as a stable northern frontier of British India and helped in securing an effective barrier against Britain's rival in Central Asia—Russia (McKay 2001: 97). Therefore, until India gained its independence in 1947, British colonial officials supported the traditional Tibetan government of the Dalai Lama and encouraged the Ganden Phodrang (Dga' ldan pho brang) with its aim of strengthening and unifying Tibet so that it could claim "its place among the world's nation-states" (McKay 2001: 97). In the 1950s and 1960s, a few former British colonial officials who had previously served in Tibet attempted to provide more publicity for the Tibet Question (McKay 1995: 254). However, regardless of their efforts, both before 1947 and after, the British government never officially recognised Tibet as an independent state and, on the contrary, sought to avoid damaging Sino–British relations and so did not express overly explicit support for Tibet. Tsering Shakya contends that after India gained independence, Great Britain completely lost interest in Tibet and left the Tibet Question to the discretion of independent India (Shakya 2000: 19).

Nevertheless, despite Britain's withdrawal from Tibetan politics after 1947, Tharchin continued to present a positive image of the British in *The Tibet Mirror* in the 1950s. For example, in November 1950, the editor reported that representatives of the Tibetan delegation were "pleased" by the British government's promise to provide them with "the best possible assistance"<sup>11</sup> when they would be traveling through

---

<sup>11</sup> *in gzhung nas grogs ram gang drag gnang rgyu* (TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 12, Nov. 1950, p. 6).

Hong Kong to Beijing for Sino–Tibetan negotiations.<sup>12</sup> Tharchin also frequently repeated in his publications that the British colonial government had participated in the negotiations in Simla and that Great Britain had recognised in the Simla Convention that Tibet was not under the Chinese rule but was “merely in the shadow of China”:<sup>13</sup>

When the agreement was signed in Simla in 1914, Great Britain recognised that Tibet was merely in the shadow of China. However, the Chinese government did not object to that. According to the agreement, the Chinese government was not allowed to control Tibet, to take over [Tibet], to expand [its territory in Tibet], or to interfere in anything [in Tibet]. Now [November 1950], the Tibetan government has ordered its representatives to negotiate [with the PRC] precisely on the basis of that earlier agreement [reached] in Simla.<sup>14</sup>

After a large number of Tibetans and Tibetan-speaking people followed the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama into exile in India, Great Britain was still presented in Tharchin’s publications as Tibet’s “friend.” For instance, in February–March 1961, the editor published a report entitled “The British Government’s Help to Tibetan Refugees,”<sup>15</sup> in which he publicised the financial support of benevolent British “friends” of Tibet:

Recently, on March 17 [1961], an esteemed ambassador of the British government in India, Sir Paul Gore-Booth,<sup>16</sup> handed over to his colleague K.L Mehta, the Secretary General of the Indian Foreign Ministry, the help of the British government for Tibetan refugees who had arrived in India in the form of 50,000 English pounds, which is equal to 666,000 Indian rupees.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> *in ji nas grogs ram gnang rgyu’i bka’ mol la ‘thus mi rnams thugs mnyes po byung ‘dug* (TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 12, Nov. 1950, p. 6).

<sup>13</sup> *in ji nas bod rgya nag gi grib ‘og tsam du ngos len gnang ‘dug.*

<sup>14</sup> TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 12, Nov. 1950, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> *bod kyi skyabs bcol ba rnams kyi ched du dbyin gzhung gi mthun rkyen* (TIM, Vol. XXVII, No. 6, Feb.–Mar. 1961).

<sup>16</sup> In the publication, Tharchin slightly distorts his name as “Sir Paul Gore Broth.”

<sup>17</sup> TIM, Vol. XXVII, No. 6, Feb.–Mar. 1961, p. 6.

1.2 *India*

In the metanarrative of Tibetan independence constructed in *The Tibet Mirror* in the 1950s and 1960s, India appeared as another old “friend” of Tibet. Tharchin portrayed India as the “country of Bodhisattvas”<sup>18</sup> with a “religious government,”<sup>19</sup> which logically entailed its essential affinity to the “Tibetan Religious State.”<sup>20</sup> In the 1950s, the editor regularly mentioned the subject of close cultural and religious ties between Tibet and India, but not between Tibet and China. For example, in September 1954, Tharchin emphasised the impressive centuries-old connections between India and Tibet in the spheres of religion, science, and trade and elaborated on the richness of the bonds of friendship and mutual assistance between the two countries.<sup>21</sup> After the uprising in Lhasa in 1959, Tharchin persisted with even greater enthusiasm to promote the narrative of the longstanding Tibetan–Indian friendship. This is evident in an “abridged summary of a rough translation of news”<sup>22</sup> that Tharchin published in April 1959, based on a report that had appeared in the Calcutta-based newspaper *The Statesman*, on March 31 that year.

That report (see Appendix 1) summarises a long speech by Nehru, or at least Tharchin’s interpretation of it. One notices first the emphasis placed on the strength and closeness of historical ties between India and Tibet; these are alluded to three times in the article. Nehru is cited as arguing that such ties exist between India and Tibet at present (“India and Tibetans have strong kinship, cultural, and other ties”<sup>23</sup>), that India designs its Tibetan policy while being guided by these ties (“based on its close longstanding cultural and religious ties with Tibet,

---

<sup>18</sup> *rgya gar 'phags pa'i yul* (TIM, Vol. XXV, No. 12, May 1959, p. 5).

<sup>19</sup> *rgya gar chos ldan gzhung* (TIM, Vol. XXIII, No. 12, Nov. 1956, p. 3).

<sup>20</sup> *bod chos ldan rgyal khab*, the term that was predominantly used by Tharchin to refer to Tibet.

<sup>21</sup> TIM, Vol. XXII, No. 5, Sept. 1954, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> *gnas tshul rags bsgyur mdor bsdu*s (TIM, Vol. XXV, No. 11, Apr. 1959).

<sup>23</sup> *rgya gar dang bod mi rnams gyis bar lal\_nye tshan gyi 'brel ba dang shes rig sogs kyi 'brel ba brtan por yod*.

[India] feels profound sympathy for Tibetans”<sup>24</sup>), and that India wishes to preserve these ties with Tibet (“we want to maintain close relations and pure mutual friendship with Tibetans”<sup>25</sup>).

In Tharchin’s account, Nehru criticises the PRC for using physical force against Tibetan monks (India sees “the damage which has been brought by communist China to the numerous monastic communities as a result of its unprincipled violence and which has become the reason for the [total] decay of good virtues [there]”<sup>26</sup>) and “urges” China to “expand” the “freedom and independence”<sup>27</sup> of Tibet. As if echoing the opinion of *The Tibet Mirror* editor himself, Nehru, according to Tharchin, declares that the Tibetan government has never recognised its subordination to China.<sup>28</sup> Thus, with respect to the Sino–Tibetan confrontation, India in *The Tibet Mirror* fully supports Tibet, even though formally—“in terms of politics”—its hands are tied<sup>29</sup> and at the same time, India would even like to maintain its friendly relations with the PRC.

Tharchin’s account also includes a smoothing of the brutal “legacy” of colonial India and Great Britain in Tibet. During Younghusband’s military expedition to Tibet, British soldiers used modern artillery weapons and machine guns to kill hundreds of primitively armed Tibetans, plundered monasteries and forts, and forced the Tibetan government to sign a treaty on conditions that were entirely favourable for the British (Powers & Templeman 2012: 271, 740–741; McKay 2012: 14, 19). However, in Tharchin’s rendering, Nehru mitigates these facts by presenting Younghusband’s expedition to Tibet as “not a daunting intervention with a takeover sanctioned by

---

<sup>24</sup> *bod dang sngon nas shes rig dang chos sogs kyi 'brel gnas dam por yod par brten/\_bod mi rnams la sha tsha'i sems tshor chen por yod.*

<sup>25</sup> *nga tshos bod mi rnams dang mthun 'brel gtsang mar nye 'brel byed 'dod yod.*

<sup>26</sup> *rgya dmar nas tshul min dbang gis dgon sde khag mang gtor skyon btang ba de ni gang min bsod nams nyams pa'i rgyu red.*

<sup>27</sup> *nga tsho khong tshor rang dbang rang btsan yar 'phel yong rgyur yid 'dod chen po zhu gi yod.*

<sup>28</sup> *rgya nag gzhung re re nas bod 'di rgya khongs yin par brjod 'dug kyang /\_bod gzhung rim pa nas ngo len byas mi 'dug.*

<sup>29</sup> *rgya gar nas khrims bstun ltar bod skor srid phyogs nas gang yang byed mi thub.*



the government's order."<sup>30</sup> Nehru is also described as claiming in his speech that India, even if it had seized Tibetan territories earlier, had always renounced its rights to them. Yet, according to Tsering Shakya, in October 1947, two months after India gained its independence, the Tibetan government demanded that India return the Tibetan territories that had been "gradually annexed by the British," and Nehru dismissed the demand as unrealistic (Shakya 2000: 280). Later, the unresolved territorial disputes on the border of India and Tibet, further fuelled by the activities of Tibetan guerilla fighters in the late 1950s and early 1960s and the diplomatic strain after the flight of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama to India, contributed to piling up tension in the region and ended up in the form of the Sino-Indian War of October-November 1962.

Later statements in *The Tibet Mirror* attributed to the Indian Prime Minister on the Tibet Question were more reserved and diplomatic in their tone. For example, in July 1959, Tharchin included another excerpt from Nehru's speech, but unlike three months earlier, this time the Indian Prime Minister said nothing regarding the political status of Tibet and confined himself to a summary of the current conditions offered for Tibetan immigrants in India:

As it was reported in the news from New Delhi on July 7, [1959], during a monthly meeting with journalists in Delhi, the esteemed Prime Minister Nehru made a speech.

Esteemed Prime Minister Nehru [said] regarding the venerable Dalai Lama: "It is difficult to distinguish what must be said, [but] we clearly see how he is doing. We are equally aware of [his] feelings [because of] the difficulties. The venerable Dalai Lama has reached the age of 25.<sup>31</sup> Not only he [himself], but his fellow countrymen too have lived through a terrifying experience.

---

<sup>30</sup> *'di ni bkas bskos rgyud 'dzin pa'i dbang gnon the byus byas pa ma red.*

<sup>31</sup> The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso (Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho) was born on July 6, 1935, which means that in 1959 he was 24 years old according to the Western system of age-counting. Nehru, in Tharchin's account, is apparently using the East Asian system of age-counting, in which one year is added to the child's age at birth. Tsering Shakya reports that 1959, when the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama turned 25, was considered to be astrologically unfavourable for the Tibetan leader, which was why some Tibetans believed that 1959 would bring difficulties not only for the 14<sup>th</sup>

As you [can] understand, since he is the main religious leader [of Tibet], we paid him our respects with a warm welcome. As long as the venerable Dalai Lama is in India, we will treat him with great love and respect. [We] have not only welcomed about 12,000 more people [from Tibet] but, having gradually divided the Tibetans who asked for asylum into groups, we will send them to various mountain areas. The refugees will not be sent to the plains. [Some of them] will be sent to the ancient monasteries of Sikkim, and some will be settled in other areas unrelated to Sikkim. The children of [Tibetan] refugees have been and are being sent [now] to schools and similar institutions. We are trying to overcome these difficult circumstances gradually.”<sup>32</sup>

In Tharchin’s narrative from July 1959, India gives “a warm welcome”<sup>33</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and the Tibetans who fled after him, takes into consideration the high-altitude factor of Tibetan native areas while arranging the refugee settlements and tries to resolve the existing difficulties. Nehru expresses his sympathy and empathy for the people of Tibet and the Dalai Lama, yet he makes it clear that Tenzin Gyatso (Bstan ’dzin rgya mtsho) has the status of a “religious leader,”<sup>34</sup> not a political one. The Indian Prime Minister describes the experience of the Dalai Lama as “terrifying,”<sup>35</sup> but diplomatically refers to Tibetan refugees as the Dalai Lama’s “fellow countrymen,”<sup>36</sup> but not as his “subjects,” or his “people.”

Before publishing this report, Tharchin included a one-sentence statement in his paper: “Any kind of Tibetan government on the Indian territory will not be recognised.”<sup>37</sup> No matter how much the editor of *The Tibet Mirror* would have hoped for the opposite, but this time Nehru confined his discourse strictly within the framework of

---

Dalai Lama himself, but for all Tibetans (Shakya 2000: 191). Perhaps, Nehru mentions the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama’s age in his speech in connection with this prejudice popular among Tibetans back at the time.

<sup>32</sup> TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, June 1959, pp. 7–8.

<sup>33</sup> *dga’ bsu zhus*.

<sup>34</sup> *chos kyi dbu gtso*.

<sup>35</sup> *’jigs rung gi nyams myong myangs pa red*.

<sup>36</sup> *khong gi lung pa’i mi nams*.

<sup>37</sup> *rgya gar sa gnas su bod gzhung dang ’dra zhig yin rung ngos ’dzin byed kyi ma red* (TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, June 1959, p. 7).

Indian humanitarian aid, which Tharchin could not present as support for Tibetan independence.

In the July 1959 issue of *The Tibet Mirror*, Tharchin allocated more space to promoting positive images of India and Sikkim as “friends” of Tibet who readily came to the aid of Tibetan migrants (see Appendix 2). According to Tharchin, India comes to the rescue and does “everything possible”<sup>38</sup> for Tibetans who fled the PRC: it grants asylum to all refugees, tries to settle them in cooler areas, improves their living conditions, collects donations for them, and takes good care of Tibetan lamas and monks. Sikkim,<sup>39</sup> being portrayed as another important “friend” of Tibet, also provides tangible and no less sympathetic assistance to Tibetan immigrants. At the same time, Tharchin underlines in his report that “what matters most” is that, despite the difficulties, “the venerable Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government will certainly make every possible effort”<sup>40</sup> for the benefit of Tibetans. The editor of *The Tibet Mirror* thus supports the construction of a narrative in which the Tibetan Ganden Phodrang government, having migrated along with the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama to India, did not lose its legitimacy and continued working for the benefit of its subjects, with the only difference being that now it was to perform its duties from the territory of India.

Tharchin’s publications about India’s concern for the Tibet Question were not limited to reports about Indian humanitarian aid for Tibetan refugees. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the editor also made room in his newspaper for Indian public figures who condemned Chinese communist oppression and human rights violations in Tibet. For instance, in November–December 1959, under the resonant title, “A Drama of Suffering and Terror Is Being Played in Tibet,”<sup>41</sup> Tharchin published a translation of a public statement on the Tibet Question made by the Indian politician Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi (1887–1971; see Appendix 3).

<sup>38</sup> *thabs shes gang drag gnang mus su mchis*.

<sup>39</sup> The Indologists Yurlov and Yurlova (2010: 313) define Sikkim of that period as “a quasi-sovereign state which was a protectorate of India.”

<sup>40</sup> *gtso che gong sa mchog dang bod gzhung nas thabs shes gang drag gnang nges*.

<sup>41</sup> *bod du mya ngan dang 'jigs skrag can gyi zlos gar zhig khrab bzhin pa red*.

Munshi’s speech was a highly critical assessment of the Chinese communist policy in Tibet, expressing views similar to Tharchin’s anti-communist position. Munshi, an activist of the Indian independence movement, politician, and writer, is presented in *The Tibet Mirror* as speaking on behalf of all India. His statement was published nine months after the Dalai Lama’s flight to India, but it is much harsher in its rhetoric than Nehru’s speech the previous April. In Munshi’s rendering, there is no longer any talk about Chinese suzerainty, and instead, the emphasis is placed on the fact that Tibet had certainly been independent (“earlier Tibet used to be an independent religious state just like us”<sup>42</sup>). Additional ambivalence is added when speaking about the years since 1950 when Tibet was already officially part of the PRC, Munshi implies that Tibet still nevertheless held its “independent” political status: “The introduction of any malevolent and highly improper measures [aimed] at the restriction of human rights and of the religious sphere of an independent [Tibetan] state are nothing but indecent evil acts which violate ethical norms.”<sup>43</sup>

Much as Tharchin had done in his own writing, the Indian politician portrays the PRC as an aggressor and a tyrant. In three consecutive sentences, Munshi uses grammatical constructions to suggest that the Chinese aggression will be of indefinite duration and aimed not only at Tibet but at the entire continent of Asia: Chinese communists “have conducted and are conducting a campaign of violent expansionism,”<sup>44</sup> “have said and are saying that they will liberate not only Tibet, [but] all people of Asia,”<sup>45</sup> and “have unbearably oppressed and are [currently] oppressing Tibet.”<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> *sngon du bod 'di ni nga tsho dang 'dra bas chos ldan rang btsan rgyal khab gcig yin.*

<sup>43</sup> *rang btsan rgyal khab de'i mi'i dbang tshad dang /\_chos phyogs su shin tu mi mtshams pa'i lag len ngan pa ji dang ji bstar ba rnam ni mi chos khrims 'gal gyi las ngan 'tshabs chen sha stag bgyis.*

<sup>44</sup> *rgya nag han zer ba'i mi rigs de dag ni rgya 'gyed btsan bshed ring lugs kyi las 'gul byas dang byed mus red.*

<sup>45</sup> *de tshos bod tсам ma yin par e she ya'i mi rigs yongs la bcing bkrol btang gi yin zhes brjod dang brjod mus red.*

<sup>46</sup> *rgya dmar nas bod la mnar gcod mi bzod pa btang dang gtong bzhin.*

Munshi emphasises twice the “terrifying situation” of the “unbearable suffering”<sup>47</sup> “and the “terrible situation in Tibet,”<sup>48</sup> while accusing the PRC of “the extermination of the fine ancient traditional religion and culture of the entire Tibetan nation, as well as the social norms, rights, and basic welfare of [all] human beings;”<sup>49</sup> and “destroying the entire Tibetan nation.”<sup>50</sup> Tharchin’s account of the speech concludes with an assurance of India’s sympathy for Tibet and Munshi’s concern for the Tibet Question: “It is important to help [lay] the foundation of peace in Tibet.”<sup>51</sup>

It was not only Munshi who contributed to the construction of the image of the PRC as a dangerous neighbour “at the doorway”<sup>52</sup> of India. Tharchin actively promoted this idea himself and thus tried to insert some alienation into Sino-Indian relations. For instance, in the February–March 1961 issue, he published an ominous warning, with a poetic ending, entitled “Fears That the Happiness of Minority Nationalities of the Himalayas Is Going to Be Devoured by Red Demons from the East”<sup>53</sup> (see Appendix 4).

In the article, Tharchin introduces the conspiracy theory of the “Five Fingers,” which are assumed to be of critical importance to India and which, in his opinion, are going to be seized<sup>54</sup> by the PRC to undermine the “strength”<sup>55</sup> of India. The conception of the foreign policy theory called “The Five Fingers of Tibet (西藏的五指 *xizang de*

<sup>47</sup> *bod yul du deng sang mya ngan mi bzod pas mnar ba'i gnas lugs 'jigs su rung ba'i skor thos.*

<sup>48</sup> *rgya dmar nas [...] bod la gnas lugs ngan pa rgya cher spel ba red.*

<sup>49</sup> *bod rigs yongs rdzogs kyi sngar srol bzang po'i chos dang shes rig rnam dang 'gro ba mi'i tshad dbang bde rtsa rnam rtsa med bzo 'gyur brtsams pa red.*

<sup>50</sup> *bod rigs yongs rdzogs rtsa med bzos pa red.*

<sup>51</sup> *bod la zhi bde 'thob pa'i gzhi rtsar phan grogs nges par gnang dgos gal che zhes gsungs 'dug.*

<sup>52</sup> *rang re's sgo 'gram la.*

<sup>53</sup> *hi ma la ya'i ri bsul du chags pa'i mi rigs grangs nyung rnam kyi bde skyid la shar phyogs srin dmar gyis za sems la dwogs zon.*

<sup>54</sup> *rgya gar gyi byang phyogs su lag sor lta bu'i sa gnas 'gag rtsa che ba nub stod la dwags dang smad shar a sam khul dang / bar du khyim mtshes rgyal khab bal yul dang 'bras 'brug khag la [...] za sems dbang gnon byed phyir dmar po'i srid byus spel thabs dang / rgya gar nas tha dad du 'phral thabs byed kyi yod pa red.*

<sup>55</sup> *rgya gar gyi stobs shugs la gnod thabs byed kyi yod pa red.*

*wu zhi*)” is attributed to Mao Zedong. Still, no official information has been found to confirm that. According to the theory, the leader of the PRC held Tibet as the “palm” of a “hand,” while the territories of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh, and present-day Arunachal Pradesh were the five “fingers” of it.<sup>56</sup> After the incorporation of Tibet into the PRC in 1951, Chinese communists allegedly sought to create a buffer zone on the Sino–Indian border, which the so-called “five fingers” were to form (Singh 2013: 1; Smith 2013: 27). By promoting the “Five Fingers of Tibet” theory, Tharchin, first and foremost, tries to antagonise India against the PRC, while also provocatively urging Sikkim, Nepal, and Bhutan to “stay very cautious” and “not get fooled”<sup>57</sup> by the promises of the Chinese.

The editor uses the label “demons”<sup>58</sup> for Chinese communists, literally excluding them from “the human realm,”<sup>59</sup> where representatives of the PRC cause “the real experience of suffering.”<sup>60</sup> To characterise the policy of “communist demons,” Tharchin uses graphic similes (the 17-Point Agreement is “like a razor smeared with honey and a hat made of wet leather;”<sup>61</sup> “harmed” India is “like [...] a palm without fingers which is left without any strength”<sup>62</sup>), as well as metaphors (owing to the fault of “demons,” Tibetans suffer from “committing suicide with the razor [smeared with honey]”<sup>63</sup> and having their heads “squeezed ... by the hat made of wet leather”<sup>64</sup> that

---

<sup>56</sup> Singh 2013: 1. The professor of the US Naval War College Paul J. Smith argues that the author of the “five fingers” metaphor was the British journalist Desmond Doig, who published an article entitled “India to Protect Border States” in *The Washington Post* on Aug. 26, 1959 (Smith 2013: 27, 34). It is interesting that the publications on the “Five Fingers” theory by both Teshu Singh and Paul J. Smith came out in 2013.

<sup>57</sup> *de la dwogs zon chen po gnang zhing / dbu ma 'khor na ha cang yag po red.*

<sup>58</sup> *srin mo; srin dmar.*

<sup>59</sup> *mi yul.*

<sup>60</sup> *sdug bsngal [...] dngos myang ji byung la gzigs.*

<sup>61</sup> *sbrang rtsi byugs pa'i spu gri dang klo rlon zhwa mo dang 'dra ba'i gros mthun don mtshan 17pa.*

<sup>62</sup> *sor mo med pa'i lag mthil la nus shugs gang yang bral ba ltar gyaa gar [...] la gnod.*

<sup>63</sup> *spu gris rang srog bcad.*

<sup>64</sup> *ko rlon zha mos rang mgo btsir.*

starts to dry up), and epithets (“feigned love,”<sup>65</sup> “pleasant demonic lies”<sup>66</sup>). At the same time, the editor repeats four times that Tibet was and still is an “independent state”: “earlier, there was an independent Tibetan Religious State between India and China,”<sup>67</sup> “the independent Tibetan state stood like a border guard,”<sup>68</sup> “the independent Tibetan government submitted a petition,”<sup>69</sup> and “the independent Tibetan state has no choice but [...]”<sup>70</sup>

Concluding the article with four seven-syllable lines, Tharchin resorts to hyperbole to declare the destruction of “the entire Tibetan nation”<sup>71</sup> and uses syntactic and lexical parallelism to liken the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence<sup>72</sup> to the 17-Point Agreement, in which Tibet officially recognised itself as part of the PRC in 1951. Thus, the editor tries to convince India that China deceived it in 1954 and seeks to create further tension in Sino–Indian relations.

### 1.3 *The Kuomintang*

Who else, in Tharchin’s opinion, was among the “friends” of Tibet? In the 1950s and 1960s, representatives of the Kuomintang—unlike Chinese communists—were described in *The Tibet Mirror* not as “enemies” of Tibet, but rather as allies of Tibetans. Tharchin referred to the Kuomintang as the “true” or “genuine” Chinese government<sup>73</sup> and, most importantly, claimed that the Kuomintang government

---

<sup>65</sup> *bcos ma'i brtse ba.*

<sup>66</sup> *rgya dmar srin mo'i g.yo gtam snyan po.*

<sup>67</sup> *sngon du rgya gar dang rgya nag gnyis kyi bar la bod chos ldan rang btsan rgyal khab yod.*

<sup>68</sup> *bod rang dbang rgyal khab kyis [...] sa srung ba lta bur gnas yod pa red.*

<sup>69</sup> *bod rang btsan gzhung gis [...] snyan gseng zhus.*

<sup>70</sup> *rang btsan bod rgyal khab de yang da cha rgya dmar btsan 'og tu mi tshud ka med byung ba red.*

<sup>71</sup> *bod rigs thams cad phung.*

<sup>72</sup> The principles known in Hindi as the Panchsheel (पंचशील) were adopted by India and the PRC in 1954 in the Preamble to the Sino–Indian Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet Region of China and India (Tikhvinskiy 2017: 570).

<sup>73</sup> E.g., see TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, June 1959, suppl. 2 or TIM, Vol. XXI, No. 5, Aug. 1953, p. 7.

would grant Tibet independence if it regained its control over mainland China.<sup>74</sup> In the Chinese news column in *The Tibet Mirror*, the editor advocated for the return of the Kuomintang to mainland China and predicted that Chiang Kai-shek would be successful in his confrontation with the CCP.<sup>75</sup>

Tharchin repeatedly placed news about the Kuomintang alongside news from Tibet. For example, on the front page of *The Tibet Mirror* in the January 1954 issue, amid news about the Kuomintang, the editor published a letter from Tibet in which the author criticised the policy of the PRC and the “liberation” of Tibet by the PLA.<sup>76</sup> Directly above this letter, Tharchin placed a piece of news stating that the Kuomintang government was about to attack the Chinese Communist Party. Immediately after the letter, the editor shared the news that the government of the US was currently assisting the Kuomintang with arms and that Kuomintang troops would very soon be seen entering mainland China.<sup>77</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, Tharchin portrayed the Kuomintang as a valuable ally of Tibetan nationalists not only because any “enemy” of the PRC automatically was considered a “friend” of defenders of Tibetan independence, but also because, in Tharchin’s interpretation, the alliance with the Kuomintang was virtually equivalent to the alliance with the US. The editor recurrently emphasised that the Kuomintang enjoyed the broad support of the United States and that, therefore, the coalition of interests between these two governments left the PRC with no chance to win. For instance, in the September 1954 issue, under the title “Exaggeration regarding the Liberation of Formosa, or Taiwan,”<sup>78</sup> Tharchin argued that any threats to Taiwan’s security made by the Chinese communist government would meet an equally strong response from the U.S. government—if the PRC pursues its aim to “certainly liberate” Taiwan,<sup>79</sup> the United States “will

---

<sup>74</sup> TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, June 1959, suppl. 2.

<sup>75</sup> TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, June 1959, suppl. 2.

<sup>76</sup> TIM, Vol. XXI, No. 10, Jan. 1954, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> TIM, Vol. XXI, No. 10, Jan. 1954, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> *phor mo sa'am da'i wan bcings bkrol gtong rgyu'i 'ur gtam.*

<sup>79</sup> *ring ming phor gling bcings bkrol byed nges gtan.*



certainly defend" it.<sup>80</sup> He uses the word "certainly" twice, but at the same time indicates that his account is an approximation ("replied something like this"<sup>81</sup>):

Beijing radio recently announced: "Soon, we will certainly liberate the island of Formosa. No foreign state is allowed to interfere at that time. If anyone does so [i.e., interferes], he will get into trouble."

The American President replied something like this: "The 7th Marine Regiment [of the US] will certainly defend the island of Formosa."

When I look at such statements, I clearly see that if the [Chinese] Communist Party invades the island of Formosa, the United States will provide support to Chiang Kai-shek. Given the circumstances, would not the conflagration of the Third World War get ignited at Formosa, as a result of which the soldiers and communist fire[power] would destroy themselves and others?<sup>82</sup>

On the same page of *The Tibet Mirror*, immediately following this news, under the title "Liberation of China,"<sup>83</sup> Tharchin reported on the decisive plans of the Kuomintang leader himself. Here, he depicts the Chinese communists as oppressing the people of China and as the "enemies of the Buddhist teaching,"<sup>84</sup> while Chiang Kai-shek, who is identified as "the genuine ruler of China,"<sup>85</sup> is said to promise "certainly" not just "liberation from the oppression of the followers of communist Russia,"<sup>86</sup> but also independence:<sup>87</sup>

The genuine ruler of China, Chiang Kai-shek, said: "All people of China that are [still] left in the isolated areas will soon be certainly made happy as a result of liberation from the oppression of the followers of communist Russia."

<sup>80</sup> *phor gling la mtsho dmag ang bdun pas bsrung skyobs byed nges gtan yin.*

<sup>81</sup> *de'i lan lta bu.*

<sup>82</sup> TIM, Vol. XXII, No. 5, Sept. 1954, p. 11.

<sup>83</sup> *rgya nag bcings dkrol.*

<sup>84</sup> *bstan dgra gung bran* (e.g., TIM, Vol. XXVII, No. 6, Feb.–Mar. 1961, p. 5).

<sup>85</sup> *rgya gzhung ngo ma'i spyi khyab cang kai shag.*

<sup>86</sup> *btsan dbang nas rgya nag yongs kyi mi dmangs mya ngam thang lus rnam la bcings bkrol thog bde la 'god rgyu nges gtan yin.*

<sup>87</sup> *slad phyin bod rang dbang rang btsan du 'jog rgyu'i rtsa 'dzin sogs kyang gtan la phab bsgrubs.*

Not only did he [Chiang Kai-shek] say that, [but] he said that Tibetan Buddhism, which is being forcefully harmed by [the spread of] atheism in the religious region, will also be liberated. It is said that even a program, according to which Tibet will be left independent in the future, was settled.

In any case, even though both sides claim that they will liberate each other, at present, one can only wonder who will set whom free. If [the Kuomintang] does not liberate [Tibet], then the Third World War will liberate [it].<sup>88</sup>

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Tharchin repeatedly published articles intended to imbue his readers with a sense of trust in the benevolent intentions of the Kuomintang towards Tibet. For instance, *The Tibet Mirror* issue of July–August 1958 said that the Kuomintang government had expressed “pleasure”<sup>89</sup> at news of the pro-independence rebellion in Kham, promised “to provide relevant large-scale assistance,”<sup>90</sup> and condemned Chinese migration to Tibet as intended to “destroy the Tibetan nation”:<sup>91</sup>

According to the rough translation of a report from a Chinese newspaper [published] in Calcutta, the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission in Formosa stated:

“[We] are very pleased that at present, the people in the Tibetan region of Kham, having gathered their own army, are organising a major uprising against communist China in order to protect their religious system and independence. The situation with their needs, goals, etc. will be analysed in detail, and in the future, the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission plans to provide relevant large-scale assistance. By relocating a large number of Chinese people to Tibet, communist China has been thus employing numerous strategies to destroy the Tibetan nation. Tibetans certainly need to be cautious of this.”<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup> TIM, Vol. XXII, No. 5, Sept. 1954, p. 11.

<sup>89</sup> *deng dus khams bod khul du rang gi chos lugs dang rang dbang bsrung ched [...] rgya dmar la ngo rgol chen po byed kyi yod 'dug pa de la ha cang dga' spro chen po byung.*

<sup>90</sup> *gang la gang 'os kyi rogs ram rgya chen po byed rtsis yin.*

<sup>91</sup> *rgya dmar nas rgya yi mi dmangs mang po bod du btang nas bod kyi mi rigs med pa byed pa'i thabs byus mang po byed kyi yod pa red.*

<sup>92</sup> TIM, Vol. XXV, No. 3–4, July–Aug. 1958, p. 12.

After the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's flight to India, Tharchin also covered the Kuomintang's assistance to Tibetan immigrants in his newspaper. For instance, in *The Tibet Mirror* issue dated November–December 1959, he published a “rough translation”<sup>93</sup> of an excerpt from a speech<sup>94</sup> by Li Yongxin (李永新 1901–1972), the official in charge of the Kuomintang's Tibet policy. According to the article, Li had expressed concern about the fate of Tibetan refugees (“the government of Taiwan needs to find a way to accommodate all of them”<sup>95</sup> and “the government of Taiwan will find a way to accommodate”<sup>96</sup> Tibetan refugees), referred to Tibetans twice as “brothers,”<sup>97</sup> claimed to be helping even those Tibetans who are not refugees but live permanently in Taiwan (“the government provides them with help, and their living conditions are very good”<sup>98</sup>), and offered to provide for other Tibetans who might decide to immigrate to Taiwan:

“After the uprising in Lhasa in March 1959, there are more than 25,000 Tibetan monks and laymen who went into flight. The government of Taiwan needs to find a way to accommodate all of them. Apart from that, more than 5,000 of them [Tibetan refugees] sent the [following] petition to the government of Taiwan: ‘Since we will certainly expel Chinese communists, [we] ask for help, support, and assistance.’ Therefore, in order to save Tibetan brothers, the government of Taiwan will find a way to accommodate [them],” —said [Li Yongxin].

Among Taiwan citizens, there are more than 700 people in the government who voluntarily help their Tibetan brothers. Moreover, people who donate money gave more than 800 Taiwanese dollars<sup>99</sup> to the government of Taiwan to help Tibet.

---

<sup>93</sup> *rags bsgyur*.

<sup>94</sup> “Head of the Kuomintang Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission Li Yongxin Stated [the Following] at the Meeting,” (*go min tang gi bod sog las khungs kyi dpon po rlis yun shing nas tshogs 'dur gsungs par*).

<sup>95</sup> *de tshang ma da'i wan gzhung nas tshur blang thabs byed dgos*.

<sup>96</sup> *da'i wan gzhung nas [...] tshur blang thabs byed kyi yin*.

<sup>97</sup> *bod rigs spun zla rnams la rogs skyabs slad* and *bod rigs spun zla rnams la dwangs blang rogs ram byed*.

<sup>98</sup> *de tshor gzung nas rogs ram gnang zhing 'tsho gos sogs ha cang yag po 'dug*.

<sup>99</sup> Tharchin used the basic term *sgor* which can refer to any currency, but in context is assumed here to refer to Taiwanese dollars.

Nowadays, there are altogether 466 Tibetans and Mongols among the residents of Taiwan. The government provides them with help, and their living conditions are very good.<sup>100</sup>

Amid the continuous reporting on Chinese communists being the “enemies of the Buddhist teaching,” Tharchin also featured news on how the Kuomintang government made offerings to Tibetan monks during the Monlam Chenmo celebrations in India in 1961:

I heard the news that recently, during the Lhasa Monlam Chenmo Festival celebration at the Tibetan monastery in Bodhgaya, the Kuomintang government of China respectfully presented each monk with an offering of money, tea, and soup.<sup>101</sup>

Thus, in Tharchin’s anti-communist discourse, the Kuomintang government occupied an important position of a “friend” of Tibet and the Tibetan-speaking diaspora: the Kuomintang promised to grant independence to Tibet if it won over the CCP, it supported anti-communist uprisings in Tibet, its followers demonstrated a sympathetic attitude towards Tibetans residing in Taiwan, and—unlike representatives of the CCP—they expressed profound respect for Tibetan Buddhism.

Representatives of the Kuomintang did, indeed, offer financial aid and arms to the Tibetan insurgents (Shakya 2000: 170–172; Rgyal lo don grub 2015: 146), and in March 1959, pressured by the US Chiang Kai-shek declared the future prospect of Tibet’s self-determination if the Kuomintang succeeded in returning to mainland China (Shakya 2000: 231). However, the possibility of Tibetan self-determination under a future Kuomintang regime did not mean that the Kuomintang government had renounced the idea of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. As the Japanese scholar Kensaku Okawa has noted, the official position of the Tibetan government-in-exile now regards any cooperation with the Kuomintang as compromising the claim of Tibet as independent from China, and Tibetans who cooperated with the Kuomintang government in the 1960s and 1970s are considered as “betrayers” (Okawa 2007: 607, 599).

---

<sup>100</sup> TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 6–7, Nov.–Dec. 1959, p. 9.

<sup>101</sup> TIM, Vol. XXVII, No. 6, Feb.–Mar. 1961, p.6.

Tharchin's view of the Kuomintang as a "friend" of Tibet was, nevertheless, shared by some individual Tibetan politicians in exile. In particular, the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's elder brother Gyalo Thondup—who as a youth had studied in China with financial support from Chiang Kai-shek—wrote in his memoir that Chiang Kai-shek treated him "as a son," "never said that Tibet had ever been part of China," and "was also willing for Tibet to remain independent" (Rgyal lo don grub 2015: 73–75). After the PRC had made clear its goal to "liberate" Tibet, Gyalo Thondup, who was married to a daughter of the leading general in the Kuomintang army (Knaus 2003: 64; Rgyal lo don grub 2015: 80, 121), went to Taiwan in May 1950 on a passport issued by the Kuomintang government and met with Chiang Kai-shek, who offered him the position of the Head of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (Shakya 2000: 40; Okawa 2007: 600; Rgyal lo don grub 2015: 118). After spending 16 months in Taiwan as a paid guest of Chiang Kai-shek, Gyalo Thondup left for the US with his Kuomintang-issued passport and a cheque for 50,000 US dollars from the Kuomintang leader (Rgyal lo don grub 2015: 121, 123). Only after his visit to the US did Gyalo Thondup change his mind on the favourability of cooperation with the Kuomintang and instead prioritise direct contact with the US. In his memoir, he explained his change of heart by noting the discrepancy between the Kuomintang's goal of fighting against Chinese communists to regain power in mainland China and "the struggle for a free and independent Tibet" by Tibetan fighters. In any case, in those years, he wrote, it seemed to him that "the US was so great and powerful that it could make almost anything happen" (Rgyal lo don grub 2015: 146).

It is also worth mentioning that in his memoirs, Gyalo Thondup notes that a group of Tibetan immigrants in Kalimpong who were working on the Tibet Question in India in the 1950s and 1960s (i.e., Gcen mkhan rtsis gsum<sup>102</sup>) "persuaded" Tharchin Babu to increase the

---

<sup>102</sup> The Gcen mkhan rtsis gsum was an anti-Chinese group of Tibetan *émigrés* formed in the 1950s in Kalimpong by Gyalo Thondup, the former Tibetan minister Shakapba, and the Tibetan monk official of the 4<sup>th</sup> rank Khenchung Lobsang Gyaltzen (Mkhan chung Blo bzang Rgyal mtshan). From 1954 onwards, the group unofficially cooperated with the Indian government and the Indian Intelligence

production of *The Tibet Mirror* to once a week (Rgyal lo don grub 2015: 149). Given that, the cooperation between Tharchin and Gyalo Thondup was probably not limited to a one-time contact about increasing the frequency of the newspaper’s production. Reading through the pages of *The Tibet Mirror*, one cannot help noticing that the views on the Tibet Question, certain wordings, and specific individuals mentioned by Gyalo Thondup in his book largely coincide with those mentioned by Tharchin in his newspaper in the 1950s and 1960s.

#### 1.4 *The United States*

References to the US in *The Tibet Mirror* are found not only in the context of the United States government’s assistance aimed at transforming Taiwan into an “unsinkable aircraft carrier”<sup>103</sup> that posed a threat to the CCP. In his newspaper, Tharchin also featured panegyrics acclaiming the splendour of the US in general. In May 1958,<sup>104</sup> he placed two articles facing each other on the same page. The first was headlined: “America Is the Good Mother of Asian Countries.”<sup>105</sup> To its right, the second headline read: “Communist China Has Become a Common Enemy of All Asian Countries.”<sup>106</sup> Whereas Tharchin labelled the PRC in *The Tibet Mirror* as a “common enemy”<sup>107</sup> or a “global enemy,”<sup>108</sup> he depicted the US as a “good mother” who was providing financial aid (in this article, it was US\$399 million) to various Asian countries (namely South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Republic of Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, and Laos).

---

Bureau as a pro-Indian Tibetan organisation and even received funding from India to gather intelligence on the situation in Tibet and on the Sino–Indian border (Goldstein 2014: 155–157, 161, 163, 168–169). For more details, see Goldstein 2014: 141–206.

<sup>103</sup> The metaphor is borrowed from Tikhvinskiy 2017: 569.

<sup>104</sup> TIM, Vol. XXV, No. 1, May 1958, p. 6.

<sup>105</sup> *a mi ri ka ni e she ya’i rgyal khab rnams kyi a ma bzang po zhig yin.*

<sup>106</sup> *rgya nag gung bran ni e she ya’i rgyal khab tshang ma’i spyi dgrar longs ’dug.*

<sup>107</sup> *spyi dgra.*

<sup>108</sup> *’dzam gling spyi’i dgra bo* (TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 8, July 1950, p. 3).

It was thus protecting Asia, as he put it, from the “great danger” that Asian countries were certain to be exposed to if they were to “fall into the hands of communists.”<sup>109</sup>

Suggesting that the US shared something else—no less important—in common with the “Tibetan Religious State,” Tharchin introduced the concept of the US as the “American Religious State.”<sup>110</sup> Offering as visual evidence five photographs of the smiling Mongolian community in the US and of a new Buddhist temple that American citizens had built there for the Mongols,<sup>111</sup> Tharchin highlighted the supportive attitude of the US towards Buddhism and the potential for the establishment of friendly relations between the US and Tibet.

The positive image of the US as a “friend” of Tibet was also built on the basis of the American position on the Tibet Question and on their relations with the Kuomintang government. Tharchin tried to show in *The Tibet Mirror* that the US had great influence over the government of Chiang Kai-shek and that Americans supported Tibet’s independence, arguing that therefore, if the Kuomintang returned to mainland China, given their American support, Tibet was sure to become independent again. For example, in the April 1959 issue of *The Mirror*, Tharchin published “news from Washington”<sup>112</sup> that in his view clearly indicated US confirmation of the Kuomintang’s support for Tibetan independence:

The Press Secretary of the U.S. government said: “The esteemed leader of the Kuomintang government of China, Chiang Kai-shek, and his government repeated that since [they] treated with respect the religious and secular autonomous government of Tibet, they would be granting independence [to Tibet]. This fact made us happy.”<sup>113</sup>

Tharchin also gave space in his paper to news of America’s humanitarian aid to Tibetan refugees. In two news reports published immediately after the proclamation issued by “the Tibetan Volunteer

<sup>109</sup> *gal srid [...] gung bran gyi lag tu shor na e she ya rgyal khab tshang ma gnas thabs med pa'i nyen kha chen po zhig yod.*

<sup>110</sup> *chos ldan rgyal khab a me ri ka* (TIM, Vol. XXV, No. 7, Dec. 1958, p. 1).

<sup>111</sup> TIM, Vol. XXV, No. 7, Dec. 1958, pp. 1–2.

<sup>112</sup> *wa shing Ton gyi gsar gsal ltar.*

<sup>113</sup> TIM, Vol. XXV, No. 11, Apr. 1959, p. 3.

Army for Defence of Religion” in March 1959, the title of which was untypically provided in both Tibetan and English,<sup>114</sup> Tharchin first claimed that the US is ready to assist in the education of Tibetan youth and to arrange a permanent place of residence for Tibetan immigrants. In his second report, he detailed the humanitarian aid delivered to Tibetans by the US in the form of medicinal drugs and vitamins, worth in total US\$410,000.<sup>115</sup> Immediately after the report on the American aid, Tharchin published news that Taiwan had also provided assistance to Tibetan migrants and that the Tibetan government-in-exile had thanked the Kuomintang government for its help.<sup>116</sup> There was, however, no mention in *The Tibet Mirror* in the 1950s and 1960s of the CIA’s assistance to the Tibetan guerilla forces.

## 2 Internationalisation of the Tibet Question

While constructing the metanarrative of Tibetan independence in *The Tibet Mirror*, Tharchin not only shaped images of specific countries as “friends” of Tibet but also elaborated on the need for support of the Tibet Question from the international community. Tharchin discussed in this context the role of modern intergovernmental structures such as the United Nations (UN). As early as October 1, 1949, when the founding of the PRC was formally proclaimed, the editor tried to inform his Tibetan readership about the bases for obtaining membership of the UN. In an article entitled “Nepalese Government Attempts to Join the United Nations,”<sup>117</sup> he provided a “rough translation” of the submission of the Nepalese government to join the UN, which listed Nepal’s arguments for proving its independence as a state. These included the fact that it had sent diplomats abroad, that it had signed treaties with other nations (including Tibet), that it had its army, and that there were no foreigners in its government or army

<sup>114</sup> *bstan srid dmag sgar gyis dril bsgrags*; Eng. *Proclamation Made by the Tibetan Volunteer Army for Defence [sic] of Religion on 19-3-1959*.

<sup>115</sup> TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 2–3, July–Aug. 1959, p. 15 [i.e. 17].

<sup>116</sup> TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 2–3, July–Aug. 1959, p. 15 [i.e. 17].

<sup>117</sup> *gor Sha gzhung 'dzam gling mthun tshogs su tshud thabs*.



(see Appendix 5). Later, in September 1950, the editor mentioned this article from the previous October and gave his readers a sample of his reasoning for Tibet's admittance to the UN.<sup>118</sup> One can say that ever since the early 1950s, Tharchin had been consistently portraying the UN as another potential "friend" of Tibet, the attention that Tibetans needed to secure for their independence to be officially recognised by the international community.

The editor collected and presented in *The Tibet Mirror* any evidence of the international community's support or sympathy for Tibet in its fight against the Chinese communists. For instance, in June–July 1960, Tharchin reported that such an authoritative organisation recognised the oppression of Tibet by Chinese communists as the International Commission of Jurists:

A group of international jurists wrote down in a book reliable information about the Tibet Question and submitted [it] to the United Nations General Assembly. [They reported that] communist China had continuously oppressed and was [still] oppressing Tibet. In order to fully exterminate the Buddhist teaching, [Chinese communists] destroyed the protective stupas and other [sacred sites]. By means of "struggle sessions," [Chinese communists] killed many prominent lamas and *tulkus*, etc.<sup>119</sup>

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) was established in 1952 to counterbalance the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, which was under the control of the Soviet Union during the Cold War era and was thus perceived as a pro-communist organisation. However, the International Commission of Jurists was not an entirely independent and objective structure either, for the organisation was secretly sponsored by the CIA until 1967 (Tolley 1994: 31; Claude 1994: 576–577). Tsering Shakya describes the ICJ report on the situation in Tibet as "unashamedly pro-Tibetan" (Shakya 2000: 223). But, even though the organisation's report on Tibet reflected the strong anti-communist spirit of the 1950s and 1960s, the

---

<sup>118</sup> TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 10, Sept. 1950, p. 5. For a full translation and analysis of the publication, see Moskaleva 2020: 420–423.

<sup>119</sup> TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 12, June–July 1960, p. 10.

ICJ’s findings played a significant role in increasing publicity for the Tibet Question and in further internationalising it (Shakya 2000: 223).

Tharchin brought up the topic of internationalisation of the Tibet Question in many other articles. For example, in the August–September 1960 issue of *The Tibet Mirror*, under the title “Assembly of States of the World,”<sup>120</sup> the editor once again reminded his readers of the UN and the ICJ findings about Chinese communist policies in Tibet:

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of this month [September 1960], in the big American city called “New York,” there is going to be held the [15<sup>th</sup>] Session of the UN General Assembly. The Tibet Question is to be discussed during this meeting.

A group of international jurists carefully examined the Tibet Question. They presented a book which described in detail the destruction of the true Dharma by communist China and the complete annihilation of Tibetans.

Recently, the Indian government via its operational group<sup>121</sup> also submitted a petition to the [UN General] Assembly to request support for the Tibet Question.

When last year [1959], the Tibet Question was discussed during [the 14<sup>th</sup> Session] of the [UN General] Assembly, representatives of the Nepalese government not only did not support their neighbour Tibet, with which [the Nepalese] share a thousand years of mutual love for religion, but, furthermore, even initiated a harmful discussion<sup>122</sup> [on the Tibet Question]. Therefore, we Tibetans became greatly disheartened. If the Nepalese government has understood well what the policy of communist China is like, will they not provide support to the [discussion of the] Tibet Question this time?<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup> *‘dzam gling spyi’i rgyal khab tshogs ‘du.*

<sup>121</sup> *ape ro e she yan tshogs pa.* Unfortunately, it was not possible to establish a precise translation of this term used by Tharchin.

<sup>122</sup> According to the results of the vote on the UN General Assembly resolution on the Tibet Question that was conducted on Oct. 21, 1959, Nepal abstained from the voting (“Question of Tibet: Resolution / Adopted by the General Assembly 1959”, *United Nations Digital Library*. Available online at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/664377?ln=en>, accessed July 24, 2024).

<sup>123</sup> TIM, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, Aug.–Sept. 1960, p. 12.

The motion to include the Tibet Question in the agenda of the 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly did not, however, gain enough support from the UN member states—49 countries voted in favour, 13 against, and 35 abstained (Shakya 2000: 234). As a result, in 1960, despite the ICJ's report on the "annihilation" of Tibetans, neither the independence of Tibet nor the violation of Tibetan human rights by the PRC became the subject of resolutions passed by the UN that year.

While instructing the Tibetan readership on the importance of engagement with the UN in the struggle to regain Tibet's independence from China, Tharchin provided his readers with particular ideas for gaining more international support. These included strategies for successfully presenting the Tibet Question without even arguing about the political status of Tibet. On the last page of five successive issues of *The Tibet Mirror* published between June and October 1950,<sup>124</sup> Tharchin placed an advertisement in English for gramophone records and books teaching Tibetan language. The striking feature of these advertisements was not, however, the purchasable products, but Tharchin's rationale for the importance at that time of studying Tibetan. Continuing the British colonial tradition of the exoticisation of Tibet, Tharchin refers to Tibet as a "land of mystery,"<sup>125</sup> outlines its importance for world politics and emphasises its cultural heritage and its role as the "museum" of the world, protecting the cultural heritage of all Asia. Tharchin's narrative thus implies that the endorsement of Tibetan independence is essential for establishing and preserving peace in the whole world:

---

<sup>124</sup> See TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 7, June 1950, p. 4; TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 8, July 1950, p. 8; TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 9, Aug. 1950, p. 6; TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 10, Sept. 1950, p. 12; TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 11, 1950, p. 6.

<sup>125</sup> For more information on the image of Tibet constructed by the British colonial officials, see McKay 1995: 189–198.

THE TIBETAN LANGUAGE CAN NOW BE LEARNT AT HOME  
WITHOUT A TEACHER<sup>126</sup>

Tibet is now rapidly gaining international fame and importance in world Politics. In fact the great powers of the world are taking more interest in Tibetan affairs. Tibet is not only a land of mystery but also the “MUSEUM” of the world, because it can claim to have preserved the ancient culture, religion and arts of Asia from ruin. The modern world can learn many things good from Tibet. Tibet has preserved vast ancient Sanskrit literature with faithful translation into Tibetan which are missing from India. It is, therefore, high time that India and all the powers of the world should take more interest in studying its religion, culture and various ancient manners and customs apart from its politics. One can learn many things from Tibet for bringing peace to the world. It is, therefore, very important that one should know the language well. This can now be done very easily with the help of a set of Tibetan language gramophone records and text books. The records are prepared by the Govt. of India and the text books by Sir B.J. Gould, C.M.G., C.I.E. the former Political Officer in Sikkim & Mr. H.E. Richardson, O.B.E., I.C.S. the present Officer Incharge of Indian Mission Lhasa, Tibet.

The text books and set of records are now available from THE TIBET  
MIRROR PRESS, KALIMPONG P.O. (W.Bengal.) India.<sup>127</sup>

As Alex McKay has argued, at the international level, the image of Tibet as a mysterious land contributed to the promotion of the idea that Tibet was a separate state (McKay 1995: 193). It also contributed to the image of Tibet as a cradle of Buddhism and a centre of spirituality (McKay 1995: 193–194). After 1959, this counterposing of the uniqueness of Tibetan culture and the exceptional spirituality of Tibetans with the atheism of Chinese communists was used by the Tibetan exile administration and its leaders as a strategy for winning international support for the Tibetan cause and the Tibetan diaspora (Brox 2006: 93). These efforts led to the culture of Tibet becoming so widely known across the world that it has been acknowledged as a

---

<sup>126</sup> Tharchin’s original orthography, syntax, and style are presented in the cited advertisement intact.

<sup>127</sup> TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 9, Aug. 1950, p. 6.

part of global cultural heritage and as deserving of patronage by the international community (Brox 2006: 93). This in turn has helped the exile administration claim its status as the only legitimate representative of authentic Tibetan culture and of the genuine cultural and religious traditions of Tibetans (Brox 2006: 89).

Another important strategy used by Tharchin to internationalise the Tibet Question involved historical parallels. Danilova considered historical parallels as ways of manipulating the perception of discourse recipients by emphasising the external similarity of two compared objects or events, where the author “substitutes one phenomenon for another” and introduces a set of associations, emotions, and connotations that are relevant to the comparison but not necessarily to the reality of the compared objects (Danilova 2014: 84). This what Tharchin often did when he linked the Tibetan situation to precedents where other countries had either recently achieved international recognition as independent states or had received support of some kind from the UN during their struggles for independence.

One such article discussed the case of the former Outer Mongolia, which, like Tibet, had been part of the Qing Empire but had managed to gain its independence owing to the support of the Soviet Union.<sup>128</sup> Similarly, Tharchin repeatedly published vivid accounts of India’s fight for independence on the front page of his paper.<sup>129</sup> He also drew an analogy between the situation in eastern Tibet under Chinese communist rule and the Soviet–Yugoslav confrontation in 1948–1953. His source of inspiration was Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980), the then leader of Yugoslavia, who had become famous for initiating an independent political and economic development program for his country in the late 1940s. This had led to disagreement with Stalin and as a result Yugoslavia had been expelled from the Cominform; Soviet–Yugoslav relations remained severed until after Stalin’s death in March 1953 (Dvornichenko *et al.* 2008: 398–399). Shortly after, in July 1953, Tharchin published an appeal to the people of Kham to rise up

---

<sup>128</sup> TIM, Vol. XIX, No. 6, Sept. 1951, p. 6.

<sup>129</sup> E.g., TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 10, Sept. 1950, p. 1.

“like Tito,” referring to them as the “Tito[ists]”<sup>130</sup> of Kham (see Appendix 6). In the article, Tharchin called three times for an uprising against “the Other”<sup>131</sup>—the communists—in eastern Tibet in the name of the “independence” of the entire Tibetan “motherland”<sup>132</sup> (“Rise up in the near future for independence like Tito!”).<sup>133</sup> Tharchin thus put Tibet, which had never been officially recognised as independent (or as including Kham), on a par with Yugoslavia, the independence of which had not been disputed since the end of the Second World War.

Later, Tharchin compared the fighting between the Khampas and Chinese communists in eastern Tibet to the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising by Soviet troops in 1956:

According to international law, a powerful state is not allowed to drop bombs from the sky and to fire from tanks on the ground into any protesters [who stand up] in the name of independence of their state, which is inferior in terms of strength and weapons. It is an illegal and evil act of the Chinese communists to have dropped bombs on the barely armed Tibetans who were practicing religion and standing up for the[ir] independence. It is reported that now, because of the fear of a recurrence of uprisings, [the Chinese communists] have additionally sent some tanks to Lhasa.

Recently, Russian communists carried out the invasion of Hungary in a similar manner by [bringing in] tanks and [dropping] bombs on people who stood up for their independence. However, it is reported that the people [of Hungary] continued resisting and fighting with even greater courage.

Recently, Great Britain and France invaded a republican country, and [in response] all states declared that it was unacceptable. However, there is probably not even one who would say “unacceptable” for the sake of our Tibet.

If there is no peace in Tibet, then there will probably be no peace in the whole world.<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>130</sup> *kham bod khul du bzhugs pa'i ti to rnams.*

<sup>131</sup> *gzhan.*

<sup>132</sup> *rang ljongs rgyal khab rang btsan yun gnas ched.*

<sup>133</sup> *mi ring ti to bzhin du sger langgs shog.*

<sup>134</sup> TIM, Vol. XXIII, No. 11, Nov. 1956, p. 4.

The “republican country” that Tharchin referred to here is Egypt, and his reference was to the Suez Crisis. The Anglo–French–Israeli tripartite attack on Egypt over its nationalisation of the Suez Canal in the fall of 1956 resulted in condemnation by the international community, the exerting of diplomatic pressure on Britain, France, and Israel, and the first ever deployment of the United Nations Emergency Force, which was used to secure a cease-fire on the Egyptian–Israeli border.<sup>135</sup> However, as with his reference to the Hungarian Uprising, Tharchin’s comparison of the UN’s lack of response to the suppression of uprisings in eastern Tibet by the PLA to the UN’s intervention in the Suez Crisis is a tenuous one, since Egypt had been a UN member state since 1945.

In April 1959, three years after his reference to the Suez Crisis and one month after the 1959 Uprising in Lhasa, Tharchin turned again to the topic of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. This time, his purpose was to show that he was not alone in seeing similarities between the Soviet suppression of Hungarian protesters and the suppression of uprisings in Tibet by the PLA:

According to a news report from March 30, [1959] from the Malay capital of Kuala Lumpur, the government of the Federation of Malaya stated: the attempt of the Chinese communist government to annihilate [protesters] in Tibet [by the means of] ruthless oppression is identical to [the case of] the 1956 Hungarian Uprising against the USSR.<sup>136</sup>

Behind this appeal to the concurrence of his views with those of the Malayan government, one can see Tharchin’s effort to convince his readers that the lack of peaceful settlement of the Tibet Question would lead to the instability in the whole world, as he had put it in his Suez article of 1956.<sup>137</sup> For Tharchin, the underlying aim was thus to impress upon his readers the broader importance of Tibet’s geopolitical position.

---

<sup>135</sup> See the UN General Assembly Resolution 1001 (ES-I) adopted on Nov. 7, 1956 (Available online at “Resolution 1001 (ES-I)” *United Nations Digital Library*. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/208418>, accessed July 24, 2024).

<sup>136</sup> TIM, Vol. XXV, No. 11, Apr. 1959, p. 8.

<sup>137</sup> *gal srid bod du bde ba ma byung nal 'dzam gling yongs su bde ba zhig e yong.*

### 3 Conclusion

The articles cited in this paper comprise only a fraction of the discourses and narratives found in *The Tibet Mirror* during the 1950s and 1960s. However, even this limited selection of examples shows how, in constructing a metanarrative of Tibetan independence, Tharchin did not only create vivid images of a Tibetan Self and a Chinese communist Other;<sup>138</sup> they show that he also aimed to construct an image of international support for Tibet in its struggle against the PRC. The main members of this support group were, as he saw it, Great Britain, India, the US, and the Kuomintang government. In this narrative, the Kuomintang was presented as, in contrast to the CCP, consistently supportive of Tibetan Buddhism and of Tibetan immigrants to Taiwan, as well as in close contact with the powerful “mother of Asian countries,” that is, the US. The *Tibet Mirror* also depicted the Kuomintang government as having resolutely guaranteed that it would grant independence to Tibet should it regain power, a claim not found in other historical sources.

Furthermore, Tharchin brought to the attention of his readership such essential aspects of the struggle for independence as the need to internationalise the Tibet Question and to engage with modern international organisations, such as the UN. The editor demonstrated how the Tibet Question should be presented to the international community, which facts and historical parallels could be used in arguing for Tibetan independence, and where to seek support for the Tibet Question.

The ideas and arguments that Tharchin laid out in *The Tibet Mirror* were not without influence. Many, if not all, of them would find their way into the policy and advocacy documents subsequently prepared by the Tibetan government-in-exile and exile politicians. In the booklet “Tibet Proving Truth from Facts,” released by the Department of Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration in India in 1996, the arguments in support of the claim

---

<sup>138</sup> For more details regarding the images of the Other and the Self, please refer to Moskaleva 2020.



for Tibetan independence cited the evidence Nepal had presented of its “independent diplomatic relations with Tibet” in its application for UN membership in 1949, just as Tharchin had noted at the time.<sup>139</sup> The same booklet referred to the speech on the Tibet Question delivered by Nehru in the Lok Sabha in 1959 as proof of India’s recognition of “Tibet’s right to self-determination,” which Tharchin had also done in *The Tibet Mirror* at the time (*Tibet Proving Truth from Facts*: 14). Similarly, in 2005, the CTA compiled a 300-page publication entitled “International Resolutions and Recognition of Tibet (1959 to 2004),”<sup>140</sup> containing all formal references to Tibet made by international bodies and legislatures. The exceptional role of India and the United States as the “two most important supporters” (Gyari 2022: 626) of the CTA as well as the “strong support base” (Gyari 2022: 429) of the Tibetan cause by the British people and individual royalty has been highlighted and thoroughly discussed by, for example, the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama’s Special Envoy in the US Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari (Rgya ri Blo gros rgyal mtshan, 1949–2018). Tharchin’s efforts to design and promote a discursive strategy for the pursuit of Tibetan independence from the end of the 1940s until 1963, when he published the last issue of *The Tibet Mirror*, prefigured what would become the dominant mode by supporters of that cause over the following half-century and beyond.

---

<sup>139</sup> “Nepal not only concluded peace treaties with Tibet and maintained an Ambassador in Lhasa, but also formally stated to the United Nations in 1949, as part of its application for UN membership, that it maintained independent diplomatic relations with Tibet” (*Tibet Proving Truth from Facts*: 5).

<sup>140</sup> Lobsang Nyandak Zayul, Kalon. *International Resolutions and Recognition of Tibet (1959 to 2004)*. Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration. Dharamsala, India. n.d. [2005].

## Bibliography

Brox, Trine

“Tibetan Culture as Battlefield: How the Term ‘Tibetan Culture’ is Utilized as Political Strategy.” In L. Schmithausen (ed.) *Buddhismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit im Buddhismus*, Vol. X, Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 2006, pp. 85–105.

Claude, Richard P.

“Book Review. The International Commission of Jurists: Global Advocates for Human Rights,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 16 (3), 1994, pp. 576–578. Available online at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/762438> (accessed January 19, 2025).

Danilova, Anna

*Manipulirovanie Slovom v Sredstvakh Massovoi Informatsii. 3-e izd.* [Verbal Manipulation in Mass Media. Third Edition]. Moscow: Dobrosvet and Izdatelstvo KDU, 2014.

Dreyfus, George

“Are We Prisoners of Shangrila? Orientalism, Nationalism, and the Study of Tibet,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 1, 2005, pp. 1–21. Available online at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268361871\\_Are\\_We\\_Prisoners\\_of\\_Shangrila\\_Orientalism\\_Nationalism\\_and\\_the\\_Study\\_of\\_Tibet](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268361871_Are_We_Prisoners_of_Shangrila_Orientalism_Nationalism_and_the_Study_of_Tibet) (accessed January 19, 2025).

Dvornichenko, Andrei, Yurii Tot, and Mikhail Khodyakov

*Istoriya Rossii: Uchebnik.* [History of Russia: Textbook]. Moscow: TK Velbi and Izdatelstvo Prospekt, 2008.

Fader, Louis H.

*Called from Obscurity: The Life and Times of a True Son of Tibet Gergan Dorje Tharchin.* Vol. 3. Kalimpong: Tibet Mirror Press, 2009.

Goldstein, Melvyn C.

*A History of Modern Tibet, Vol. 3. The Storm Clouds Descend: 1955–1957.*  
Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gyari Lodi Gyaltsen (Rgya ri Blo gros rgyal mtshan, 1949–2018)

*The Dalai Lama's Special Envoy: Memoirs of a Lifetime in Pursuit of a Reunited Tibet.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2022.

Knaus, John K.

"Official Policies and Covert Programs: The U.S. State Department, the CIA, and the Tibetan Resistance," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5 (3), 2003, pp. 54–79. [doi:10.1162/152039703322286773](https://doi.org/10.1162/152039703322286773).

McKay, Alex

"Tibet and the British Raj, 1904–47: The Influence of the Indian Political Department Officers." PhD Thesis. London: SOAS London University, 1995.

"'Kicking the Buddha's Head': India, Tibet and Footballing Colonialism." In P. Dimeo and J. Mills (eds.) *Soccer in South Asia: Empire, Nation, Diaspora*. London: Frank Cass, 2001, pp. 89–104.

"The British Invasion of Tibet, 1903–04," *Inner Asia* 14 (1), 2012, pp. 5–25. Available online at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24572145> (accessed January 19, 2025).

Moskaleva, Natalia

"Sketches of Contemporary Tibetan History in *The Tibet Mirror* (1949–1963)," *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* (37), 2016, pp. 247–261. Available online at [https://d1i1jdw69xsqx0.cloudfront.net/digitalhimalaya/collections/journals/ret/pdf/ret\\_37\\_14.pdf](https://d1i1jdw69xsqx0.cloudfront.net/digitalhimalaya/collections/journals/ret/pdf/ret_37_14.pdf) (accessed January 19, 2025).

"'What Does Babu Say?', a Pinch of Artistic Approach to News Reporting in *The Tibet Mirror* (1949–1963)," *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* (46), 2018, pp. 98–148. Available online at [https://d1i1jdw69xsqx0.cloudfront.net/digitalhimalaya/collections/journals/ret/pdf/ret\\_55\\_18.pdf](https://d1i1jdw69xsqx0.cloudfront.net/digitalhimalaya/collections/journals/ret/pdf/ret_55_18.pdf) (accessed January 19, 2025).

“*The Tibet Mirror* and History Spinning in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* (55), 2020, pp. 409–439. Available online at [https://d1i1jdw69xsqx0.cloudfront.net/digitalhimalaya/collections/journals/ret/pdf/ret\\_55\\_18.pdf](https://d1i1jdw69xsqx0.cloudfront.net/digitalhimalaya/collections/journals/ret/pdf/ret_55_18.pdf) (accessed January 19, 2025).

Okawa, Kensaku

“Lessons from Tibetans in Taiwan: Their History, Current Situation, and Relationship with Taiwanese Nationalism.” 东洋文化研究所纪要. 第152册 [*Summary of the Institute of Research of East Asian Culture.*, 152], 2007, pp. 581–601. Available online at <https://repository.dl.itc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/record/26971/files/ioc152014.pdf> (accessed January 20, 2025).

Powers, John and David Templeman

*Historical Dictionary of Tibet*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2012.

“Question of Tibet: Resolution / Adopted by the General Assembly 1959,” *United Nations Digital Library*. Available online at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/664377?ln=en> (accessed July 24, 2024).

Rgyal lo don grub

*The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong. My Untold Story of the Struggle for Tibet*. Edited by Anne F. Thurston. London: Random House. 2015.

Sawerthal, Anna

“A Newspaper for Tibet: Babu Tharchin and the “Tibet Mirror” (*Yul phyogs so so’i gsar ’gyur me long*, 1925–1963) from Kalimpong.” PhD Diss. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University, 2018. [doi:10.11588/heidok.00025156](https://doi.org/10.11588/heidok.00025156).

Shakya, Tsering

*The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947*. New York: Penguin Compass, 2000.

Singh, Teshu

“India, China and the Nathu La: Understanding Beijing’s Larger Strategy towards the Region,” *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*

(IPCS) *Issue Brief* (204), 2013, pp. 1–4. Available online at [https://www.ipcs.org/issue\\_select.php?recNo=491](https://www.ipcs.org/issue_select.php?recNo=491) (accessed January 19, 2025).

Smith, Paul J.

“Bhutan-China Border Disputes.” In B. Elleman, S. Kotkin, and C. Schofield (eds.) *Beijing's Power and Border Disputes: Twenty Neighbors in Asia*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2013, pp. 23–35.

Tenzin, Tashi C.

“Barmiok Athing Tashi Dadul Densapa: Colossus of Sikkim,” *Talk Sikkim* (7), 2010, pp. 37–39. Available online at <https://ru.scribd.com/document/35644325/Barmiok-Athing-Tashi-Dadul-Densapa-1> (accessed January 19, 2025).

*Tibet Proving Truth from Facts*. Dharamsala: Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, n.d. [1996]. Available online at <https://tibet.net/tibet-proving-truth-from-facts-1996/> (accessed January 19, 2025).

Tikhvinskiy, Sergei (ed.)

*Istoriya Kitaya s Drevneishikh Vremen do Nachala XXI veka: v 10 t.* [History of China from Ancient Times to the Beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: 10 vols.], *Tom VIII. Kitaiskaya Narodnaya Respublika (1949–1976)* [Vol.8: The People's Republic of China (1949–1976)], edited by Yuri M. Galenovich. Moscow: Nauka, 2017.

TIM = *The Tibet Mirror* = *Yul phyogs so so'i gсар 'gyur me long* [The Mirror of News from Various Countries]. Kālimpong: edited by Dorje Tharchin, 1925–<1963>. Electronic reproduction. v. II, No. 5 (1927), v. V, No. 1 (1930)–v. XXVIII (1963). New York: Columbia University Libraries, 2009. Available online at [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/cul/texts/ldpd\\_6981643\\_000/](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/cul/texts/ldpd_6981643_000/) (accessed July 24, 2024)

Tolley, Howard B. Jr.

*The International Commission of Jurists: Global Advocates for Human Rights*. Pennsylvania: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994.

“UN General Assembly Resolution 1001 (ES-I) adopted on November 7, 1956,” *United Nations Digital Library*. Available online at <https://digital.library.un.org/record/208418> (accessed July 24, 2024).

Yurlov, Felix and Evgenia Yurlova

*Istoriya Indii*. [History of India. 20<sup>th</sup> Century]. Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies RAS, 2010.

Zayul, Lobsang Nyandak

*International Resolutions and Recognition of Tibet (1959 to 2004)*. Dharamsala: Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, n.d. [2005].

## Appendices

### *Appendix 1*

Tharchin’s account of Nehru’s statement on Tibet to the Lok Sabha, published in *the Tibet Mirror*, Vol. XXV, No. 11, Apr. 1959, pp. 2–3.

I [would like to] briefly report on a few key points from a detailed discussion of Tibet by the esteemed Prime Minister [J.] Nehru during a meeting of the Indian Council of Ministers [*sic*] Lok Sabha<sup>141</sup> on March 30, [1959] in New Delhi.

It has been about three years since the Indian government welcomed [here] the independent autonomous government of Tibet that was in the shadow of China. When the Indian government gained its complete independence from British rule, other regions that had previously been taken under British control did not think that India would take control [into its own hands] and refused to accept this seizure of power.

In terms of politics, by acting in accordance with the law, India cannot do anything about the Tibet [Question]. However, from a religious point of view, based on its close, longstanding cultural and

---

<sup>141</sup> *rgya gar log sa bā zhes pa’i bka’ shag lhan rgyas*. Lok Sabha (लोकसभा, lit. “House of the People”) is the lower house of India’s bicameral Parliament.

religious ties with Tibet, [India] feels profound sympathy for Tibetans and [sees] the damage which has been brought by communist China to the numerous monastic communities as a result of its unprincipled violence and which has become the reason for the [total] decay of good virtues [there].

Since we want to maintain close ties and pure mutual friendship with Tibetans, we urge [them] to expand their freedom and independence. At the same time, it is extremely important for us to maintain [our] friendly relations with China as well. Although it [China] is such a state, [we] do not capitulate to them [i.e., the Chinese] [when they] give an order to India.

Although India and Tibetans have strong kinship, cultural, and other ties, we have not interfered in the boiling [process] of Tibetan politics. Therefore, when earlier, about 55 years ago [1904], the Indian government sent troops into Tibet under the command of the officer [Francis] Younghusband, although [we] certainly intervened, it was not a daunting intervention with a takeover sanctioned by the government's order. It is a legacy that has been inherited [by us] from Great Britain and the Indian government of the time.

When seizing control over the Tibetan territories, India was always renouncing [its right to] them so that [they] would keep [the same status as before]. However, no matter what policy regarding the Tibet [Question] has been pursued [by India], in response communist China has established the practice of not following [a similar path]. We had no desire to establish such a rule in any country of the world. [...]

Although every Chinese government claimed that Tibet belonged to China, successive Tibetan governments did not recognise [it]. We should not interfere with the existing laws, or reality, and [should] act as witnesses.

The esteemed [Prime Minister] Nehru recalled that when the Premier of the People's Republic of China Zhou Enlai arrived in India two and a half years ago [in 1956], the two of them discussed the situation in Tibet. He [Nehru] will not now recall what questions [they] asked each other with regard to that situation. However, [Nehru said the following:] "According to his [Zhou Enlai's] statement then, although Tibet was part of China, Tibet was not China. Since Tibet had always been a subordinate territory of China with its [own] autonomous government, [China] even had the intention to grant full autonomy [to Tibet]. As I [Nehru] remember, he made such statements

about politics concerning the Tibet Question. I myself was very much pleased that he insisted on granting Tibet full autonomy and independence. I replied to him [Zhou Enlai]: ‘If, in accordance with what you said, Tibet is granted full autonomy and independence, the difficulties that arose earlier in Tibet will surely diminish.’”

## *Appendix 2*

Tharchin’s description of the aid provided by India, Sikkim and Kalimpong, published in TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, June 1959, suppl. 1:

The Indian government has provided asylum for all those [people] who went into exile from Tibet after the Dalai Lama. For about 10,000 monks and laymen who came through Tawang [Rta dbang] in the Mon region and a few thousand monks and laymen who came through Bhutan—over 13,000 people in total—the Indian government has made arrangements for their temporary settlement in [the area] called Mussoorie and in [the area] called Buxa Dooars at the border with Bhutan. [The Indian government] continues to improve [their living] conditions [there].

Because of the efforts to relocate [Tibetans] to cooler areas within a short period of time, the government of Sikkim—by virtue of its enormous mercy to Tibetans—also provided over 2,000 people with work on road construction in the cooler areas of Sikkim, and by now, over about 1,000 [Tibetans] have relocated to Gangtok.

The esteemed government of Sikkim provides significant assistance in treating many [Tibetans] who fell ill because of the hot [weather] conditions. Moreover, during a brief encounter in Gangtok, I witnessed how the honourable Mrs. Phun Khang (Phun Khang)<sup>142</sup> of the [11<sup>th</sup>] Dalai Lama’s<sup>143</sup> family together with the Princess of Sikkim and the son of the distinguished Sikkimese official ‘Bar thing<sup>144</sup> examined and comforted the sick on a daily basis, for which I must express my gratitude.

---

<sup>142</sup> *yab gzhi phun khang lha lcam mchog*.

<sup>143</sup> Mkhas grub rgya mtsho (1838–1856).

<sup>144</sup> ‘bar thing. Tharchin probably referred to a son of the Sikkimese official Barmiok Athing (1904–1988). See Tenzin Tashi 2010.



Besides, many lamas and *tulku* set off on their own and have arrived in Kalimpong because the heat made it uncomfortable for them to stay in Mussoorie. However, although virtually everyone may experience difficulties, what matters most is that the venerable Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government will certainly make every possible effort [for the good of Tibetans].

Apart from that, the Kalimpong district is arranging the necessary conditions for collecting donations for about 100 refugees. The esteemed Acharya Kripalani<sup>145</sup> has recently arrived here. When [he] petitioned for the appointment of the Assembly of Administrative Managers, the head of administrative managers replied that help would come. However, conditions were not yet right, but there was much hope that [conditions] would be right soon.

The Indian government also pays considerable attention and makes arrangements for more than 1,500 scholar monks with a *geshe* degree to get relocated to the Buxa area and [start] teaching [there], and [makes] arrangements for more than 500 lamas who are lineage holders [of the Buddhist teachings] to arrive and settle in Punjab in the area called Dalhousie, as well as makes every possible effort for ordinary monks.

### *Appendix 3*

Summary of K. M. Munshi's speech on Tibet, published in TIM, Vol. XXVI, No. 6–7, Nov.–Dec. 1959, p. 9.

According to the latest news from Agra from December 13, [1959], the leader of a group called "Independent India," who had previously served as the governor of Uttar Pradesh, Mr. K.M. Munshi, held a two-day meeting on the Tibet Question. This is a rough translation of what he said then:

"We heard that now in Tibet there is a terrifying situation with the oppression [of people] with unbearable suffering. For this reason, we have sincerely been greatly distressed too. Given that earlier Tibet used to be an independent religious state just like us, the introduction of any malevolent and highly improper measures [aimed] at the restriction of human rights and the religious sphere of an independent state are

---

<sup>145</sup> Acharya Kripalani (1888–1982) was an Indian politician and independence activist.

nothing but indecent evil acts which violate ethical norms. Moreover, by combining an ancient political strategy with communist ideology, communist China has been exacerbating the terrible situation in Tibet.

Since this does not concern solely Tibet and is spreading at our doorway, we cannot [afford] to make the slightest mistake. Those people in China called the Han have conducted and are conducting a campaign of violent expansionism. They have said and are saying that they will liberate not only Tibet, [but] all people of Asia.

As was stated by esteemed [Finance minister] Shakabpa [Zhwa sgab pa], the minister and political frontman (the mastermind of the political strategy) whom the venerable 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama sent [here] specifically for this meeting, communist China has unbearably oppressed and is [currently] oppressing Tibet. [Chinese communists] have undertaken the extermination of the fine ancient traditional religion and culture of the entire Tibetan nation, as well as the social norms, rights, and basic welfare of [all] human beings [there]. Some people believe that, except only for a few lamas, monks, and officials, [Chinese communists] do not treat in such an inappropriate way [any] other [people]. Although [some people] think so, this is not true. Communist China has been destroying the entire Tibetan nation regardless of the noble or low origin [of people], of their religion, or of anything else. Therefore, it is important to help [lay] the foundation of peace in Tibet with a fair ethical-legal system.”

#### *Appendix 4*

“Fears That the Happiness of Minority Nationalities of the Himalayas Is Going to Be Devoured by Red Demons from the East,”<sup>146</sup> published in TIM, Vol. XXVII, No. 6, Feb.–Mar. 1961, p.6.

Nowadays, communist China is obsessed with the prosperity and power of the independent Indian state, and it is applying various harsh and gentle strategies to satisfy its hunger.

If one asks why [communist China uses] such strategies? [It does so] to swallow and bully the key areas which are similar to fingers in the

---

<sup>146</sup> *hi ma la ya'i ri bsul du chags pa'i mi rigs grangs nyung rnams kyi bde skyid la shar phyogs srin dmar gyis za sems la dwogs zon.*

north of India—the regions of upper Ladakh and the lower eastern Assam, [as well as such] neighbouring states [as] Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan in between them. On a pretext of feigned love, [Chinese communists] are trying to spread the communist strategies [there] and isolate [these areas] from India. In other words, [Chinese communists] are trying to harm the strength of India so that it becomes like, for example, a palm without fingers which is left without any strength.

Besides, earlier, for example, there was an independent Tibetan Religious State between India and China, [and] therefore the two powerful states did not need to meet face to face and they were able to exist [each] in one's own place. Or [one can say that] the independent Tibetan state stood like a border guard for the two mutually prosperous states.

However, when communist China invaded Tibet in 1950, even though the independent Tibetan government submitted a petition to the United Nations and to the government of [its] neighbour India, since [the petition] was disregarded and neglected, there was not anyone who paid attention to [it] and gave it [any] credibility.

Furthermore, since Tibet was perceived as a constituent of China, the independent Tibetan state has no choice but to remain under the rule of communist China at present. As all people, high and low, monks and laymen from Kham and Tibet did not foresee [the danger], they have all suffered from being fooled by the deceitful words of Chinese communist demons in the 17-Point Agreement, which is like a razor with smeared honey and a hat made of wet leather. As for now, look at the real experience of suffering in the human realm from committing a suicide with the razor, from squeezing one's own head by the hat made of wet leather, and from other hardships.

Similarly, now Chinese communists will be telling pleasant demonic lies to the small states and peoples [located] between India and Tibet. It will be very good if [you] stay very cautious regarding that and do not get fooled. Otherwise, [you] will [also] inevitably [experience] what [you] see and hear [now] about the situation in China and Tibet.

With the 17-Point Agreement

Having been fooled, the entire Tibetan nation has been annihilated.

With the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence

Having been fooled, India has been put in an uneasy position.

*Appendix 5*

Tharchin’s “rough translation” of Nepal’s application for membership of the UN, published in TIM, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, Oct. 1949, p. 5.

According to a recent news report, the Nepalese government has filed a petition to join the United Nations. A rough translation from English of the Nepalese government’s response to the questions of the United Nations is presented below:

“The Nepalese government is an independent state. [We] were able to protect our lands on our own. In addition to the fact that we send our official representatives to foreign countries, [we] are not under the rule of any powerful country. Earlier in 1815, the Gorkha [Kingdom], or Nepal, was at war with the British, and there was even a peace treaty signed. Also, when [we] attacked China in 1792 and when we fought with Tibet in 1855, at the time when the treaties were concluded, [we] made decisions independently without any third party or an intermediary state. Considering [all the above-mentioned facts] and the fact that [certain] internal adjustments were made [in the country], Nepal is requesting permission to join the United Nations.

The claim that the property and income of Nepal are controlled by India is not true. Since Nepalese-owned resources and goods are comparable to Indian ones, [we] develop [our] trade relations with foreign countries. In order to be able to defend the territory of Nepal on our own, [we] have well-equipped troops and sufficient weaponry for conducting military operations. There is not a single foreigner in the Nepalese government and military structures. The Nepalese government can even declare a war and order the mobilisation of its troops. [It also] has the power to sign a peace treaty on its own.”

*Appendix 6*

Tharchin’s appeal to Khampas to rise up. TIM, Vol. XXI, No. 4, July 1953, p. 3.

Brothers residing in the Tibetan region of Kham! Due to the need conditioned by the current circumstances, you are [all] brothers [to each other]. Although it is probably impossible to disobey the orders

of the Other [Chinese communists], rise up in the near future for the independence like Tito!

The Tito[ists] residing in the Tibetan region of Kham! In order for your motherland to remain an independent state forever, [you,] being creative, enthusiastic, and very brave, rise up in the near future for the independence like Tito!

I, the old man, know that there are many Tito[ists] in the Tibetan region of Kham. Enthusiastic and very brave Tito[ists]! Rise up in the near future for independence like Tito!

